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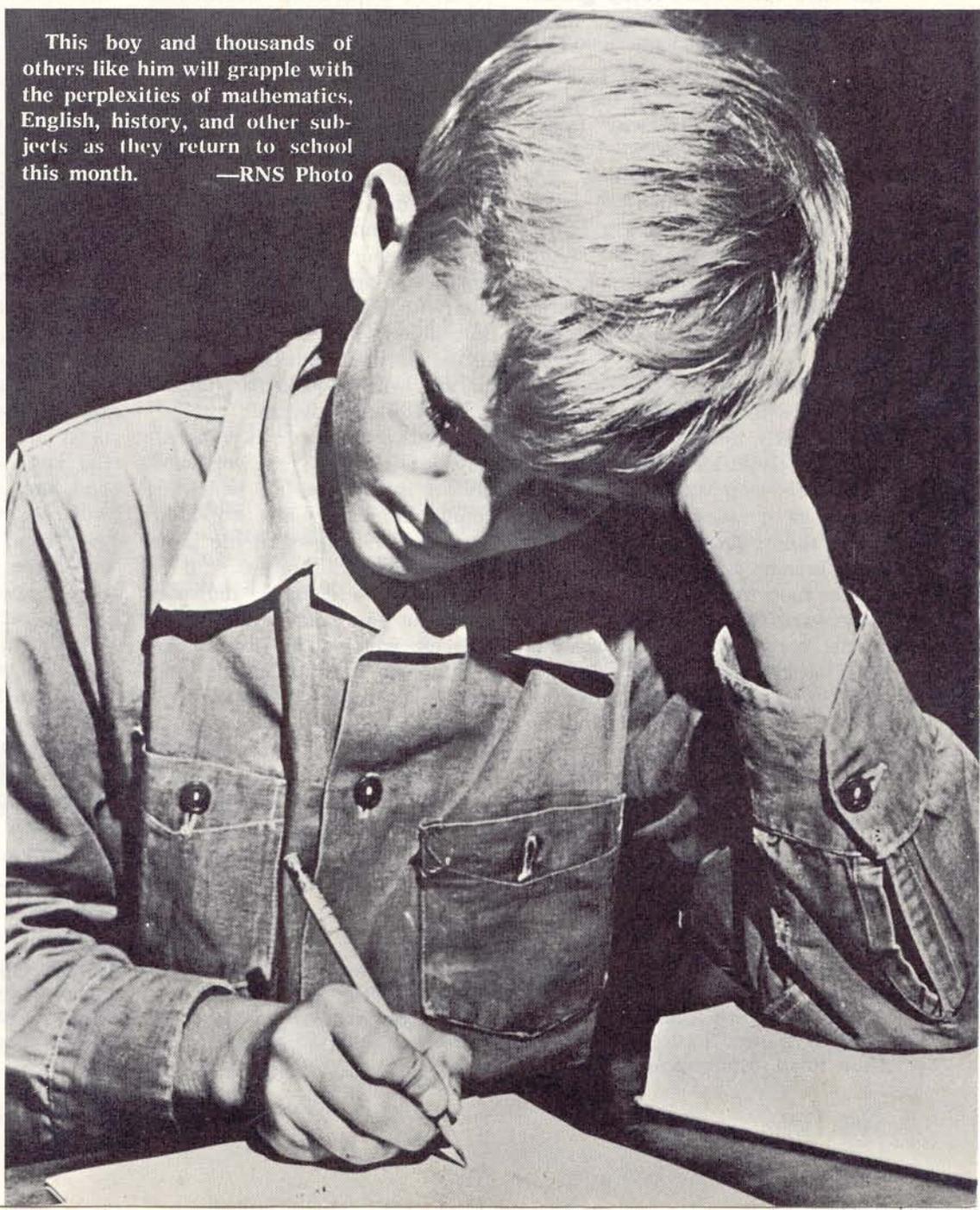
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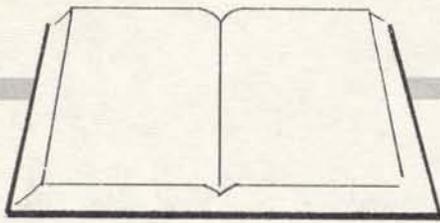
LUTHERAN

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This boy and thousands of others like him will grapple with the perplexities of mathematics, English, history, and other subjects as they return to school this month.

—RNS Photo





According to the Word

THE UNENDURING

*The second of four meditations
on the Sower and the Seed*

“And these in like manner are the ones sown upon rocky ground . . . and they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away” (Mark 4:16, 17).

Last time we described a type of soil or hearer which we called the “unimpressed.” Such a hearer is in the place where the Word can reach him, but in devious ways he fends off the Holy Spirit who would bring the living truth to his heart.

The second group of hearers is likened to rocky ground in which seed quickly takes root, but when it cannot penetrate the rock below, it withers and dies. The sun, a friend as it warmed the shallow soil, thus quickening germination, became a foe as it dried up tender roots which could not reach downward to life-giving moisture. Some hearers of the Word are like this, Jesus said. They respond quickly to the invitation to follow, but in the heat of the day often desert the field of battle long before others who did not step so easily into the fray.

Yes, we have seen them—how lovable, how promising, in the fresh bloom of emotion, no world

unconquerable before them. And how disappointing when they do not answer muster after emotions have subsided and the enemy is scoring points with short, relentless body blows. There is no real Christian experience where emotions are not touched, but neither is there such where the will is not made captive to the divine will.

Don't you think this was why Jesus reminded an eager recruit that his discipleship would require a great self-sacrifice? and why He insisted on His followers counting the cost? and why He laid down a requirement of unconditional allegiance so strong that the natural man will have no part of it? Emotions alone will not suffice to come successfully through the many tribulations which would bar the way to the eternal kingdom.

The Christian way is a narrow way. It is the only real worthwhile life to live. It is life which triumphs and never ends. But it has its price. The crown of life is not for the one who begins, but for the one who *endures* and *overcomes* in the battle of life. The bedrock which will destroy and kill the life of faith in our situations may come in the form of ridicule. Are you willing to be laughed at for the sake of Jesus? There may be the cross of loneliness. In your obedience to Christ, are there times when there is a parting of the ways with your associates?

Surely the secret of enduring is to be found in living close to the Lord Jesus. Out of daily communion in prayer and Bible reading will come continually charged emotions united with a will which is becoming more and more the will of Christ. “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal. 2:20).

Now a word to you who may have begun with Christ and have fallen back. Is there any hope for one who renounced the devil and all his works and all his ways on confirmation day, for instance, and then gradually drifted into a world of grays, then blacks?

One preacher, when asked by a backslider if he could give him one word of hope, said, “Yes. If I could not, I would never preach again.” Take a promise from Deuteronomy: “But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut. 4:29). I understand the parable of the Prodigal Son to speak to this point, and all of the gracious invitations of Jesus to humanity are for you, too, who feel that you wandered away from what had been a living fellowship with Him.

The Lord is able to break up the bedrock of tribulations and make steppingstones out of them so that there will be endurance, not failure; salvation, not departed glory.

—Raynard Huglen

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John Wesley's "heart warming" could well be emulated
in a day beset by world weariness

Aldersgate and 1963

GERALD KENNEDY

One evening 225 years ago, a man went into a religious meeting in Aldersgate Street in London. He was discouraged and frustrated, for he had been long seeking a real experience of God and it still eluded him. He had traveled to America as a missionary seeking such an experience, but everything had gone wrong. There had been an unhappy love affair, a lack of response on the part of the Indians, a parish rebellion—and he had returned to London worse off than ever. He wrote in his *Journal* that he had gone to America to convert the Indians, but who would convert him?

However, at that London meeting on May 24, 1738, while listening to a reading from Luther's preface to Romans, something happened. Of it John Wesley later wrote: "About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation. . . ." The experience changed his weakness into power, his frustration into assurance. It was the beginning of a spiritual flood which affected profoundly the evangelical revival of the 18th century. When he died 53 years later Wesley left behind him, as someone has said, a badly abused reputation, a worn-out pulpit robe, and the Methodist Church.

This experience of the "warmed heart" is at the center of the Wesleyan witness. It is not, however, the sole possession of any particular church or group. Religion as an experience constitutes one of the mainstreams in the Christian tradi-

tion; whenever any man in any communion has his life changed, either suddenly or gradually, it is of deep interest to all Christians and to all churches. It might be well for us who are so obviously in need of renewal to consider the event at Aldersgate and ask what implications it may have for us.

Unwillingness

I have been impressed by Wesley's note at the beginning of the *Journal's* entry on Aldersgate: "In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street." I wish he had said why he was unwilling. Perhaps he wanted to read a book, or call on a friend, or just stay home because he was tired. But it is noteworthy that the change of his life occurred when he would rather have been at another place, doing something else. Even great emotional experiences owe much to routine habit, and grace is never entirely free from law.

This is a hard word for us; the spirit of our time is to do only what comes naturally. We read too much about God's promises and pay too little heed to His demands. If we can be washed without getting wet or find power without exercising our muscles, that is fine. But doing what we do not want to do that it may bring us to life is not acceptable doctrine today. The popular expression of farewell, "Have fun!" expresses our point of view; we cannot learn the lesson that man who makes having fun the goal of his life does not have much fun. We have been living on the false assumption that everything, including education, ought to

be fun. When, a good many years ago, I began the study of Greek, no one suggested to me that it was going to be fun. Indeed, if the old professor had said at the opening of the first class, "Learning Greek is fun," I would have thought he was crazy or at least was trying out a dull joke.

We have been trying to operate life on the basis of willingness, and that road does not take us very far. Great artists have found their lives full of tensions and pains, apparently the penalty for striving to create. Joseph Wood Krutch asks what would have happened to Beethoven and Poe if they had been psychoanalyzed, made normal: would we have the music of one and the literature of the other? At least it is clear that their achievements were not accomplished easily or painlessly.

Did you ever meet a saint, the kind of person whose very presence lifts up your heart and restores your faith in the goodness of man? Of the few legitimate saints I have known, not one found life easy. To them the words from Hebrews apply: "For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."

The Christian Church had better forget a great deal of the sentimental nonsense it has been preaching and proclaim that many of God's greatest gifts are to be found only at the end of the unwilling road.

Discipline

When John Wesley at 35 found his heart strangely warmed, he

Expectancy

was the most disciplined man I have ever heard about. He had parted company with leisure; early in his life he had learned the value of time. In our day awareness of the sin of wasting time, a part of the Methodist tradition, has too often been dulled. In the name of being free of the law we fall into the trap of the antinomians—enslaved by license.

To our flabby generation, John Wesley's physical exploits seem quaint but hardly exemplary. Chief Justice Warren suggested some time ago that American corporations need an expert in ethics on their boards. This, it seems to me, is carrying specialization about as far as it can go. Has the morally gray twilight we live in made the black and white of right and wrong no longer discernible? Have we so sinned against the Holy Spirit that whatever is profitable is right, that mere failure is sin?

I hear more nonsense talked in the name of religion than in that of any other subject. As churchmen we present to the world the curious spectacle of being at an all-time high numerically and at an all-time low spiritually. Oh, we would be willing to have the Lord warm our hearts, but we have no idea of changing our habits. Though God must have something to work with, we present Him with vague wishes but no solid resolutions. The Christian without the discipline of holy habits will long in vain for the experience of the heart strangely warmed.

Our sickness is our softness. We are destroyed by our preference for the trivial, our fear of the serious. We must learn to read our Bibles, to ponder particularly the hard words it speaks, so that the Word may find us. We must learn to pray, to stretch our mental and spiritual muscles. We must do our duty, contribute our service, despising ease and comfort. We must seek the inner witness and the personal knowledge of God as if it were the most important thing in life—as indeed it is!

Surely one of the most amazing things about John Wesley was his tenacity in following the path to personal experience. He could not believe that the cold and formal religion he saw in the established church was all there was to Christianity. He had the indestructible faith that God had more to give him, that a blessed assurance was his rightful possession. That expectancy was once a characteristic of Methodist preaching and Methodist worship. Viktor Frankl, the Viennese psychoanalyst, writes from his experience in Hitler's concentration camps that when men lost hope they died. A doctor might say the cause of death was malnutrition or overwork. But men who could believe that the war might end in time for them to be set free endured and survived their sufferings. When Queen Victoria asked Disraeli if he believed in God, he said he did. She asked him what proof he had and he answered, "The Jews"—who, "chosen" by God and taught by their prophets that their sufferings had meaning, never lost their identity. Men and nations live or die according to their expectancy.

When life goes stale, it is not because of hard work but because of boredom. The sickness of our civilization results from our loss of faith in God. If we could believe that around the next corner we might meet Him and that He would change our lives from defeat to victory, we could be saved. If we could put an expectancy into our church services, they would recover an excitement which all the liturgical skill of the experts is unable to restore. Francis Asbury said of the Methodist society meeting at which he was converted that it was not the church, but it was better; it was alive with personal testimony and great expectations. Saul, who went around breathing out threats of murder against the Christians, had such an experience; then he became Paul, who preached the unsearch-

able riches of Christ. At the center of the Christian proclamation lies the reality of the miracle of conversion—and we ought to be preaching about it with confidence.

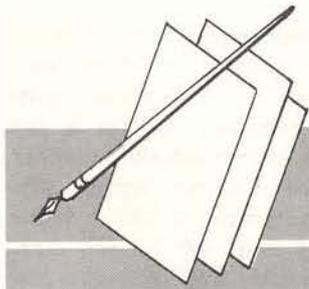
A few years ago I walked past Copenhagen's Town Hall one evening when a group of people were holding a religious meeting on the steps. They were singing some hymns and I stopped to join in. The one that seemed to go the best went like this: "It is no secret, what God can do; what He's done for others, He'll do for you." They tell me the music to which the words are set is not great, and I know the words are not great poetry. But they go right to the heart of the Christian proclamation. We need to recover their implication.

Implementation

Unlike some men who have had great spiritual experiences, John Wesley never considered leaving the church. He was suspicious of the mystics, who seemed to him too individualistic, too lacking in appreciation of the church; he thought they needed the criticism and guidance of their brethren in its ranks. In Wesley's mind, if his heart-warming experience could not stand the test of the church's life and doctrine, it would be a sure sign that it had no final validity. There are a good many wild, heretical, harmful movements which would never have started if their founders had possessed the good sense and humility to submit themselves to the counsel and judgment of the church.

Protestantism needs this insight to balance its emphasis on each man's priesthood. We need not go so far as to equate the authority of tradition with the Bible, but we should discourage any man's believing that his own vagrant experience is of equal weight with the testimony of the church. We can learn a lesson here from the late Robert Frost, who called free verse playing tennis with the net

[Continued on page 9]



EDITORIALS

BISHOP KENNEDY'S MESSAGE

Our lead article today, "Aldersgate and 1963," by the Methodist bishop of the Los Angeles area, says some things with which we heartily agree and therefore we present it to you. Not that we must always feel confined only to things with which we agree. But in this case we do agree.

Some of our readers may take strong exception to his last section on "Implementation" in which he praises John Wesley for not leaving the Anglican Church. We are, as you know, often accused of leaving the Lutheran Free Church. However, we remind you that in our estimation we did not leave the Lutheran Free Church. And at any rate, we have not left the Lutheran Church even though we choose a framework in which to live and work which is different than that of the majority.

Do not let any disagreement you have with the final section cloud the thrust of the whole message.

RECOGNIZING AN OLD FOE

It has been said that an important part of battle is to recognize one's foes and know something about them. There is great wisdom in that assertion. Complications arise when the enemy uses camouflage so that he is missed entirely or dons new garb so that he is mistaken as a friend and not an adversary.

The old foe alcohol has been dressed up in the clothes of respectability in our age so that mention of beer and hard liquor brings to mind lovable bears romping in beautiful lakes and woodlands; vast, ripened grainfields; lofty, snow-capped mountains; happy summer evening beach parties; and successful businessmen comfortable in great chairs before glowing fireplaces. How easily forgotten are the products and by-products of alcohol—about 4,000 deaths directly attributed to alcoholism in the United States each year and another 8,000 that can be credited to alcohol in a more refined way (sometimes); auto accidents (always tragic, but more so when drinking is involved); men lying on city sidewalks; women and children trying to live as normally as possible with a husband and father who

has taken the heart out of a home; alcoholic women who withdraw into a world of hidden bottles; young people who find "status" and "maturity" in drinking and throw chastity and scruples to the winds; to say nothing of all the souls that end up in hell because liquor helped them down that pathway.

Yes, we know that the matter of drinking or not drinking is a personal affair. What isn't? Ultimately each person decides what he will or will not do. The Christian person faces an additional hurdle in arriving at the right choices regarding personal action. He must ask what the will of the Lord is concerning the contemplated course. He must ask this question not only as it relates to his own well-being (physically and spiritually), but also as it refers to the witness of his life for his master, Jesus Christ.

We believe that after considering all the evidences the best conclusion is that it is much wiser not to drink. And in view of the tremendous havoc wrought by the liquor traffic, we simply cannot justify its existence, its preservation and protection. You may be able to do so, but we cannot. We know that it will continue to be with us, but we do not want to aid or abet it.

The fact that church people help to sustain and make the alcoholic beverage industry such a profitable one can be seen in the fact that approximately the same proportion of American adults drink in some degree as belong to churches. And who does not know from personal observation that it is not the unchurched alone who keep the taverns and liquor stores of our communities open and paying businesses? The patrons spend at least ten billion dollars a year on these products. That's a lot more money than is spent on many other items. It is roughly 500 times more than the annual budget of the American Lutheran Church.

Today a number of church bodies, faced with increased drinking among their members, have come to the defense of moderate drinking almost with the fervor of their pleas for civil rights. Of course, they warn against the dangers of excess and advise that if you do drink that you do so for "right reasons." We are sure the brewing people will take support wherever they can get it, but they must be astounded at all the backing they've been getting from some Protestant church bodies and pastors—astounded and mystified, but, we hasten to add, grateful and humble.

The task of the church is to make Jesus Christ known to the world. We say that He meets the needs of people, that He gives purpose and meaning to life, that He enables us to face all the circumstances of life victoriously. Alcoholic beverages have an answer to man's fears and insecurities too. But their answer is to depress the senses and dull spiritual sensitivity. They lift the person out of his problems for a moment only to crash him back into them

and compound the guilt of a conscience which is running away from the one who could really help.

We have written these things somewhat aware of what the Bible says about drinking. And whatever defense may be made about the position of alcoholic beverages in Biblical times, we feel that we have nothing good to say about the liquor traffic in the light of the situation today. We think it stands condemned. We are aware that some contend that by taking the position we do we eliminate the possibility of being of help to the person who has a drink problem. We don't think so. Here is where the possibility of disliking what another does while having love for him as a person enters in.

We are aware that there is a nice little corner of "limbo" reserved for "reformers" and "moralists." That may be, but surely the Lord wants us to be honest, and we've discussed the situation in brief as we see it. The drinking of alcoholic beverages (we haven't made any distinction among them) will have its defenders, but we are not among them. And an industry which preys upon human weakness, which seeks to tear down, not to build up, ought to find no support among us.

MEN FOR THE MINISTRY

There has been a lot of talk in recent years about the need for more pastors in nearly every church body. The situation apparently is serious although the panic button hasn't been pushed yet.

A few years ago some of the Lutheran churches conducted a series of "Men for the Ministry" conferences around the country. No doubt some young men made decisions for the ministry because of them, although we are not aware of any increase in seminary enrollments that could be directly attributed to those conferences. But their impact can't be fully assessed yet.

We are sure that one failing which has led to the present condition is lack of specific prayer for ministerial candidates. We think this because we feel there is a general lack of prayer in the church. Parents and congregations do not offer their sons and daughters upon the altars of service for Christ and His kingdom if there is no earnest prayer life which intercedes for the community and the world. It may take church-wide revival to stir up the churches of America and Canada to devotional life which will storm mercy's gates with a zeal that will not be denied. In the meantime, if you pray, join your voice in the cry for laborers for the harvest.

It is difficult to state in certainty why more young men do not enter our seminaries. We have heard why some have entered the ministry, but we don't know much about those who turned the call down. They do not usually reveal those reasons unless they reverse such a decision a few years later.

Some seem to fear that they cannot support a family on a pastor's salary. It is not clear why this

should be impossible for them when a good many thousands of pastors in our country are doing so—with all sorts and sizes of families. Salaries are quite good today and some are excellent. In not a few parishes the pastor is not the lowest salaried member, by any means. Parsonages are often new homes, suitably located. Pension plans assure a much better chance for happy retirement than our fathers faced before the days of social security and adequate pensions. It cannot be denied that another profession may offer more remuneration than the ministry, but the pastor of today will fare well enough.

Do some young men see the pastor as lacking the importance of men in certain other professions—let us say, for instance, the school superintendent, doctor, dentist, lawyer, etc.? Again, it is not clear why this should be of such great concern and we feel that, by and large, he is given proper respect. A pastor is also a *minister*, a servant. He does not enter the ministry to impress his community with his own importance. He is called to give spiritual leadership to a certain group of people in a community and, of course, to influence the whole community toward the good as best he can.

Permit us to say that, personally, we have been in the ministry for ten years. God's call to the ministry came early in life. It varies with different people. We have found the ministry deeply rewarding. We are sure there is no work more satisfying than that of the parish pastor. We do not envy those who are called to administrative posts, although someone must serve there also.

There are problems in the ministry. The people may not share the pastor's vision. Or he may chafe under the wise counsel of trusted leaders in the congregation. He dreads the walk that brings him into the home where sorrow or tragedy has just come. He carries the burden of the spiritual life of his people in his heart. Each sermon is a challenge to speak the truth in love.

But the glory of the ministry lies in being called of God to be a preacher, a pastor, a minister for people. The glory of the ministry lies in being called by a congregation to live with them and work with them, to share joys and sorrows, to care for their souls as no other man does, to hold up Christ before them.

We urge all who are called by God for the ministry (or mission work) to heed that call. We ask congregations to send forth their sons to the Lord's vineyard and to encourage them to that end by dealing well with their own pastors.

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations has the task of providing a seminary for those young men who will be called to serve as our pastors. We have the promise of such candidates. Surely the Lord will give us the means of training them for the work. Let us make this a matter of much prayer and let us enter the open doors He sets before us.



Awoke Too Late

Rev. Fritjof Monseth
Valley City, North Dakota
Luke 16:19-31

Our text is the story of a man who awoke too late to be saved. The door of salvation was forever sealed to him. He was lost for all eternity. No tragedy could be greater and more horrible than that.

It reminds us of the hopeless situation of the large masses of people in the days of Noah when the great flood came. No doubt many of them woke up to see how utterly stupid they had been to ignore God's Word as spoken by Noah, but it was too late. They had sinned away the day of grace.

I knew a man who awoke too late to see a speeding train at a railroad crossing over in Minnesota as he was driving along the highway. His car was struck, and he and his wife and six children were crushed to death in seconds. Marks on the highway showed that he had applied the brakes of his car, but it was too late. It slipped onto the tracks in front of the train.

The man in our text (let's call him Dives) awoke to see the tragic folly of living apart from God. Some folk become troubled and panicky when they realize death is near, but this man Dives evidently slept in his worldliness and indifference and sin until he awoke in hell. Then salvation from hell was too late.

And it was too late for him to be of any spiritual help to his

brothers or neighbors. His eyes were opened in hell to see that they needed to be saved, but it was forever too late then to help them on the way to life eternal. Think it over, friends. Not only will your own soul be lost if you reject the call of God; your near ones, too, will be hindered by your example.

Dives did finally awaken to see the need of prayer. In his stubborn self-sufficiency he had closed his eyes to the need of praying until he awoke in hell. Then he began to pray, "Father Abraham," but it was too late. In the Book of Revelation, chapter 6, we read of a day that is coming when some are going to pray to the mountains and rocks to fall on them to hide them from the face of Him who sits on the throne. Then it will be too late to pray.

We might ask the question, Why was Dives lost forever? Why did he arrive in the place of torments? In answer we can say that it was not because no attempt had been made to awaken him. Right at his gate was Lazarus, a true believer, who by his attitude and life reminded him of seeking the things that are above. Daily that reminder came, but he ignored it.

Dives was not ignorant of the way of salvation. Just read the text. His words show that he knew repentance from sin was necessary. He knew that he himself was in hell because he had not repented. He awoke to see it, but it was too late.

Love for this present world had been the downfall of Dives. He had been so preoccupied with this world that he had been able to subdue the call of God. He had

been clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day. Life for him on earth had been a merry round of entertainment. He awoke in hell to see the emptiness of it all, but it was forever too late.

Dives evidently reckoned once, if he reckoned at all, that he had plenty of time to give heed to the call of God. His health was good, his financial outlook was bright, and he was having a lot of fun. No doubt he avoided and scorned hell-fire preachers. But he awoke in hell to discover that the preacher was right and the Bible was true, but it was too late, forever too late.

Friends, today is the day of salvation. "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

—Reprinted from the Valley City
Times-Record

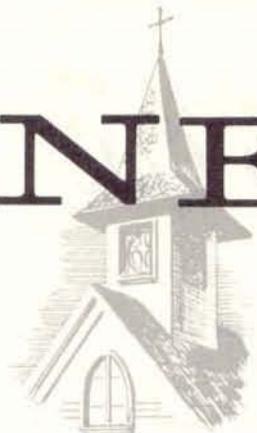
PERSONALITIES

Add to the list of pastors celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of their ordination into the ministry the name of Rev. Oscar C. Olson, Seattle, Wash. Congratulations.

Pastor G. A. Almquist was among the many Lutherans from the United States who attended the Lutheran World Federation Assembly in Helsinki, Finland, recently.

"Better is open rebuke
than hidden love" (Prov 27:5).

"Do not boast about tomorrow,
for you do not know what a day
may bring forth" (Prov. 27:1).



NEWS

of the Churches

FROM WILLMAR, MINNESOTA

A new congregation, to be known as "Free Lutheran Mission," has been organized and plans to start functioning in the city of Willmar within the next week or two.

Since the merger of the Lutheran Free Church with the American Lutheran Church last February 1, a need has been felt in this area for the continuation of the principles of the former Lutheran Free Church. A Bible study and prayer fellowship group, under the leadership of Verle Dean, has been meeting in various homes once a week, and a discussion meeting was held on August 14 at the Green Lake Lutheran Church. The Rev. H. R. Schafer, president of the Home Mission Board of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, led the discussion. It was then decided to meet on August 20 for the purpose of organizing in the Willmar area.

Temporary officers were elected at this meeting and plans made to begin Sunday school September 8.

The "Free Lutheran Mission" congregation will affiliate with the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, of which the Rev. John Strand of Tioga, North Dakota, is the president. They have their headquarters in Fargo, North Dakota, and this association has grown beyond all expectations.

Further announcements will be made as to the time and place of the first service of the "Free Lutheran Mission."

—Willmar Tribune

(Mr. Leif Fostervold, Atwater, Minn., was elected chairman of the new congregation. Ed.)

FROM NEWFOLDEN, MINNESOTA

On Wednesday, July 31, at 8:30 p.m., there was a special congregational meeting held at Westaker Lutheran Free Church, of rural Newfolden, Minnesota. After prayer and after much discussion and deliberation, the congregation voted to move into the village of Newfolden in order to establish a Free Lutheran church there. Pastor John Abel, missions director from Fargo, N. Dak., was present at the meeting and spoke of the Association's interest in and support of the work in the Newfolden area. He challenged the members to think of this relocation as a mission opportunity. The Westaker building will remain in its present location and will continue to be utilized by the congregation on special occasions. Preliminary work has already begun, and the move will be completed this fall, God willing. Members of the building committee are Leroy Knutson, chairman of the congregation, Carl Haugen, Oscar Oswald, Clarence Skyberg, and Campbell Thompson.

—Robert Lee, student pastor

FROM THE TWIN CITIES

The Twin City Lutheran Association began conducting Sunday

morning worship services in August at the Sons of Norway building, 1455 West Lake Street, in Minneapolis. Out of this fellowship the formation of a congregation is expected which will affiliate with the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

Mr. Alan A. Hendrickson of the Ambassadors' Caravan was the first speaker. In addition to his sermon on "Walking in God's Ways," he also shared briefly some of the group's experiences in their tour of Association churches up to that point. Twin City area members of the team are Terry Simonson and David L. Johnson.

Mrs. David Hanson of Richfield gave a "missions serial" each Sunday for the children and will work with the Sunday school of the fellowship. That began on Sept. 8. Director of music during the summer was DeWayne Herbrandson, Edina, a Concordia College, Moorhead, Minn., senior music major. Pianists are Miss Miriam Pederson, Edina, and Mrs. Esther Farrier, Minneapolis.

The fall schedule of Sunday activities calls for Sunday school at 8:00 a.m., worship service at 9:00 a.m., and Bible study and fellowship hour at 7:00 p.m. All interested persons in the area are welcome to attend these meetings and to participate in the work.

"For in much wisdom is much vexation,
and he who increases knowledge
increases sorrow" (Eccles. 1:18).

"Open your mouth for the dumb,
for the rights of all who are left
desolate" (Prov. 31:8).

"Every word of God proves true;
He is a shield to those who take
refuge in Him" (Prov. 30:5).

"The rod and reproof give wisdom,
but a child left to himself brings
shame to his mother" (Prov. 29:15).

What Lutherans Believe and Teach

by Martin Hegland

God is an infinite spiritual Being who thinks, feels, and wills.

God created the universe and continues to sustain and govern it by His power, wisdom, and love.

God placed human beings in the world who were in perfect harmony with himself.

Tempted by Satan, men were disobedient to God, lost their innocence, and brought upon themselves the fearful consequences of sin—guilt, shame, sorrow, and the penalty of eternal death.

The resulting sinful nature of man's first parents was passed on as original sin to all human beings born according to the usual course of nature.

God did not abandon men to darkness and destruction, but gave them the light of His revealed Word, the Bible.

The Bible is supernaturally inspired, contains both law and gospel, and is the only sure guide in matters of faith and conduct.

When the time was ripe, God sent to earth His Son, Jesus Christ, to be the Savior of men.

Jesus Christ is true God, but also true man.

Christ died upon the cross for the sins of all men and triumphed over death by His resurrection.

Through this completed redemptive work of Christ, salvation is possible for all men, bringing deliverance from sin and eternal death.

Man is saved not by his own efforts but solely by the grace of God freely offered through Christ.

Because of original sin, all human beings, including infants, need to be born again in order to enter the kingdom of God.

Baptism is a means of grace which the Holy Spirit uses to give spiritual life to young children and to give them entrance into the kingdom of grace.

Baptized children should be carefully instructed in Christian truth which the Holy Spirit uses to develop their spiritual lives, to bring them to a conscious faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

Confirmation is a rite in which a baptized person renews his baptismal covenant, confesses his faith in the triune God, renounces the devil, and pledges loyalty to Christ to the end of his life.

If an individual falls away from his baptismal covenant with God, either before or after confirmation, he needs to be converted through a sincere repentance of sins and a trusting faith in Christ as Savior.

In the lives of non-Christians who hear or read the Word of God, the Holy Spirit is constantly at work to produce conviction of sin and to lead them to accept Christ as their personal Savior.

When an adult who has not been baptized is converted, he should be baptized in obedience to the Lord's command and as a seal of his new state of grace with God.

In the Lord's Supper, Christ imparts to participants His glorified body and blood—for believers a pledge of the forgiveness of sins and a source of spiritual nourishment.

A repentant and believing soul may be assured of being a child of God because of the sure promise of grace.

By His help God expects believers to grow in their spiritual life, to become triumphant over sin, and to be fruitful in good works and in Christian service.

The Church is a divine institution instituted by Christ himself for the administration of the means of grace and for fellowship in faith and service.

Ordination is a rite by which a person is consecrated for the work of the Christian ministry. Ordina-

tion does not change his nature, but sets him aside for his special work.

It is the privilege and duty of all Christians to help spread the gospel of salvation in Christ to all people everywhere who do not have it.

Stewardship is required of all Christians—stewardship of time, talents, and money.

Man's destiny culminates in either eternal life or eternal death—heaven or hell.

If a Christian by the grace of God remains faithful unto the end of life, God will receive him into His heavenly home.

At the end of time Christ will return to earth as Judge; there will be a general resurrection of all the dead, and believers will enter with Christ into the final form of His kingdom—"The new heavens and the new earth."

—Courtesy, Tract Mission

[Continued from page 4]

down; poetry, he thought, needed to discipline its wild, free way with straitness of meter and steadying of pattern.

If the Methodists and the Anglicans should come together in England, as it appears they may, the spirit of John Wesley should offer no problem. For he never left the established church, never ceased being an Anglican priest. One can hear him saying, "I told you so." I can but believe that a fresh observation of Wesley at Aldersgate has significance not only for Methodists but for all Christians.

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LWF UNABLE TO AGREE ON "JUSTIFICATION" REPORT

HELSINKI (NLC) — Lacking unanimous agreement on the wording of a "contemporary statement" on the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith, the Fourth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation referred the document to its new Commission on Theology for refinement.

Action was taken by the delegates in plenary session after more than an hour of debate over the report presented by the Coordinating Committee on Group Discussions.

Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, president of the LWF and presiding officer, said the theology commission will study the report and possibly "recast it in another form," for which time is not available at this assembly.

Responding to a question, Dr. Fry emphasized that the assembly's unwillingness to receive the report in its present form does not mean that Lutherans around the world thereby challenge "our common confession of faith in the unaltered Augsburg Confession."

The member churches of the LWF hold "unwaveringly" to this confession, he said, adding that while Lutherans have a common confession, they do not have a "common theological approach to that confession." Nor, he said, is this necessary.

After the decision of referral by the assembly, Bishop Hanns Lilje of Hannover, Germany, chairman of the Coordinating Committee on Group Discussions, asked, "Am I to understand the document will not be published?" Told by Dr. Fry this was so, Bishop Lilje commented, "What a pity."

The report of the committee was based on the results of three meetings each of 26 discussion groups, composed of the 272 delegates with the 413 official visitors also participating.

Discussions in these groups centered on the assembly's theme, "Christ Today," and more specifi-

cally on the application of the doctrine of "justification by faith" in modern terminology.

Lutherans maintain that this doctrine, meaning that man is justified before God through God-given faith in Christ as Savior, is a central teaching of Christianity, as restored by Luther.

Four motions concerning the report were made and defeated—that it be received and published in its present form as a statement of the assembly, that it be returned to the Coordinating Committee for redrafting, that it be referred to the Executive Committee to act on at its discretion, and that it be received and forwarded to member churches for study and comment and report back to the Executive Committee.

During the debate, several delegates objected that a number of the formulations in the report were unclear and might lead to misunderstanding.

An example is the statement, "It is forgotten that baptism embraces the whole of life up to the day of judgment and that the powers of the resurrection are at work in the life and death of the Christian." This, it was said, might lead some to say that Lutherans were establishing a Lutheran purgatory because baptism in the Lutheran understanding cleanses a person up to the time of death.

Another delegate said the report was not a valid statement of the Lutheran heritage—namely "justification by faith—but only a report of group discussions.

So we accept in all seriousness the challenge of the world in which we live today. Nothing can save us from the judgment of God, neither the best of achievements nor the most elaborate ideologies and programs. Our salvation lies in Christ alone who shed His blood for us and gives meaning to our life, so that God's good and gracious will may be done—on earth as it is in heaven.

Still another spoke in German on what he called "certain theological inexactitudes," as the simultane-

ous interpretation put it, and when he said the report should be received without giving the assembly's full approval to it and that it be published, there was scattered applause.

So strongly did one delegate feel concerning what he said were necessary amendments to the report in regard to one statement that he said, "We ought to dismantle our pulpits."

The statement referred to was, "Today, however, the Church finds herself at an impasse as to how she should preach the good news—whether the image of justification is used or other concepts."

The delegates took particular exception to the phrase "image of justification," saying it was rather an "act of God."

ALC'S DR. SCHIOTZ NAMED PRESIDENT OF THE LWF

HELSINKI (NLC) — Dr. Fredrik A. Schiotz of Minneapolis, Minn., president of the American Lutheran Church, was elected as the fourth head of the Lutheran World Federation at the closing plenary session of its Fourth Assembly here. He will serve a term of six years.

Dr. Schiotz, 62, will assume leadership of the international church organization from Dr. Franklin Clark Fry of New York, president of the Lutheran Church in America.

Dr. Fry, who is chairman of the policy-making Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, has been president of the LWF for six years. He was named to the office by its Third Assembly at Minneapolis in 1957.

The Federation's other leaders have been Bishop Anders Nygren of Sweden, who was elected its first president when the LWF was organized at Lund in 1947 and served until 1952, and Bishop Hanns Lilje of Germany, who was chosen by the Second Assembly at Hannover in 1952 and served until 1957.

WISCONSIN SYNOD WITHDRAWS FROM SYNODICAL CONFERENCE

MILWAUKEE, Wis. (NLC) — The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod became the second church body to withdraw from a 91-year-old organization of conservative Lutheranism whose largest member is the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

At its 37th biennial convention here, the 350,000-member Wisconsin Synod ended three hours of debate with a voice vote of 138 to 28 approving withdrawal from the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America.

Recently the 14,000-member Evangelical Lutheran (Norwegian) Synod severed ties with the Synodical Conference. Only two church bodies now remain affiliated in the Conference. They are the 2,600,000-member Missouri Synod and the 20,000-member Synod of Evangelical Lutheran (Slovak) Churches.

The Wisconsin Synod convention adopted the resolution to withdraw "in solemn protest against the departure of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod from the historical doctrinal position of the Conference."

Both church bodies were charter members in the Conference which was organized in 1872 and is the oldest grouping of conservative Lutherans in the United States.

Two years ago the Wisconsin Synod broke fellowship with the larger body. That ended pulpit exchanges, privileges of joint communion and easy transfer of members between congregations. Remaining were an estimated ten joint projects, mostly in the welfare field, and mission work in Africa.

When fellowship was suspended, the Wisconsin Synod noted that it had "lodged many admonitions and protests with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod" during the past twenty years to keep that body from the "path that leads to liberalism in doctrine and practice."

In November, 1962, during the

Synodical Conference meeting at Chicago, a proposal of the Wisconsin Synod was turned down that called for a "peaceful and orderly dissolution of the Conference" since the organization no longer represented a unity of doctrine and practice. A Wisconsin Synod spokesman said that resolution was defeated by the superior voting strength of the Missouri Synod.

The Wisconsin Synod maintains that there can be no religious fellowship or joint church work with other church bodies unless full doctrinal agreement has been reached. The Wisconsin group charged that the Missouri Synod leadership has for a number of years engaged in joint devotions, prayer, and church work with leaders of Lutheran bodies not in full doctrinal agreement.

The Missouri Synod cooperates with the National Lutheran Council in activities of the Lutheran Immigration Service, Lutheran Service Commission, Lutheran World Relief, Inc., Lutheran Church Productions, Inc., and Lutheran Film Associates Productions, Inc. In addition, the Synod coordinates its pastoral ministries in institutions and the armed forces with the NLC. The Missouri Synod also has been engaged in conversations with the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church to explore the possibility of organizing a successor organization to the National Lutheran Council.

FACTIONS HOLD SEPARATE SERVICES IN CHURCH SPLIT

VALLEY CITY, N. Dak. (AP) — The two factions that have split First Lutheran Church here held services Sunday in two separate sanctuaries.

The first group, led by a majority of the church council and favoring membership in the American Lutheran Church (ALC), met in First Lutheran Church and heard a sermon by Rev. Joseph Belgum of

the Lutheran Welfare Society in Fargo.

"They got their man into the pulpit, so we held services elsewhere," commented a member of the opposing faction, which seeks to keep the congregation out of the ALC. Their leader, Rev. Fritjof Monseth, conducted a service for about a hundred people in the local Nazarene Church, offered for their use by Rev. Dennis Page.

No disturbance was reported at either church.

Monseth's group held services last Sunday on the lawn of First Lutheran Church after members of the pro-ALC faction had locked the church's doors. Monseth, members of the council said in a statement, was no longer pastor of the church, which is legally a member of the ALC.

First Lutheran had been a member of the Lutheran Free Church until that body merged with the ALC last year. Since then, the congregation has been divided.

Now, says Monseth, "the folk who favor the merger think things are settled, but other people do not."

His supporters anticipate court action against him, possibly this week. Monseth has been warned by the pro-merger council that he must vacate the church's parsonage immediately.

—Grand Forks (N. Dak.) *Herald*

BIBLE VERSES

"There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death" (Prov. 14:12).

* * * * *

"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any nation" (Prov. 14:34).

* * * * *

"Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips" (Prov. 27:2).

* * * * *

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver" (Prov. 25:11).

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

4/64
STANLEY HOLMAAS
NEWFOLDEN MINN

Enclosed you will find my subscription for the *Ambassador* for the following year. I have enjoyed reading it very much. I am glad to see such a wide variety of subject material included. I think that you have also done a fine job in the area of layouts. (*Thank our printers for that Ed.*) May God continue to bless you in your efforts to serve Him to the glory of His kingdom.

Robert Reith
Tioga, N. Dak.

I am grateful to God that I had the opportunity to spend some of the time at Bible camp at Lake Geneva. It was a real blessing to fellowship with other Christians and to listen to the inspirational singing and also to soul-stirring messages that were spoken. It brought back memories, for it was at this same Bible camp back in 1947 that I came to accept Christ as my Savior. Although I must admit that I haven't lived a life always pleasing in God's sight, yet by His Word that convicts we can come back into His fold.

So as we live from day to day, we need to look at His Word to lead and guide us in whatever we do.

Herman Stuvland
Hawley, Minn.

We are very much interested in your new church body and hope that some day, before too long, there will be one in this part of the country that we can attend. We are very dissatisfied with the _____ and we cannot and will

never accept some of its teachings. We do not intend to remain members of the _____, but we plan to remain Lutherans for the time being, in hopes that there will be, in time, a Lutheran church that really teaches the Word of God in our locality. We know of any number of dedicated Christians in our church, also some from other Lutheran churches in this area, who are not satisfied with their present church teachings.

Name Withheld
Southern Minnesota

We are in sympathy with this Assembly of Free Lutheran Congregations and pray that it may go forward to the glory of His name.

Name Withheld
Argusville, N. Dak.

I belong to an ALC which used to be a Hauge church. Am very interested in your association and have been praying for it since its beginning.

Name Withheld
Southern Minnesota

I am a member of the Lutheran Brethren Church here in Seattle, but would like to follow along with your work. God bless you in your new efforts in establishing a synod. I liked the Lutheran Free Church the way it was when I grew up. I praise God for every true believer wherever they are found. May we stand together reaching out for the lost everywhere.

Miss Othelia Lee
Seattle, Wash.

May the Lord richly bless and prosper your work [the Association]. We will also remember you financially.

Does the Association have a congregation in Minneapolis? If not, could you tell us which one is closest to _____ as we would like to attend services there whenever possible.

Name Withheld
Wisconsin

“A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest,
and poverty will come upon you
like a robber,
and want like an armed man”
(Prov. 24, 33, 34).

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