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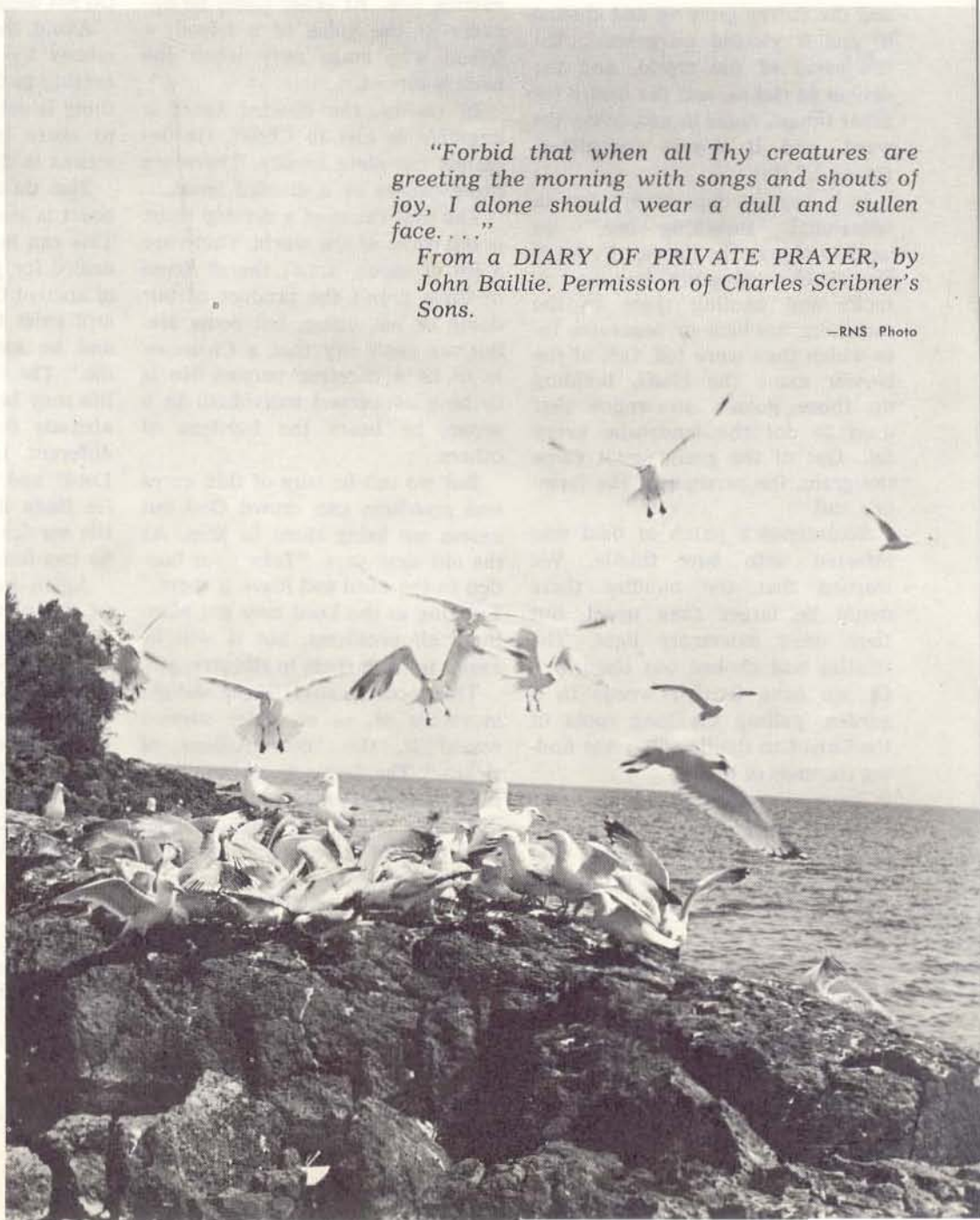
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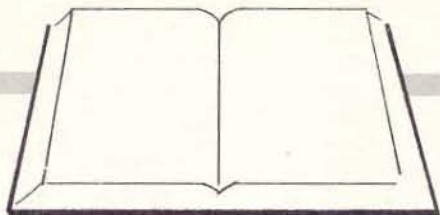
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"Forbid that when all Thy creatures are greeting the morning with songs and shouts of joy, I alone should wear a dull and sullen face...."

From a DIARY OF PRIVATE PRAYER, by John Baillie. Permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

—RNS Photo





According to the Word

THE DIVIDED HEART

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

“Other seed fell among thorns and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain...but the cares of the world, and the delight in riches, and the desire for other things, enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful” (Mark 4:7, 19).

In a bygone day, except for an occasional “threshing bee,” we used to climax the harvest by loading shocks of grain bundles in racks and hauling them to the threshing machine or separator into which they were fed. Out of the blower came the chaff, building up those golden strawpiles that used to dot the landscape every fall. Out of the grain spout came the grain, the product of the farmer’s toil.

Sometimes a patch of field was infested with sow thistle. We learned that the bundles there might be larger than usual, but they were extremely light. The thistles had choked out the grain. Or we have battled weeds in a garden, pulling the long roots of the Canadian thistle and never finding the ends of them.

Jesus said that some seed (the Word of God) fell in ground that was prone to thorns. Like that which fell on the rocky ground, it

sprang up in promise, but it did not last. This time it was not the unpleasantness of persecution which snuffed out spiritual life in the hearer but the subtle persuasions, sometimes pleasant, of a world throbbing with life around them. Satan does not always come like a roaring lion. At other times he appears in the guise of a friend, a friend who stabs only when the back is turned.

In reality, *the divided heart* is one that is lost to Christ. He demands complete loyalty. There are three causes of a divided heart.

The first cause of a divided heart is *the cares of the world*. There are a lot of cares, aren’t there? Some of them aren’t the product of our doing or not doing, but some are. But we can’t say that a Christian is to be a carefree person. He is to be a concerned individual. In a sense, he bears the burdens of others.

But we can be sure of this, cares and problems can crowd God out unless we bring them to Him. As the old song says, “Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.” Trusting in the Lord may not eliminate all problems, but it will be easier to meet them in His strength.

The second cause is *the delight in riches* or, as an older version stated it, the “deceitfulness of riches.” The latter is an apt term indeed. Wealth makes big promises and leads astray, but when the soul is in sight of eternity’s shore it has no answer at all.

To say that the rich are automatically shut out of the kingdom of God would not be true. There have been some notable examples of the godly rich. But in many cases wealth has borne the label “god” for a man, and the real God could only mourn for a lost soul. Do not delight in riches.

Avoid the pitfall of the love of money by recognizing your stewardship to God and how that everything is really His. Then determine to share proportionately of your means in definitely Christian work.

The third cause of the divided heart is *the desire for other things*. This can be taken as the search or desire for pleasures. A philosophy of ancient Greeks, whose adherents still exist today, said, “Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.” The Christian can agree that life may be over that soon, but his attitude toward life is altogether different. He says, “Rejoice in the Lord” and “I will serve the Lord.” He finds that in losing himself in the service of Christ and of others he has found happiness.

Again today we have witnessed in the parable a sidetracked life. How it must grieve the great heart of the Saviour to see *things* rob a soul of fulfillment. But we close with this word of hope, the confidence that if you have been overtaken by these enemies but desire to shake their hold from your life, Jesus Christ can pry them off and set you free to serve Him.

—Raynard Huglen

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OUR PRESIDENT WRITES

by PASTOR JOHN STRAND

What Do We Want?

Most congregations have recently entered a very busy fall and winter program. As we launch out, we ask ourselves, "What do we want to accomplish with our church this year?" Unless we have a goal, the work will not produce the results it should.

The question should not be, however, "What do we want to accomplish?" but rather, "What do we need in and through the church?" Sometimes our wants aren't very sanctified. God knows our needs, and we should seek the "higher good." Each congregation should examine itself to see what is really needed.

What is true for a congregation is also true for our Association. There are many things we want. It would not take long to make a long list of wants—and undoubtedly many of these wants are very wonderful. But we must be more concerned with what our Lord knows we need. Only as we make our goal what God knows we need will the greater blessings come our way.

There is one basic need in our Association, our congregations, and in our individual lives. This need is a spiritual awakening.

The Lutheran Free Church was born in the midst of an awakening in the 1890's. This awakening was felt throughout the Midwest and was the work of the Spirit of God. The awakening was so desperately needed in that day. The

church strife had become very bitter. We hope the strife today won't come to that point in any place. But in the midst of this strife, very strangely, God poured out His Spirit, and a mighty awakening came. May God be pleased to do the same today.

A spiritual awakening will result in several wonderful blessings. I shall mention just a few.

A spiritual awakening will produce holier living on the part of the children of God. An awakening must begin among Christians. Christian living is very low among many today. Many Christians are so much of the world that no one can tell if they are Christians or not. God would have each of His children be a real witness for His Lord. The most effective witness is a consecrated life. We read in I Thessalonians 4:3: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." An awakening always results in a deeper awareness of personal sin, a sincere repentance and a greater commitment to God on the part of Christians.

During a spiritual awakening, sinners are converted. Are all members of our churches Christians? We fear not. One of our Fundamental Principles draws attention to the fact that we must not consider all our people Christians. This is different from the approach of many today. While we believe in baptismal regeneration, because many are not taught God's Word in home and church as they ought

to be, because many reject God's claims on them through the Word, they lose their faith and their souls. They need to be brought back. There ought to be a great burden on our hearts for the unsaved. II Corinthians 6:2: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." During an awakening, sinners seek salvation. There is an urgency in preaching, an urgency in seeking.

During an awakening, eyes are opened to the task before the church. "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are already white for harvest" (John 4:35). Paul had an unceasing anguish in his heart as he thought of the fields, the task to do. Many are blind today. They see only very little of the tasks and opportunities. They need to be awakened.

An awakening results in better stewardship. Paul appealed to the Romans to present their bodies as a living sacrifice. Awakened people do that. They give of themselves, their time, their talents, and their treasures. And as they live giving lives, the fields white for harvest are entered in upon.

Are we prepared for an awakening? I don't know. Perhaps we would be genuinely frightened if one came. Regardless, this is what we need. Will you, too, pray this prayer, "Dear Lord, begin with me"?

MESSAGE OF THE LUTHERAN
ASSEMBLY
WORLD FEDERATION

Helsinki (NLC)—From all over the world we have been gathered in Helsinki under the theme, "Christ Today." We have rediscovered how Christ unites us beyond all human divisions because He puts an end to the division between us men and God. In our daily worship, our meetings and discussions, we have had a new glimpse of the mystery of the Savior who brings us before the living God, takes upon himself our guilt before God, gives us new life and thus sets right our whole human existence for time and eternity.

We are living in a generation which is filled with hope and tormented by fear. In the age of atomic power, jet aircraft and space flight, the final victory over poverty and hunger, sickness and war is thought by many to be approaching. In spite of this, men are living more than ever before in suspicion, prejudice and hatred, and above all in fear of an atomic war which would bring total annihilation. A deep division is that separating the older and younger generations; what young people welcome as a sign of the future is looked upon by older people with suspicion and alarm, and what the older people once held to be essential and valuable has become in the eyes of young people unimportant and outmoded.

The man of today no longer asks, "How can I find a gracious God?" His question is more radical, more elementary; he asks about God as such, "Where is God?" He suffers not from God's wrath, but from the impression of His absence; not from sin, but from the meaninglessness of his existence; he asks not about a gracious God, but whether God really exists. Nevertheless, God's love which seeks out man and which in Jesus Christ overcomes human isolation, fear and meaninglessness, is unceasingly at work. Particular theologies, liturgical forms and ecclesiastical

structures have sprung out of specific historical situations and are involved in the rise and fall of history; but the living God, the Lord of history, stands above it all. Today too He is at work seeking to draw men into fellowship with himself. God's no and yes spoken to this world in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is still valid today. Jesus Christ is God with us in this world.

For this reason we believe that God calls us today to be witnesses to His love in the midst of a world threatened by terrifying possibilities. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to day and for ever"—this means not that we are curators of a museum of ecclesiastical antiques, but that we bear witness to the presence of God through Christ in our midst today. It does not mean that we want to surrender the answer which our fathers gave to the question concerning the gracious God—this has been the intention of no one at this great gathering of Lutheran churches; but rather we are to give this answer anew in our generation, so that it may remain the same answer. For this reason we are summoned to a fearless and honest encounter with contemporary thought. The man who can meet God freely, joyfully and without fear can meet the world with the same freedom, joy and fearlessness. We must face with open minds the new structures of society and critically examine our own forms of organization in the light of this new development. Above all we must meet the many forms of human need with a new and more profound understanding of Christian service; it must be realized, in the spirit of Jesus Christ, who became the brother and servant of man.

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, that God's good and gracious will may be done—on earth as it is in heaven.

District Court Gets Church Row

Valley City (AP) —Court action in the division of First Lutheran Church here has been moved to Barnes County District Court.

The summons and complaint asking that Rev. and Mrs. F. B. Monseth vacate the church parsonage had been filed by a faction favoring membership in the American Lutheran Church (ALC).

The case was to have been heard by Judge T. O. Kroshun here Friday.

In the Monseth answer and counter claim by Attorney H. P. Oehlert, Fargo, it was stipulated the court action was one of determination of the real estate holdings of the church.

Such title hearings must be held in District Court.

The hearing will be conducted during the fall term of District Court, unless set in a special session earlier. Court officials did not set a definite date.

Meanwhile, Rev. and Mrs. Monseth will continue to occupy the parsonage.

The pro-merger faction will continue to use the church building, however. Rev. Monseth and the anti-merger group will conduct services in the church of the Nazarene here.

—Grand Forks (N. Dak.) *Herald*



THE FIELDS ARE WHITE UNTO HARVEST

THE GOSPEL FOR A DYING WORLD
Pastor John H. Abel

TEXT: II Cor. 4:1-6

"For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. . . . God . . . has shone in our hearts" (vss. 5, 6).

The Gospel is the good news that there is salvation for all who come to Christ in faith, honestly seeking forgiveness for their sin. There is salvation for all who repent and believe in His shed blood, full and free salvation. Do you know that the world is in darkness about this truth? Do you know that billions are perishing because no one has taken this truth to them, or has lived it in their midst, or has testified to it with joy and rejoicing in the written Word of God?

Friend, do you dare to call yourself a Christian? Jesus said, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I say?" What did Jesus say? He said, "The gospel shall be preached in all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." And, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations" (Matt. 28:19). "You shall be my witnesses . . . to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

We are living in a crisis-filled world. Now is a day for Christian Americans to dare to be missionaries. No greater challenge has ever been given to mankind by God. Recently I received a letter from Brazil which told of a new movement among the evangelical churches in the state of Parana. It is a co-operative Christian service led by several leading evangelical Brazilian Christians in the city of Londrina. These men, friends of mine from our years of mission-

ary service in this city, put out some pamphlets to challenge Christians to help meet the needs of the poor around them and to dedicate themselves personally to lift up their suffering countrymen before some radical revolution or communism should find an appeal in the hearts of the masses.

Here are some thoughts and Brazilian proverbs expressed in their literature.

The country is only the sum of its families. As the families are, so will the country be."

"Only a dumb animal will not seek to know the dangers that threaten him and the opportunities that are offered him."

"Love builds for eternity."

"Action for vengeance is satanic. Action for personal interest is ambition.

Action from fear is cowardliness.

Action from admiration is subservience.

Action from love is saintliness."

"To confront the hatred of evil, there is only the heroism of the good."

"What is important for a satisfying life is not necessarily to see victory but to have your life identified with a cause that will be victorious."

"To hate the rich is not to love the poor."

"Neither trade your bread for liberty, nor your liberty for bread."

"Revolutions require a river of blood to bring out one truth. Love brings out all truths, but human stupidity continues to prefer revolution over love."

"It is better to give now than

have it taken from you in the future."

"The word neutral means: 'not one and not the other.' There are two types of neutrals—the ignorant and the irresponsible.

"The ignorant is a victim of his own ignorance. He does not have, therefore, any real personal convictions. He is lacking personality, in this sense. He can be called clay molded by the majority around him. The irresponsible is a person who knows something on both sides, the right and the wrong, the good and the bad. Nevertheless, miserably, mysteriously, and unexplainably, he will not be on one side or the other. It appears that his will is paralyzed. He is impotent. He is irresponsible.

"Nature does not propagate the irresponsible or neutral. There is a definiteness in nature. Things are either masculine or feminine. Justice also requires a definite judgment, guilty or innocent—no middle ground. Good sense is positive: bread, bread, milk, milk. Christ was positive: 'He who is not with me is against me' (Matt. 12:30).

"We cannot be neutral in the face of the agony of this hour of the world's history. A real person is opinionated; only jelly goes the way it is pushed. We are called, if not to be heroes, at least to be men. Seek the truth and stand up for it; be not a hunk of clay."

The following story is told to illustrate complacency in modern life among those who have had an active Christian history and heritage. And oh, how complacent we often are; how apathetic, uninterested in the need of others.

There was a flock of wild ducks that made long migratory flights in search of food. They passed over beautiful countryside and high mountains and knew the rivers and feeding areas over two continents. One time as they flew along they saw, on a beautiful farm below, a quiet artificial lake with a number of domesticated ducks quietly resting on its placid waters.

Some of the wild band decided to interrupt their trip and to set

down on the little pond in such a beautiful setting.

The experiment was notable! Their adaptation was rapid. The difference between the wild ducks and the tame ducks rapidly disappeared. The food furnished by the generous farmer was very ample. The wild ducks stayed. After some time they forgot about their background, and their origin in a wild flock of ducks, trained for long and courageous flights.

Many months later another wild band of the same species flew rapidly and noisily over this same little farm. Then the wild ducks, now domesticated, felt a strange impulse to fly away after them. They flapped their wings and attempted to fly but they could no longer take to the air. They were far too fat and their wings had grown weak from disuse.

Have we, too, become fat, selfish and self-centered? This, then, was the question asked by these Brazilian Christian leaders in the city and state where I have served. Can we not ask the same questions of ourselves? Have we lost our broad vision for the whole world? Have we forgotten what our origin and heritage as Americans and Christians is? Do we no longer thrill to the challenge of crossing mountains and seas to conquer new lands and new worlds for Christ? Do we say, like the domesticated ducks, "Why these long, arduous, difficult flights, when we have a peaceful, artificial lake, and an abundant table?"

O friend, there is a world to be won. Half of the people of the world go to bed hungry every night. Over half never see a Bible or hear its message. The reality of our world is a world dying in misery, poverty, ignorance, sickness and superstition. Millions are barely existing. Life to them is but a flight from death. In fear and hopelessness they head for a Christless eternity.

What would Jesus do for these? Can you do any less than give Him your best? Will you be His missionary?



WOMEN for Christ

DO I HAVE A RESERVATION?

This is a question I once asked a hotel clerk. Actually it was a foolish question, for I knew that I did. You see, I had called in ahead of time and requested a reservation. The clerk looked at a list of names and then smiled and said, "Yes, room —." I went up to my room happy because in this crowded city I had a pleasant place to stay.

I do not have occasion to travel much or make many reservations; but each time I do, the thought comes to me as I ask the question "Do you have a reservation for Mrs. Nelson?" what about my reservation in eternity? Have I made sure of it? Have I claimed the reservation God has made for me?

I suppose that often a clerk must say, "I'm sorry but I do not have a reservation for you." By this statement we find that we cannot obtain a room in a hotel or a seat at a banquet or some other special function. Perhaps we may have had opportunity to secure a reservation, but either by neglect or for some other reason we failed to place our name on the reservation list. What a disappointment when we learn that we must have a reservation.

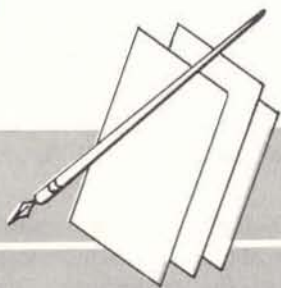
My Bible tells me that God has two reservation lists. We find written in I Peter 1:4, "An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." God clearly states here that He has made a reserva-

tion for me in heaven. This reservation assures me of an inheritance that cannot be destroyed and it cannot be corrupted or taken from me. Think of it! An inheritance that will never be changed by time or circumstance. The important question is this: when I appear before God, will my name be on that list, or will my name appear on God's second list as spoken of in II Peter 2:9: "To reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished"? The Word tells us here of a second list of unjust or unrighteous people whom God will punish.

Certainly there is no question as to which list I would prefer my name to be on. There is only one question that remains: which reservation have I actually made? The reservation for an inheritance or a reservation for punishment?

How does one find out in advance? One must ask God for a reservation. If that is the case, then all certainly will appear on God's list for an eternal inheritance! Sad to say, not everyone will have their names on that list. Many neglect to humble themselves and seek God to plead that He will mercifully place their names on the list of the redeemed. Some try to buy a reservation. But these reservations were paid for long ago by the precious blood of God's Son Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. Many "never get around to it." They put the request off until it

[Continued on page 9]



EDITORIALS

REVIEWING SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS

This is not intended to be any official report from the Committee on Publications and Parish Education. Such a report and recommendations from that committee of which your editor is a member will have to come later. But with the committee's knowledge and consent, we shall share some preliminary observations regarding our review of samples of Sunday school materials published by three non-denominational companies. The companies are David C. Cook Publishing Company, Elgin, Illinois; Scripture Press, Wheaton, Illinois; and Gospel Light Publications, Mound, Minnesota.

Various educational materials are being studied because we do not publish any ourselves. (See note in this issue about the reprinting of confirmation materials.) This lack of our own publications is unfortunate, of which fact we are all aware, especially when no other material (Lutheran or otherwise) is just what we might desire.

Our committee can report that in looking over a considerable sampling of very attractive lesson books from nursery age to adult classes, it found conditions to be as expected and as reported to the Annual Conference by the temporary committee. A summary of some of those recommendations, for that is what they were, may be found in the July 16 issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador*.

We found, for instance, that there is no mention of infant baptism in the non-denominational materials. This is a strange omission to one who is brought up in the Lutheran faith. Nursery materials may include a certificate of dedication but not of baptism. Where there is no infant baptism, all children will be looked upon as candidates for conversion. Now that some children, even baptized ones, need conversion and that it is possible for children to have meaningful religious experiences, we cannot deny. But surely, as Lutherans, we also believe that it is possible to remain in the covenant of baptism (infant) even

though the unfolding of that Christian life will include an awakening experience, as Dr. O. Hallesby called it.

When we use material which is not Lutheran, our teachers ought to be aware of what is omitted and be fully able to set forth the Lutheran understanding. It has been suggested that a series of lessons on the Sacraments be prepared for each age level to aid in correcting the omission mentioned above.

Of the material we reviewed, both Gospel Light and David C. Cook had the first chapter of their senior high books entitled "God in Action." We don't know if this was through coincidence or not. In view of their undisputed conservatism in general, we were a bit surprised at their views regarding science and creation. As an example, the David C. Cook book says: "Scripture does not give us the age of the universe. Some scientists believe the *earth* (not mankind) may be as much as four billion years old. This may startle you at first. But if you will stop for a minute and think about it, it will seem very logical."

The Gospel Light student book states: "Perhaps some day science will be able to determine conclusively the age of the universe. It may even one day describe in accurate detail much of the process of creation." The teacher's manual for the same course says, "We can only conclude at this state of our knowledge that Genesis 1 does not make clear when or by what process God created the earth. The message of Genesis 1 is that God is the Creator who made all things."

We only point these things out at this time to show you that if you do not agree with these ideas you must be prepared to counter them in class if these materials are used. It is very evident that these materials leave the question of "when" the earth was created open. But that is, of course, a debatable point.

Junior and senior high workbooks of these companies dealing with Christian life and its questions are very appealing to Lutherans of what we call pietistic mind. There is a warmth about them that seems to be lacking in some Lutheran productions. The Christian life is set forth as *something that has been chosen* as well as offered by the Lord in His mercy. In speaking of recreation for youth there is a clear understanding that the Christian will by conviction refrain from questionable practices.

The Sunday school magazines for youth issued by these publishing houses, *Teen*, *Power* and *Light*, are very attractive and definitely superior to what we have seen put out by Lutherans. They speak of experienced Christianity and the separated Christian life to a degree we wish that Lutheran periodicals would not be afraid to approach.

We have not looked at all materials available from these companies, by any means. Concordia Pub-

lishing House (Lutheran) materials are conservative and sound, but lack the piety we desire in the high school area. The *Augsburg Graded Series* is dependable and worthy. The American Lutheran Church will present a whole new line of Sunday school material in the next two years. It will be interesting to see what that is like.

If we could combine the good features of all these products we would have something very fine—the warmth of the non-denominational materials and the doctrine of the Lutheran companies. Maybe some day we, or someone else, will find the combination.

EVANGELICALS AND THE WORLD COUNCIL

We don't know just where we belong in the theological spectrum. We are Lutherans but belong to neither the Lutheran World Federation nor the World Council of Churches (as many Lutherans do), of which the latter is the symbol of the ecumenical (stressing the universality of the Church) movement. On the other hand, we are evangelicals and conservatives but are not united with any churches bearing that definition.

Dr. Eugene L. Smith, general secretary of the Division of World Missions of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church, calls them, "conservative evangelicals"—those Protestants who are linked together also by this common belief, opposition to the World Council of Churches. We, being of the same mind, join such diverse church groups as he mentions—the Wycliffe Bible Translators, the Free Methodists, the Christian Reformed Church, the Southern Baptists, and the Missouri Lutherans.

Dr. Smith's discussion of evangelicals and the World Council of Churches, first printed in *The Ecumenical Review*, is presented in abridged form in *Christianity Today* (August 30, 1963), itself a voice of conservative evangelicalism. The article, written by a man who is himself in the ecumenical movement, is very fair in assessing the distrust which we have of that movement as symbolized by the World Council.

We shall summarize in brief form the points he makes, taking care to be honest in representing them. Following, then, are the points Dr. Smith sees us making, and which we do. We shall change his "they" to "we."

1. We cannot agree with the "inclusivist" nature of the World Council and some of its member churches. Some of the member churches are quite willing to ordain clergy who seem to doubt the deity of Christ and the authority of Scripture. We see the "modernist" as a foe of the Church. The World Council becomes a danger because it allows such a wide divergence of theological opinion among its members.

2. Believing that true Christian unity comes

through a shared appropriation of God's grace in Christ, and feeling that many in the member churches do not have a living faith (as among us, too), the gathering of churches together as a sign of visible unity becomes a mechanical unity, not a Spirit-produced one.

We feel (Dr. Smith speaking) that the Council errs in claiming to speak for the entire membership, overriding "the convictions of the conservative minority." The Council is controlled by leadership that is not responsive to "the grass roots."

3. Closely akin to our dislike of the inclusivism of the World Council is our fear of "universalism" in the thinking of Council members. The statements of some who are prominent in the World Council leans toward this. (Universalism is the belief that all men will finally be saved. Or a variation is "it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe.")

4. We believe that the World Council of Churches has great "ecclesiological significance." We think it will one day become a "super-church." (Dr. Smith says that some conservative evangelicals already consider it a church.) (We should note, as Dr. Smith indicates, that the Orthodox churches are among the strongest in maintaining that the Council is not and must not be a church.)

Toward the close of the *Christianity Today* article, Dr. Smith quotes several conservative evangelicals as saying, "We know there are many true evangelicals in the World Council of Churches. There are more in the World Council circles than outside. We have to ask, therefore, why they have accomplished so little." He feels that a major step toward fellowship between conservative evangelicals and the ecumenically inclined is spiritual repentance. Dr. Smith believes that out of this could come the "given unity in which the truth of Christ is fully manifest, and whereby the world may be led to saving faith."

To conclude, we appreciate Dr. Smith's fine exposition of our position regarding the World Council of Churches. We think these are reasons enough for staying out of the Council even though those who favor it will have answers for every one of these objections.

We are ecumenical in the sense that we believe in the brotherhood of all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. But we fear the mechanicalness of drawing churches of great variety as to beliefs, practice and polity, and composed of members (a good number of whom don't want to be there), some of whom have living faith, some of whom are admittedly confused, and others who have no faith at all, together and saying, "This is Christian unity." It is not the unity which will impress the "world" to such a degree that the world will say, "This I must have, too."

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Though I am not a member of the Free Church Association, I am much interested in the movement. I attended your convention in Fargo this past summer, although perhaps I went there more for curiosity than any other reason. I left that convention with a conviction that a group of people who in their sessions took time out for a prayer session are going to be hard to stop.

I know of many congregations which have been split by this merger. I think it was one of the gravest errors we have ever done or committed. Only God knows the outcome of it all. It seems that the ultimate goal and aim of our leaders and some of our pastors, too, is bigness and prestige and we know these two things always go before a fall. It seems now the straws in the wind point Rome-ward, and we ought to know what that will be.

The world is going bankrupt spiritually. We have many religions in the world, but where is our Christianity? Oh, yes, we build big churches to our gods. Memberships in our congregations are growing fast. Yes, religion in more than one way has become externalized, and it is always when religion sinks to a low ebb that men build monuments to its fading glory. But these may not be monuments to the faith which was once delivered to the saints. They may rather be a testimony to its inner decay. When the spiritual life has declined something must fill the vacuum. Maybe that's why the high-churchly movement spread so rapidly through our Lutheran

Church. When the voice of the prophet is no longer heard in the land, the rituals of the priests take its place. So even though I am a member of the American Lutheran Church I feel that those who did not wish to merge should be given a little freedom and not be treated as dogs. (*In his last sentence the writer refers to the trouble in First Lutheran Church, Valley City, N. Dak.—Ed.*)

O. W. Wehlander
DeLamere, N. Dak.

In reply to the question, "What do you think of today's preaching?" (July 16), I would like to voice my opinion and I hope many others will do so.

I am afraid most of the preaching we hear today does not meet the needs of the time. Why is it that pastors are so afraid to come out and openly preach against sin? Sin must be openly exposed if it is to bring conviction.

As Christians we need messages that will convict us, that we may be revived. How much more the unsaved that they may be awakened and turn to the Lord?

I believe if pastors would spend more time in prayer and waiting on God for the message, they would be more led by the Holy Spirit and would not have to depend on their notes. Then we would not have people sleeping in church as we do.

I would like to quote a paragraph from *Herald of His Coming*. I hope all pastors who receive this paper take time to read it. The Lord will use it to bring revival to your church. "Be not afraid, O fel-

low ministers, to preach repentance to the saints! Let us have more heart-preaching, dealing with sin! God's men, under heaven's anointing, learn to name sin, yea, individual sin!

"There must be a new note of urgency in the preaching of today—because the sands of time are sinking, and the blackest of earth's darkest night comes on apace, but it is a blackness that will, thank God, herald the dawning of earth's golden day!"

May we hear preaching under the power of the Holy Spirit in our Association of Free Lutheran Churches. Then we can expect revival and souls will be saved.

Name Withheld
Minnesota

(*Surely there must be some more opinions about today's preaching. We shall be pleased to receive them. Remember that we accept anonymous letters on this subject.—Ed.*)

[Continued from page 6]

is too late. Each time God reminds them of the opportunity to make a reservation they put it off thinking it will always be available. But one day the list will be complete and there will be no further reservations taken. Some depend upon others to make the reservations for them. But each one must make his own. God accepts only those reservations that are made in person.

Have you made your reservation yet? If you have neglected to do so, your name will appear on God's second list, the reservations for eternal punishment.

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3).

Mrs. Vernon Nelson
Grand Forks, N. Dak.

* * * * *

"I hated all my toil in which I had toiled under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me; and who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool?" (Eccles. 2:18, 19).

NOTICES OF INTEREST

About fifty slides showing possibilities for mission work in Brazil are available for Luther League and Ladies Aid meetings in local churches. They are accompanied by a written commentary. You may order the slides from Lutheran Association, Box 905, Fargo, N. Dak.

Luther's Small Catechism, Explained, the Senior Workbook and Junior Workbook for confirmation classes, is being reprinted. A quantity of the Bible histories remains in print. *These books may be ordered now* from Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 7013 Lee Valley Circle, Minneapolis 24, Minnesota.

The catechism sells for \$1.00, the other books for 75¢ each. All orders must be accompanied by full payment.

Postage and handling charges are: up to \$2.50-10¢; to \$5.00-25¢; to \$7.50-40¢; to \$10.00-55¢; over \$10.00-75¢.

The organizational convention of the Women's Missionary Federation of the Eastern North Dakota district will be held at Ny Stavanger Lutheran Church in Buxton, N. Dak., on Wednesday, October 23 (not October 22, as previously announced).

The Lutheran Association radio broadcast from Fargo is now carried over KXGO, Fargo, 790 kilocycles, from 6:05 to 6:30 p.m. each Sunday. The program is under the direction of the Rev. John H. Abel.

The fifteen-minute broadcast over station KRWB, Roseau, continues at the regular time of 8:15 a.m.

FROM THE TWIN CITIES

A group of interested persons met on August 27 of this year at the home of David Hanson, Minneapolis, to discuss the possibility of forming a congregation in the Twin Cities area to be affiliated with the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

There were about 30 people pres-

ent from various sections of Minneapolis-St. Paul. Pastor John Strand, president of the Association, and Pastor Julius Hermunslie, chairman of the Board, were also present to give the group guidance and counsel.

From this meeting a Steering Committee was elected to guide the group until a congregation is organized and a pastor is secured. This committee: Mr. Harold Lieder, chairman; Mr. David Hanson, treasurer; Mrs. William Farrier, secretary; Professor George Soberg (who will serve as interim pastor beginning September 29 until a pastor takes over); and Mr. Joe Mathison.

Morning worship services are currently being held in the YMCA building on Longfellow and Lake Streets in Minneapolis at 10:00 a.m., Sundays. An evening service and fellowship hour is held in the same place each Sunday evening at 7:00 p.m. It is expected that Sunday school will begin October 6; Mrs. David Hanson will be in charge. A midweek Bible study is held each Thursday evening in various homes.

We believe God is working on our behalf in the Twin Cities.

Esther Farrier, Sec.
Steering Committee

BAPTISM SEPARATED FROM CHRISTIAN UPBRINGING CHALLENGED

Stavanger, Norway (LWF)—The general custom of baptizing all babies in "Christian" countries was indirectly challenged by a lecturer at the annual enlarged meeting here of the Lutheran World Federation Commission on World Mission.

"Infant baptism should be administered only where there is a fair prospect of the child's having a Christian upbringing," stated Prof. Olav G. Myklebust, director of the Egede Institute in Oslo.

Although he was addressing mission and church leaders concerned with Christian work in Africa and Asia, one of his hearers pointed out the significance of his statement

for the "dechristianized" Western society as well.

Dr. Myklebust also advocated abolishment of the practice of administering baptism in private rites instead of at public congregational worship.

Stressing that baptism is "a corporate and public event" and "the reception of the individual—adult or child—into the household of God," he asserted that "it concerns not only the individual but the church as a whole."

He also pointed to the responsibility of the church in providing, at the time of baptism and afterwards, an "environment of faith" for the child who is baptized.

On the other hand, he defended the soundness of infant baptism from the standpoint of Biblical doctrine and branded "rebaptism," as practiced by some Christian groups, as "a repudiation of baptism."

Baptism, Professor Myklebust declared, "is administered once for all and is unrepeatable."

He also questioned the churches' insistence upon the necessity of a young person's having submitted to the rite of confirmation before being eligible to take the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Dr. Myklebust's lecture on "Baptism, Its Meaning and Practice in the Church's Mission" was one of two on theological topics presented on the opening days of the LWF/WM meeting here.

The other was given by Prof. Warren A. Quanbeck of Luther Theological Seminary at St. Paul, Minn. It was titled "Revelation, the Word of God, and Scripture."

"Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins" (Eccles. 7:20).

"The words of the wise heard in quiet are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools. Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good" (Eccles. 9:17, 18).

"Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days" (Eccles. 11:1).

"... in six weeks, I was on parole and going straight."

"I was sitting in my cell, head in my hands, when I heard the clanking of steel doors at the end of the cell block. Soon I heard the chaplain's voice: 'Any who would like to hear Billy Graham on TV may come to the chapel.' Who wouldn't want to get out of a cramped cell! I thought. So I joined the gang, and we shuffled off to the chapel.

"To me, one religion was as bad as another. I had grown up in the tenements of New York and been expelled from the fifth grade for obscenity and kicking the teacher. My parents never cared where I was. I left home and I guess they were glad to get rid of me. I got into a gang and became its number-one dope pusher. I got caught. So here I was, disgusted with myself and bored with prison life. I had never learned to read very well, so books and magazines couldn't make my life less dull.

"The TV was on when we entered the chapel. It seemed as though we were joining the crowd in Madison Square Garden. I had been at the Garden for fights and shows, but never for anything religious. I had never been to church, but now I felt I was in church. I didn't have to listen long to hear that I was a sinner and that unless God did something, there was no hope for me. I faced up to it, and that night God did something. Lots of people won't believe it, but even the warden saw the difference, and in six weeks I was on parole and going straight.

"I'm joining a church, and I can read! I learned by studying the Gospel of John. If I couldn't get a word, I'd just stop somebody on the street and ask him. I know God helped me, because I'm just too slow to do it alone."

—Reprinted by permission of
The Billy Graham
Evangelistic Association

STUDY OF JUSTIFICATION FEATURES LWF ASSEMBLY

HELSINKI (NLC) — "Justification by faith," a Biblical teaching Lutherans have for over 400 years proclaimed as and claimed to be the central doctrine of Christianity, is going under the microscope here.

Some 280 Lutheran delegates from around the world are studying a document titled "On Justification" in 26 discussion groups at the Lutheran World Federation Fourth Assembly, July 30 to August 11.

Sitting in on the groups are about 415 official visitors, among representatives of other denominations and ecumenical organizations, including the Roman Catholic Church.

The discussion groups were scheduled to meet in three sessions on August 1 and 2, and a report on their findings will be presented to the morning plenary session of the Assembly on Monday, August 5.

It was a claim of 16th-century reformer Martin Luther that the Roman Catholic Church of his time had largely disregarded this teaching, which means that God, because of Christ's self-sacrifice, forgives the sinful person who by His power simply believes it.

"We cannot today casually dismiss the theological teaching of the Roman Catholic Church as patently false, unbiblical and unevangelical," the study document states.

"Neither can we deny the many and diverse manifestations of earnest piety, charity and concern for truth in the Roman Catholic Church."

"When the Lutheran Church asks what the article on justification [in the 16th-century Augsburg Confession] means for the twentieth century, some of the questions which must be examined are those raised by the Roman Catholic Church," the study asserts.

(The Augsburg Confession is a statement of Lutheran faith and belief presented by followers of

Luther to Emperor Charles V in 1530.)

The document asks, "Is it not possible that insistence upon the centrality of justification is an example of the way controversy shapes and perhaps warps theological thinking? Should we not be honest and courageous enough to open our theology to the entire range of the Gospel [Bible]?"

The purpose of this concentrated study of a doctrine by some of the world's leading Lutheran theologians and leaders attending this twelve-day conference is to seek to make the teaching understandable in terms of present-day reality and problems.

The document expresses a desire to "carry out the theological program we profess, and operate, not only in the shadow, but in the spirit of the Reformers. . . .

"It is no longer possible simply to continue the debates of the Reformation, using the same vocabulary and employing the same arguments," it adds.

The document defines faith in Christ which brings justification as "not only knowledge, nor only a decision of the will, nor only an esthetic or emotional experience."

"It includes all these aspects, for it involves the whole person," it says.

"Faith is man's response to the God who speaks to him in Jesus Christ. It is the recognition that God is the Lord, and that He is right when He judges us. It is trust in God's mercy and faithfulness as He makes them known to us in the cross."

Faith "is indeed a work," it is stressed, "as Luther recognized, and the only work that pleases God. But in its deepest meaning it is the work of God the Holy Spirit 'who works in us both to will and to work for His good pleasure.'"

The "salutary offense, the scandal of the Gospel" is that good works or deeds in any form do not justify the sinful person before God," the study continues.

However, as the Bible itself declares, "faith without works is

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WITH GOD

Begin the day with God:
Kneel down to Him in prayer;
Life up thy heart to His abode
And seek His love to share.

Open the Book of God,
And read a portion there,
That it may hallow all thy thoughts
And sweeten all thy care.

Go through the day with God;
Whate'er thy work may be;
Where'er thou art—at home,
abroad,
He still is near to thee.

Conclude the day with God:
Thy sins to Him confess;
Trust in the Lord's atoning blood,
And plead His righteousness.

Lie down at night with God,
Who gives His servants sleep.
And when thou tread'st the vale
of death,
He will thee guard and keep.
—Author Unknown
(from *Prayer Poems*)

NOTICE

As the Lord lays it upon
your heart to share in our
work, we invite you to send
your contributions to

Treasurer
Lutheran Association
7013 Lee Valley Circle
Minneapolis 24, Minnesota

Please send all subscrip-
tions to

The Lutheran Ambassador
Box 652, Grafton, N. Dak.

A true missionary is God's
man in God's place, doing God's
work in God's way for God's glory.

dead," and as a branch continues
to live and produce fruit as long
as it is connected with the vine, so
the justified sinner in communion
with God through God-given faith
will produce deeds of concern for
others in gratitude to God, it adds.

"The man who has been deliv-
ered by Christ from guilt and
bondage is now free to respond to
the Creator's will. . . . Justification
by faith makes it possible to live
as a member of God's people.

"In union with Christ and His
people we know what we have
been—rebels against God, and also
what we are—men who live by
God's mercy."

The document declares that "jus-
tification by faith enables the
Christian to live in the world. . .
and to face the future with confi-
dence. . . because he is already for-
given by God on account of the
crucified and risen Jesus Christ's
good work."

The study book was prepared by
the LWF's Commission on Theol-
ogy and digests lectures and dis-
cussions on the subject of justifi-
cation which the commission has
been holding for the past several
years. The commission expressed
the hope that through the study of
the document by the Assembly and
through whatever statements or
agreements grow out of it, the
churches of the LWF "will experi-
ence again and with greater depth
the unity which they have in the
Gospel."

"O come, let us worship and bow
down,
let us kneel before the Lord,
our Maker!"

—Psalm 95: 6

"Better is a little with the fear
of the Lord than great treasure and
trouble with it. Better is a dinner
of herbs where love is than a fatted
ox and hatred with it" (Prov. 15:
16, 17).

PERSONALITIES

Rev. Jonas Helland is now living
near Osakis, Minnesota, and has
that address.

Rev. O. J. Haukeness has moved
from Medicine Lake, Montana, to
Everett, Washington.

Rev. Jay Erickson, Faith, S. Dak.,
will speak at a series of evangelis-
tic meetings at Crystal Lake, Iowa,
Calvary and Grant Lutheran Par-
ish, Sept. 29–Oct. 4. The Rev.
Samuel Carlson is pastor of the
parish. All interested persons in
the area are invited to attend.