

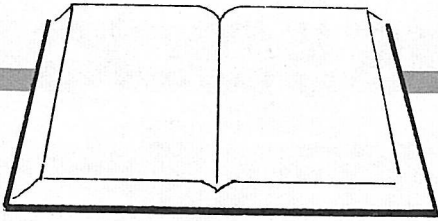
April 13, 1971

# The Lutheran Ambassador



**SPRING IS A TIME OF  
REBIRTH AND RENEWAL.  
A MOTHER SHEEP  
NURSES HER NEWBORN  
LAMB ON A SPRING DAY.**

—RNS Photo



## *According to the Word*

### LIVE WIRE OR SHORT CIRCUIT?

John 1:29-34

"... John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world... I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not; but He that sent me to baptize in water, He said unto me... the same is He that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit..."

John the Baptist lived in a tremendous period of history. Times were hard, corrupt, desperate. Men were looking for an answer, a Savior, a solution, a way out. Even John was looking. God had commanded him to look, and yet he didn't know just whom he was to bear witness of. Nevertheless, he bore witness, saying: "Repent of your sins and get ready for God's visitation, God's salvation!" His was a baptism unto repentance, and when finally God revealed Jesus unto him, that this One was the promised Lamb of God that should take away the sin of the world, John was ready, yes anxious, to send all his followers to Jesus. John said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (Jn. 3:30).

Our world is in a desperate situation

today, much like that description given by Charles Dickens in his *A Tale of Two Cities*. "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us." In the field of ethics we are told that our Western civilization has descended to a level not experienced since the early Christian era (days of John). We are in a period when relative, subjective ethics—situation ethics—as it is frequently called, is on the point of becoming the accepted cultural philosophy of our times. At a time like this both men and God are looking for faithful witnesses like John above. John was a "live wire" for God. Even Jesus called him a "bright and shining light." How often you and I act more like circuits which never go anywhere or do anything with God's good news. We are short circuits of the Gospel.

What can we do? We must start with prayer, of course, but this must be followed up by action, as we see in John's life and in Jesus'. Let us become active in getting the Gospel to our communities. Some are enrolling in area prayer meetings, others also in

home Bible studies. Some are training with their pastor to go out on home visitation teams. We must fight apathy in our own life, for certainly it is a pathetic philosophy for living. Never doubt, do not despair or become defeated, God is still on the throne. John didn't know how God would send His Messiah, nor who he would be, but nevertheless, he faithfully preached his message of repentance and faith.

Sometimes we look everywhere around us with a sense of fear and frustration. We are like the poor farmer who in colonial days went into the field of a large landholder and was going to steal some corn. He looked all around in fear and then said to his little son, "Quick, Son, open the sack!" The little boy said, "Daddy, you forgot to look one direction." His father asked quickly, "Where, Son; where, Son?" "You forgot to look up, Daddy."

We may be doing what's right while all around us we fearfully look at what is wrong, and so we may be making the same mistake as this poor farmer. We have forgotten to look up. Our God is a God of miracles, a close friend and a wonderful Savior. Have you asked Him to be all of these things to you? Will you look up to Him in prayer? If so, you may pass from fear to faith just now.

John H. Abel

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# DWINDLING EIELSEN SYNOD

## AWAITS ANNUAL MEETING

By Charles De Vries

America's smallest Lutheran church body, the dwindling Eielsen Synod, which this year observes its 125th anniversary, is now served by only one pastor.

The Rev. Thore Larson, 67 on April 7, preaches at each of the five remaining congregations once each month. They are located in South Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

He is also president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, official name for the Synod which was organized at Jefferson Prairie, Rock County, Wis., April 13-14, 1846.

It was at Jefferson Prairie also, 14 years later, that the Sandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod in North America was founded, 12 years after its first congregation was established at New Sweden, Iowa. Augustana is now a part of the Lutheran Church in America.

Roots of the Eielsen Synod are traced to a Norwegian immigrant, Elling Eielsen (1804-1883). He advocated a Lutheran low-church position. This is mainly demonstrated by opposition to domination of the church by university-trained clergymen, clerical garb and liturgical services.

On all points Thore Larson maintains this heritage and fits the mold. He has an eighth-grade education, wears a business suit for religious services and conducts worship with a minimum of form.

"We stay by the old way, simple in worship," Pastor Larson notes. "An opening hymn, the collect and epistle for the day, a solo, if a singer is present, and a sermon followed by benediction."

Surprisingly, it is not discouraging

for Pastor Larson to serve a steadily decreasing number of worshippers. He stresses that "we don't say numbers. We just say we're a few left—a remnant."

The last census was taken in the Eielsen Synod in 1953. Then the Synod reported 1,500 baptized members with 1,100 of these listed as confirmed. They were served by three ministers—Larson, J. O. Blaness and J. H. Stensether. The latter two have since died.

In 1965 a membership estimate revealed fewer than 500 members in seven of these Norwegian-heritage congregations. That estimate now has dwindled to less than 200 in the five congregations left.

Larson acknowledges that the Synod attracts very few new people. His last two baptisms were both infants, in 1968. More and more of his circuit visits to Eielsen churches are to conduct funerals. There are no students presently in confirmation classes and little likelihood of any.

He dismisses the decreasing numbers by observing that when people move they often affiliate with another Lutheran church and adds that "the younger people would rather go to a bigger church."

Quickly, he points out, though, that "some of the older members don't care to go to big churches and they stay with us."

Those who do stay, like Larson, are rugged individualists who give emphasis to piety and puritanism in their conservative practice of Christianity. They have a strong allegiance to their Synod and its work, especially missions. The numerically small band takes pride in helping to support mission activity in Japan together with

the Lutheran Mission Society of Norway.

Last year's foreign mission offering totaled more than \$3,000 and was channeled through Hauge Foreign Mission, Inc., which has offices in Minneapolis. Reference to Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771-1824), famed lay preacher in Norway, is made often by Larson.

In a recent interview, Pastor Larson recalled a handed-down story about Hauge which symbolizes the current Eielsen Synod religious practice.

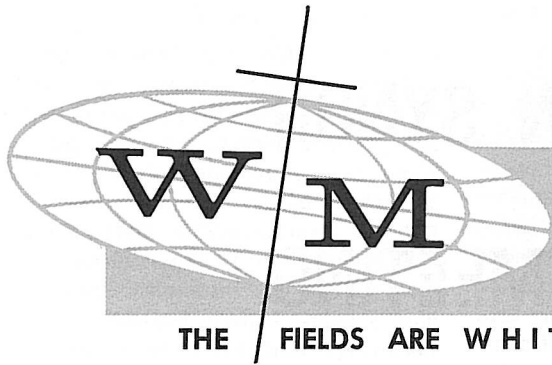
"Hauge's sister said when he was to be confirmed he should comb his hair," Pastor Larson related. "But, Hauge answered that wasn't the main thing, it was the heart that counts!"

Thore Larson is a modest, humble and dedicated individual. He had been successfully engaged in farming a southwestern Minnesota quarter section before he began traveling in 1941 among Eielsen Synod congregations as lay preacher. After seven years of "trial" as a minister, he was ordained on June 6, 1948, by the then Synod President, J. O. Blaness.

Ten years later, at the age of 54, Larson succeeded Blaness in the Synod presidency, an office to which he has since been re-elected annually. His home has continued on the farm, with most of the operations now being carried on by a son, Truman.

Throughout Thore's ministry, the majority of his livelihood has necessarily come from farming since Synod funds for full-time support were unavailable. In this way he has unintentionally been a long-time participant in the worker-priest movement or

[Continued on page 14]



# WORLD MISSIONS

THE FIELDS ARE WHITE UNTO HARVEST

## DAILY VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL IN DECEMBER

by Missionary Connelly Dyrud

The sun shone brightly at 106 degrees between the intermittent showers as we rolled along slowly over the greasy dirt road winding out to Iretama. The Jeep was loaded with a week's supply of DVBS material, slide projector, bedding and suitcases. We arrived at that village at about 5:00 o'clock Monday evening December 14, in time for supper at Arthur and Marie's house.

After a supper of beans and rice we went to the church to get the DVBS material lined up for the first big day. With that taken care of we went back for coffee with Arthur and Marie. While drinking coffee, Prof. Terezina jumped up from the table screaming and was standing on her chair before we knew what had happened. The great excitement had been caused by a big lonely frog who was looking for companionship and happened to hop on the wrong leg under the table. After he was thrown outside normalcy was restored again.

Two of the nationalist seminarians and I slept in the church while Prof. Terezina stayed with Arthur and Maria. The church did not make a very good hotel but it served the purpose for us. Four benches were put together and a straw mattress thrown on top made a bed for each of us. The board shutters (Brazilian windows) were all closed because the bugs at night are very unbearable if windows are left open, so we tried to sleep in the hot steamy church, with the mercury only dropping a few degrees to about 100 degrees at night.

Brazil is one big, glorified Finnish sauna during the summer; between

the periods of baking sun come the steamy showers. But the unpredictable showers didn't hamper the little children from coming to DVBS. After wiping the red mud off their feet in the grass, forty-two youngsters piled into the little church eager to hear about Jesus Christ. Each morning I had a ten-minute devotional and opening exercise. Then there were twenty minutes of learning new songs and singing choruses, followed by a flannelgraph story on the life of Daniel. The children were so very eager to hear and see these stories.

The very good study on Daniel, complete with workbooks, songs and flannelgraph stories, had been coordinated and arranged by Mrs. Knapp. After the flannelgraph story the children broke up into just two groups: those who could read and those who couldn't. The ones who could read had workbooks with the blanks to fill in and Bible verses to memorize. Those who couldn't read colored pictures and memorized a Bible verse each day by rote.

A filmstrip on a Bible character was a real treat for the children, followed by a final song and closing prayer. Thus each day, from 8 a.m. till more or less 11 a.m. was the regular daily schedule.

I don't know if you were aware of the fact as you read this schedule that the little children went the whole three hours without a recess or cookie break. How many DVBS's could be successful doing that back in the States? But I do believe the answer for such a surprising feat lies in the fact that after walking two to three miles in the morning to school and also back again afterwards in the humid heat, the little tykes were not too enthusiastic for rousing games.

We, the teachers, were invited out

to the different homes for the noon meal and also the evening meal. This gave us a good opportunity to meet the folks and also witness to them. Of course, we were served the same each day, no matter where we went: beans, rice, chicken and macaroni and coffee, only the flavor varied just a bit with the spices used.

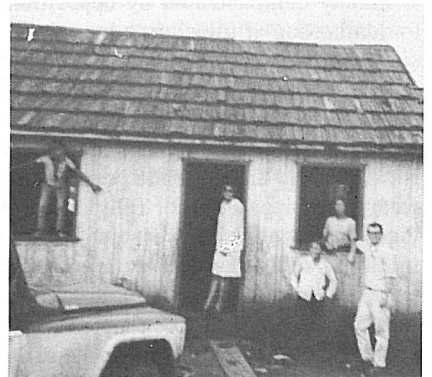
The pupils were given little premiums for bringing visitors with them to school. The premiums were the pictures cut out of the many Christmas and greeting cards sent to Brazil by the WMF who have faithfully helped in so many areas of the work. The pictures were cut from the cards and pasted on colored cardboard, with Bible verses in Portuguese. These made treasured premiums for the children in Brazil.

One little boy brought 34 friends by the weekend and he received the grand prize. And at the end of the week we had over 80 beaming children enrolled.

During the week we gave a laymen's Bible course. This was three hours of classes a night led by two of the nationalist seminarians, Prof. Terezina and myself. This is the second year this has been practiced and the results have been good. Some twenty-five to thirty adults and teenagers attended the classes each night.

Friday afternoon, while visiting some of the many folks living out by the muddy roads, we stopped to visit Jose Perera. He is one of the deacons of the church and he has a big farm. He was in the process of making brown sugar. Sugar cane taken from his farm was run through

*[Continued on page 14]*



Sr. Arthur & Marie's house, with Prof. Terezina in the doorway, Dona Maria in one window and Rev. Dyrud near the window



# THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

## TO YOU ON YOUR CONFIRMATION

**Dr. George Sverdrup**

We are thinking about the congregation to which you and I belong and from which we have received so many blessings. It is the Church of Christ. There we meet the children of God and the disciples of our Lord.

Sometimes we are disappointed in the spiritual life in the church and we ask ourselves questions. Is this really the church? The answer which comes so readily is no, the real church is invisible and this outer organization is only more or less, mostly less, representative of the invisible church. And then we think of the church as the sum of all the churches and we think of those whom God has enrolled in His Kingdom whether they belong to the Church or not. The two are not the same thing. That the visible Church does not truly represent the invisible is true, I believe, as things are. But it is not as it should be.

Spiritual life is invisible. All life is invisible. There is perhaps little difference in principle between the invisibility of the spiritual life and the invisibility of life in general.

The apple tree is visible, but the life of the apple tree is invisible. We cannot see what it is that makes a mass of material grow into an apple tree. Somehow we feel sure, however, that there is a vitally close relation between the life and the tree, so that when we see the apple tree we have in a very definite way seen the life of that tree revealing itself as it is. It is an apple tree life. But the life itself we never have and never shall see.

And then we have the rose bush. The life of the rose bush we cannot see. Apparently it is not the same as the life of the apple tree. We see the rose bush. We know there are roots. We see the bush and are happy in the beautiful fragrant blossom. We are satisfied that the life of the rose bush has found an adequate form in which to reveal itself, that is, to make itself visible. There is a very close bond between the external manifestation and the inner life reality.

To come back to our Church. The

situation there is similar to that of the apple tree and the rose bush. The true Church is spiritual and invisible. It does not, however, have quite the same kind of material as the apple tree in which to express itself. In the first place the Spirit takes its dwelling in the hearts of men and then it strives to give itself form just as the rose bush. But you and I have wills and ideas of our own. We have learned to think along certain lines and we are not passive material out of which the Spirit makes its form. We also are spirit in a sense. There is a conflict of spirit, and ordinarily the Spirit of God has the less opportunity to reveal itself. The result is evident. The outer form of the Church is more apt to be a form of the spirit of man than of the Spirit of God. That the visible Church does not adequately represent the invisible Church of God is so clear that no one ventures to say or think that the two are identical. I believe they should be, but I do not believe that they ever will be entirely so, or even approximately so, here. Still I believe that the Church or congregation is the true form of the Kingdom of God on earth.

It seems to me that our sincerity demands that you and I are aware of the wide gap between the visible and the invisible Church of God, and that we among other things give ourselves also to the task of bringing the visible Church a little closer to its inner reality. This means that we give more room to the Spirit of God in our individual lives and in our church living. When we so do we shall find that in this process our spiritual lives will be deeply enriched.

The more sincerely we take our Christian living, the more consciously we shall give room for the Spirit, and one result undoubtedly will be—the approach of the visible Church to the invisible Church of God.

We may put it this way, too, the Spirit of God will then find more suitable material out of which to make its form—to reveal the invisible in visible form.

It's not a graduation, you experience today,  
It's not a passing fancy, that comes about your way;  
It's Christ, the Way, the Truth, the Life—  
Who calls you just this way,  
To trust Him more each moment,  
He calls you to obey.

He knows your cares and failures;  
He knows your strength is small;  
He sees your need this moment,  
He cares about them all.  
Tho' man should fail and falter,  
To help in time of need,  
True to the end is Jesus,  
He promises to feed.

He calls you now for service  
In the army of the Lord.  
He bids you, "Come and follow Me";  
It's written in His Word.  
He tells you that He loves you  
More than the tongue can tell.  
He lived and died for you, dear one;  
Arose to break death's spell.

God's Word is true, it will not change,  
Tho' man may disagree.  
He calls as in past days He called  
Those fishing by the sea,  
"Come, follow Me, and I will make  
Your life what it should be.  
Cast all your care on Me, dear one;  
You know I care for thee."

Would you this day and hour  
Believe in Christ, God's Son?  
Would you commit your all to Him,  
And claim His victory won?  
Over sin and death and Satan,  
He won that you might be  
His child if you would only  
Believe in Him, be free.

He tells you that He will provide;  
Your needs with you He'll share.  
He tells you He will give to you  
A life beyond compare:  
His life to live here down below,  
Through dark and light life's flow—  
Then life for all eternity  
In heaven for you to know.

—George V. Johnson  
Eben Jct., Mich.

—from *The Lutheran Messenger*



# Luther League Activities

## WHO WILL GUIDE THEM?

by Wayne Pederson,  
Youth Director, AFLC

He got up from his chair and stood in front of the group of 75 teenagers. It was obvious this pastor meant what he said.

"Why is it that as soon as you kids get in church you clam up? Tell us! We pastors want to know."

"Okay, kids," I said. "He asked you. Here's your chance."

The pastors and parents listened intently. They, too, were obviously concerned.

A few brave teens kindly, but honestly, gave the pastor the answers for which he asked.

"We're afraid we're going to say something wrong."

"If we say something, the adults are too eager to shoot us down."

"Before we have a chance to think through the answer for ourselves, the leader comes across with a ready-made answer."

Our youth are involved in starting Teen Age Bible Study (TABS) groups in their homes, churches and schools. They feel a great need to read and discuss the Bible together. They want to relate God's Word to their lives. They want to invite their friends to their group to introduce them to the Savior.

One of the first questions asked is, "Should the Bible study and discussion be led by an experienced adult?"

I've heard two responses. One side says, "Yes, the kids need supervision. They may get in a bind or interpret

the Bible wrongly. They need a knowledgeable adult to bring them back."

Let me share with you some of the more frequent viewpoints, all of which, I might add, are viewpoints of pastors and advisors.

One advisor, a Bible school graduate, says: "I find many of the pat answers I received as a young person meaningless. I had to come to these conclusions using the Bible in my daily experience."

A pastor says: "The kids have Sunday School, confirmation, Bible study and sermons. With such grounding in the Truth, we certainly must trust our youth to study Scripture responsibly."

And further: "When they go to college, they will be entirely on their own. Let them wrestle with Scripture now under the auspices of the church."

One of the temptations facing me as I lead a teen Bible study is the temptation to break the silence. Somehow silence makes us uncomfortable. If I don't get an answer right away, I pipe up with my answer after a few seconds of awkward silence. But that silence may have been valuable thinking space. Some great thinking may have been happening in those alert minds. It would be good to allow ten minutes in a Bible study for teens to read, think, and maybe jot down some ideas.

Another temptation is to answer the question at hand before it is fully discussed. This is like swallowing a piece of steak before tastefully chewing that delicious morsel. I have seen times when I have let the discussion go on without my pat answer and the Holy Spirit has led the discussion to

amazing depths in God's Word. Thankfully, I didn't abort the discussion before it grew to maturity.

One youth group has decided to meet in the homes with the youth themselves taking turns in leading the discussion. The leader may get help from the pastor in his preparation. Youth requested an adult to be present in the next room to help in any unforeseen upset.

Another group meets by itself in the church basement Wednesday night, writes any unanswered question, and gives it to the pastor to answer at the youth fellowship Saturday night.

I'm not suggesting youth activities be unchaperoned. But I am saying youth need to discover among themselves in their own discussion that the Bible is meaningful and alive.

I have every confidence that youth, under the Holy Spirit, are capable of meaningfully applying God's Word to their lives. Let them wrestle with the truth, put it through their own mental and spiritual processes, so they can make it their own. Otherwise we are in danger of producing spiritual babies who have never learned to feed themselves.

Let me add the testimony of Jesus from John 16 (**The Living New Testament**), "Oh, there is so much I want to tell you, but you can't understand it now. When the Holy Spirit, who is truth, comes, He shall guide you into all truth. . ."

Jesus has so much to tell us today. I know the Holy Spirit will guide our young lives as we expose them to His Word.

## SOUTH DAKOTA LEAGUERS PLAN CONVENTION

The St. Olaf - Pukwana Lutheran Parish will host the South Dakota District Luther League, April 30 - May 2. The Saturday morning sessions will be held in St. Olaf Lutheran. All other sessions will be in Pukwana.

Area speakers will include Pastors Raynard Hugien of Roslyn and Edwin Kjos of Faith. Speaking at the youth banquet Saturday evening will be Dean Stendal of Minneapolis, Minn.; Yeddo Gottel, a Brazilian native who is studying at the AFLC Seminary, will bring the message at the 10:15 session, Sunday morning.

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# NEWS of the Churches



Rosedale Lutheran Church

## HOME MISSION BOARD OPENS NEW WORK IN SOUTH MINNEAPOLIS

Rosedale Lutheran Church is a new Home Mission project of the Association of Free Lutheran congregations. It is located at 44th and Pillsbury Avenue South.

The Rosedale Lutheran Church was organized in the early 1900's, and was a part of the Lutheran Free Church until the merger. Pastor Gronseth served the congregation over 40 years, serving until his death in 1970. The officers of the congregation ap-

proached the Association for service in the fall of 1970. They felt an obligation toward their former pastor's widow, Mrs. Gronseth, and desired some financial assistance to come to her. They suggested that the Association buy the church building, and adjoining four-bedroom apartment for the pastor, paying Mrs. Gronseth \$150 per month up to ten years. There is to be no interest, and no mortgage is involved. The Home Mission Board agreed and the deal was closed. The Association began its ministry in the community the first part of December, 1970.

A new Free Lutheran congregation is being organized in Rosedale. It is apparent that most of the new members of the old congregation will be a part of the new congregation. While the group is not large, they are faithful. The average attendance on Sunday morning is about 50 people.

The building is in good basic condition, but some work needs to be done. It is being rewired, at a cost of \$2,250. Some redecorating is contemplated. The building is well equipped throughout. There is a Hammond organ, two pianos, Sunday school and choir materials, and several types of hymnals in goodly number.

The church is in a good area, just a few block off Freeway 35W, linking with Freeway 94. The Association has, for years, been looking for facilities to serve south Minneapolis and St. Paul.

The congregation is presently being pastored by Rev. John P. Strand, assisted by the faculty and students from the Seminary and Bible School. A good growth is anticipated throughout the coming summer and fall.

Rosedale is just one of countless home mission opportunities facing the Association. Pray for our home mission pastors. Pray for more dedicated, humble, talented, and concerned pastors. Pray and give that the funds needed for Home Mission expansion will be provided.

Sketch by  
N. R. Limmer

## JESUS LIVES!

Jesus lives! The broken tomb  
Tells the resurrection story.  
Joy has now dispelled the gloom;  
Sealed His passion is with glory.  
Lightning gleams, and mountains  
shiver,  
He was dead, but lives forever.

I have won; the triumph's His!  
Death is swallowed up in vict'ry!  
Bound the Prince of darkness is,  
Free am I! O blessed myst'ry!  
Mine is heaven fair and glorious,  
Jesus won; I am victorious.

—Johan Nordal Brun  
(Concordia, 1917)



# Letters

## TO THE EDITOR

### LAY PREACHERS

**Why has God used lay-preachers more than ordained pastors?**

This is especially true in Norway.

The Christian people in Norway are this year celebrating special anniversaries of the two greatest lay preachers they ever had.

They are **Hans Nielsen Hauge** and **Ludvig Hope**.

Hauge was born 200 years ago on a farm in the eastern part of Norway. His exact birthday was April 3, 1771. When he was 25 years old he experienced his second birth. It happened as he was walking behind the plow on the farm. He was humming on the wonderful Hymn (No. 315 in **Concordia**):

"Jesus, for Thee and Thy blessed communion

Longing possesses my heart and my mind—"

As he started on the second verse:

"Quicken my soul thro' Thy blood and Thy merit—"

He was completely overwhelmed with peace and joy that passes all understanding. He held his hands in his bosom and said, "Oh my God! My God!"

He was not able to work any more. He unhitched his horse and went up to his room. His mother thought he was sick.

The Lord saved and filled this farmer boy with such love and all-consuming passion for souls that the revival fire spread all over the country in spite of the intense opposition

from both civil and ecclesiastical authorities.

What God could not do through any bishop or ordained minister he did through a common lay preacher.

Why?

Ludvig Hope was born 100 years ago, January 17th, this year. He was also a farm boy, from Masfjorden, north of Bergen. The Lord revealed himself to him while he was working in the potato field.

He was a mighty lay preacher and he used the most beautiful Norwegian dialect that I have ever heard. It was my privilege and great joy to know him personally. He stayed at our home many times.

When he, in the fall of 1954, went home to glory Professor Ole Hallesby wrote about him under the following heading: "En høvding i Israel." ("A chief or captain in Israel.") Dr. Hallesby said, among other things, "Ludvig Hope made his greatest impact as a preacher. I have not known any preacher in our generation who has excelled Ludvig Hope in proclaiming a full and free Gospel with such simplicity and power. It will never be forgotten in our land."

We will together with the thousands of Christians in Norway remember with thankfulness to God these two great witnesses he gave to the Norwegian people. Norway would have never been what it is today if it weren't for these two lay preachers. "They being dead yet speak."

Rev. Lars Stalsbrotten  
Eugene, Oregon



### Winger, Minnesota

April 12-15

Union Lake Lutheran Church

Forrest Swenson, Pastor

Speaker: Rev. Marvin Undseth,  
Shevlin, Minn.

### Mentor, Minnesota

April 18-22

Maple Bay Lutheran Church

Forrest Swenson, Pastor

Speaker: Rev. Jacob Andreasen,  
Hitterdal, Minn.

### Winger, Minnesota

April 25-29

Dovre Lutheran Church

Forrest Swenson, Pastor

Speaker: Rev. Herbert L. Franz,  
Cloquet, Minn.

### Sisseton, South Dakota

May 2-4

Hope Lutheran Church

Raynard Huglen, Pastor

Speaker: Rev. Gerald F. Mundfrom,  
Grafton, N. Dak.

### Roslyn, South Dakota

May 5-6

Saron Lutheran Church

Raynard Huglen, Pastor

Speaker: Rev. Gerald F. Mundfrom,  
Grafton, N. Dak.

There ought to be such an atmosphere in every Christian church, that a man going there and sitting two hours should take the contagion of heaven, and carry home a fire to kindle the altar whence he came.

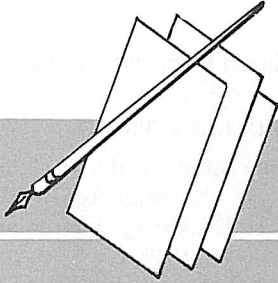
\* \* \*

We sleep, but the loom of life never stops; and the pattern which was weaving when the sun went down is weaving when it comes up tomorrow.

\* \* \*

The real man is one who always finds excuses for others, but never excuses himself.

—Henry Ward Beecher



# EDITORIALS

## THE INCARNATION

“We submit all religious teaching to the test of II John 7-11.”

### Declaration of Faith, I:5

First of all, we must look at the passage to which reference is made. “For many deceivers have gone out into the world, men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh; such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. Look to yourselves, that you may not lose what you have worked for, but may win a full reward. Anyone who goes ahead and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into the house or give him any greeting; for he who greets him shares his wicked work” (II John 7-11, RSV).

It can readily be seen now that the selection from II John deals with the doctrine of Christ and the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, by singling out this passage, is establishing her desire to stand four-square on a correct understanding of the Bible’s teaching about Jesus. This is not to imply that other, Lutherans and otherwise, do not so stand, but rather to warn against those who deny the divinity of Jesus and that He is truly God and truly man. As John R. W. Stott states in the preface to his book, **Basic Christianity**, “If Jesus was not God in human flesh, Christianity is exploded.”

The central theme of St. John’s writing is that Jesus Christ, God’s Son, became man and dwelt on earth. “And the Word became flesh (Ordet blev kjød) and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father” (John 1:14). See also John 3:16, 17; 20:31; I John 1:3, 7; 2:22. The fact of God becoming man is called the Incarnation. It is one of the great foundation stones of Christian faith. It is one of these truths without which there would be no Christian faith or Church. This is not to say that the Incarnation is fully understandable. It is not, but must be laid hold of by child-like faith.

The purpose of God coming to earth in human form is that He might bear the world’s sins as a representative of mankind. Our Catechism declares that He must be true man “in order that He might suffer and die for us” and that He must be true God “in order that His death and His blood might have everlasting power to atone for sin.” To deny the divinity of Jesus Christ or to deny His real humanity is to make of Him something less or other than the Savior of the world, as the Bible declares Him to be. And this is to have the spirit of antichrist.

There are religious sects which do deny those teachings about Jesus and there are individuals in church denominations having correct official doctrine who make of Jesus less than He is. Of these we are to beware. The Apostle says that we owe them no hospitality and if we do harbor them we share in their “wicked work.”

Among those sects which deny the Biblical doctrine of the divinity and incarnation of Jesus is the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

In the modern day “enthusiasm” for Jesus, in which His name appears in some very unlikely places and situations, there must certainly be a denial by some, or at least an ignorance, of His divinity. Care must be exercised not to be taken in by such heresy or to abet it.

It is a central doctrine of the Christian Church that Jesus Christ is the Son of God come in human form, and that today in Heaven He continues to share those two natures, the divine and the human. Such belief is binding upon the faithful.

### STRANGE MIXTURES

Country and western singer Eddy Arnold has just come out with a new song called “Part of America Died.” It is a lament on the death of a policeman, any policeman, who dies in the line of duty. The lyrics are sung against the backdrop of the beloved hymn, “The Old Rugged Cross.”

We certainly don’t quarrel with the idea of a song which honors policemen who fall protecting order in our society. **The Lutheran Ambassador** stands solidly behind co-operation with law enforcement agencies and gratefully acknowledges the brave risks policemen take daily as a matter of course. No one should claim infallibility or faultlessness for the police, but they are authority ordained of God and the death of one of them carries a special sorrow as well as a special responsibility for the perpetrator.

But having said this, we object to Eddy Arnold’s use of “The Old Rugged Cross” in connection with his new song. That most famous of all Christian songs is a spotlight on the atoning work of Jesus at Calvary. All the glory is given to the Christ who took the world’s sins upon Himself. The fourth stanza and the chorus speak of the Christian’s willingness to bear reproach for Jesus throughout life and the receiving of the crown in eternal glory for a life of faithfulness. The hymn definitely is Christ-directed and refers to deep personal commitment to the Master.

The policeman who is killed while on duty might be a true Christian man who at death does receive the crown of life. But it may also be that the one who is cut down as an officer was profane and godless and had no use for Jesus Christ. For him there will be no crown, even though society is in debt to him. All too often today sacred and holy things are brought in to hallow what may not deserve it. We think this is the case with Eddy Arnold’s new song.

Another illustration of the wrong use of a Christian song is the way the “Battle Hymn of the Republic” is sometimes handled. The words of the song are strongly Christ-centered. Yet we have heard it used in connection with the deaths of famous persons, for instance, where the impression is conveyed, knowingly or unknowingly, that it is the spirit of the deceased whose “truth is march-

ing on," whether that truth was one with the Lord's or not. If this suspicion on our part is correct, and there is a wilful diversion of honor from the Lord to man, then that is blasphemy.

And while we are on the subject of music may we mention the strange mixtures of the sacred and the profane which occur on television with increasing frequency. A popular entertainer leads a troupe of dancers through its routine to the words of a song encouraging us to put our hands in the hand of the Man of Galilee. Still another show gives a jazzy rendition, with dance of, "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder."

These things are deeply disturbing. That which is holy is mixed with open ungodliness. Entertainers in the secular field do some religious pieces for what it may be worth to them. People "use" that from the religious world which may be advantageous for them, but are not willing to be "used" of Christ.

A good amount of discernment is needed today to sift the genuine from the phoney. All is not gold that glitters.

### HELPING HAND PROJECT

A communication has been received from Faith Lutheran Church in Kalispell, Montana, announcing a trial project, approved by the Home Mission Board, by which congregations and individuals may give direct assistance to home mission congregations in order that they can obtain the facilities they need.

The contributions, which are to be channeled through the AFLC business office, are to be above and beyond what would otherwise be given to Home Missions and, by the same token, we assume are to be beyond other normal benevolence gifts, too.

Taking the new congregation at Kalispell as an example, it needs a church building. Prospects for future growth are good. A new shopping center will be situated near by. The Helping Hand Project, for that is what it is called, suggests that a given number of pledges over a two-year period would give the congregation something to start its building project on. With this "helping hand," the congregation could likely take care of the other construction costs involved.

The "helping hand" is apparently to be a gift, thus distinguishing it from the Church Extension Fund, which is not mentioned in the letter. The CEF is strictly a loan fund and whatever assistance is given from it must be repaid. Unfortunately, that fund is so small in the Association that it cannot be much help to anyone yet.

Our concern about the Helping Hand Project is two-fold. It seems to us that the plan, even though only a trial run, should have been presented first to the Annual Conference. Let us make use of the annual conferences for as much decision-making as possible. Here is a case of something that could very well have been handled that way. Second, it would be more effective, we think, if the letter about the project had come from the Home Mission Board, or better yet, was accompanied by one from that Board. That would give it more official status. The project, if successful, will, after all, involve a sizable amount of money in a year's time.

The overall idea is good. Something like this kind of assistance **must** be given to churches where the prospects for growth are good. The building sketches are good. Our

point is that the presentation should be made in as careful a manner as possible.

### THOUGHTS ON THE CALLEY TRIAL

Considerable furor has been caused by the trial and conviction of Lt. Wm. Calley. He was sentenced to life imprisonment for the slaughter of 22 women, children and elderly men at My Lai, South Viet Nam, in 1968.

We would like to make several observations. First, we cannot believe that it has ever been American military policy in any war to kill women and children and the elderly, or any civilians, for that matter. That this national tradition was broken at some level(s) of command in My Lai is evident. That some civilians get killed through bombing and some shelling is all too clearly seen and that is another of the tragedies of war.

Second, credit should be given to the American military and the government for attempting to investigate thoroughly the massacre at My Lai and to fix blame for it and for the cover-up that was at first given it. Can anyone in his most fanciful dreams imagine Communists of any country or the Nazis or Fascists of World War II stooping to inquire into the deaths of civilians of enemy nations? So there should be some recognition of merit that our army is investigating the massacre. Perhaps there would have been quite a howl, and rightly so, if nothing at all had been done to try and place blame.

Third, the impression is given through some of the pro-Calley protests that war brutalizes and therefore every American soldier in Lt. Calley's position would have done what he did. We cannot buy that. Nor can we buy the idea that all soldiers would have acted as his superiors or the men under him acted at My Lai.

We don't want to often quote Jim Klobuchar, gifted writer for the *Minneapolis Star*, because of his use of profanity in his writings, but we do present here this thought from his article "The Agony of the U.S. Army": "And now the Army, and the country, has put itself through the ordeal of global humiliation. It has made this examination for several reasons, but mostly because it was right. The world will not forget that, I think."

If we may be permitted one more comment on the Viet Nam war, we don't think some of the charges made against it as being the most de-humanizing or most brutal are really fair. There have been many wars with greater bloodshed and every bit as much human tragedy. Over 8,500,000 men died in World War I; over 1,300,000 of them French and 1,700,000 for the Russians, and all of this with weapons 50 years less sophisticated than those of today. The Soviet Union lost 7,500,000 men in World War II. Two million German and Russian soldiers died in the winter of 1942-43 alone, which included the siege of Stalingrad. Six million Jews were exterminated in Nazi Germany.

This is meant in no way to belittle the sacrifices being made in Viet Nam. Each one is one more than we would hope for. The horrors of the war upon the native population are a great sorrow to us. Let us pray for an early end to the conflict but in a way which will give reasonable prospect that South Viet Nam can live in freedom and peace. All the while remembering that men and nations have suffered terribly before Viet Nam and that nothing is happening now which has not been experienced before by millions of unfortunate people.



13. To what extent did Jesus experience innumerable evils when He was on the cross? (Isa. 53:3-7 and Matt. 27:46)

14. David had enemies who were trying to destroy his soul. What persons or forces seek to destroy the soul of a true believer today? (1 Pet. 5:8 and 1 Jn. 2:16)

15. What person or persons encourage a child of God to remain faithful unto the end? (Jn. 10:14-15 and Heb. 10:24-25)

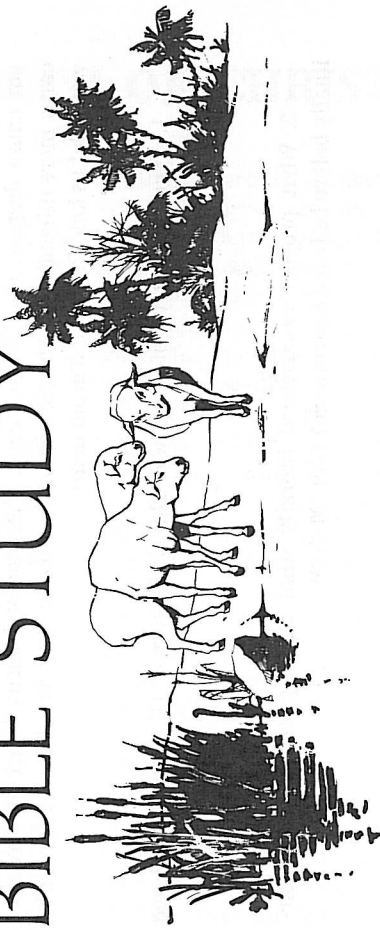
16. Why did David, a wealthy king, say he was poor and needy, in this Psalm? (Ps. 51:17; Isa. 66:2; and Job 42:5-6)

God cannot bring His help in full to others than those who have become cognizant of their own helplessness. Through your painful mortification each day you are to learn that Christ not only puts to death but also makes alive. He is present with you each day to forgive you your sins, to make you happy and secure in Him, to put to death your self-life and raise you up to a new and ever-freshening life in Him, that you may honor and serve Him better with each passing day. (Hallesby)

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.  
When clouds and darkness veil His face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace,  
In every high and stormy gale  
My anchor holds within the veil;  
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.

(Edward Mote)

# WMF BIBLE STUDY



## Psalm 40

### CAN YOU SING THE NEW SONG OF SALVATION?

The person who turns to God is one who cannot be satisfied with false hopes or half-way measures. There is darkness and there are dismal depths in the soul of man. But he digs deep—all the way to the bottom. All sin must be exposed in the light of God, old and new, small and great, open and hidden. But the more he delves, the more everything gives way beneath him. He is given a glimpse into a heart which is saturated through and through with sin. At last he sinks down in exhaustion and despair. But he discovers then, to his own amazement and joy, that he has settled upon the firm foundation—Christ!

David, the composer of this Psalm, has been writing about his sufferings,

but now he celebrates deliverance. Patiently he waited for God to deliver him from the pit of despair and place him on the immovable Rock. One who has experienced deliverance from the kingdom of darkness and has been set free in Christ will have joyful music in his soul. Let us not hide this glorious experience of God's love and release, but share it with people who are in darkness.

As long as one lives, he will need God's lovingkindness and mercy. God's faithfulness is our rock of security over against the shifting sands or loose gravel of human opinion. The Gospel of Christ is the rock on which we stand. Spiritually, we shall always be poor and needy in this life, but that ought not cause despair. God draws nearer the poor and needy heart as a mother cares more diligently for the sick child than the healthy one. Even in our sinful world, let us hide Psalm 40:3 in our hearts.

1. From what type of a pit was David delivered? (II Sam. 12:1-23 and Ps. 69:2-3)

2. What prophet experienced literally what David passed through spiritually before he found deliverance? (Jer. 38:6-13)

3. Which is more difficult to endure and why—distress of the soul or distress of the body? (Ps. 116:3-4; 39:11; and II Cor. 12:10)

4. David sang a new song after he was delivered from the horrible pit. Where else in Scripture do we hear about the new song of salvation? (Rev. 14:3 and Rev. 7:9-10)

5. Name some of the wonderful works God has done for us. (Col. 1:14; Gal. 4:5; Isa. 55:7; I Cor. 1:30; and II Chron. 16:9)

6. What particular sacrifice had eternal values involving the whole world? (Heb. 10:5-10 and Jn. 3:17)

7. When were the sacrifices made by the people of the Old Testament not accepted by God? (I Sam. 15:22 and Hos. 6:6)

8. What should be our response to Jesus who gave Himself up to obedience and blood-shedding for us? (Ex. 21:6; Deut. 15:17; and Rom. 12:1)

Note how the pierced ear of the servant in the book of Exodus meant obedience forever to the master of that servant. How gladly a child of God should give himself in absolute consecration to our Lord and the work of His kingdom.

9. When will a person gladly tell others about God's law and also His salvation? (Ps. 66:16; Ps. 51:12-13; and Col. 3:16)

10. What individual in the Bible declared God's law and God's love to all whom he met? (Jn. 4:34 and 17:26)

Living Gospels translates John 17:25-26 as follows: "O righteous Father, the world doesn't know You, but I do; and these disciples know You sent Me. And I have revealed You to them, and will keep on revealing You so that the mighty love You have for Me may be in them, and I in them."

11. Who else should be challenged to declare God's righteousness and salvation to a lost and dying world? (Matt. 28:19-20; Jn. 4:35-36; and Acts 20:24)

12. What is the daily need of a child of God in order to remain faithful to the Lord until death? (Jer. 31:3; Matt. 4:4; and Rev. 12:11)

Children of God are those people who each day yield to God, who each day cease to dispute with God. Every time the Spirit speaks to them through their consciences about their sins, they yield, and creep to the cross, to the cross of Christ. There they find peace with God instead of unending conflict with Him. And those who yield, God draws to His heart and gives unspeakable consolation and rest. (Hallesby)

## REVIEWS FROM THE BIBLE BOOK NOOK

**TORTURED FOR CHRIST** by Richard Wurmbrand, price \$.75 (paperback)

Richard Wurmbrand, a Rumanian Christian, was captured and arrested by the Communists in 1948. This book tells of the suffering and faith of Christians behind the Iron Curtain. Mr. Wurmbrand asks Americans who believe and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to come to the aid of believers in communist countries. He tells of the faith that grows under the suffering and of the searching hearts that some communists have. This book opens the door just a little and lets us take a brief look at what it is like to truly suffer for the faith.

Mrs. Vernon R. Nelson

**BILLY GRAHAM TALKS TO TEEN-AGERS** by Billy Graham, price \$.60 (paperback)

Billy Graham is giving advice to questions teenagers are asking him. He tells his personal testimony of his own conversion. He tells young people what he would do if he were 17 again. He would witness, have a systematic Bible study, attend church regularly, and listen to his parents' advice, etc. He writes to brides and grooms advising them to be sure to have God's best for themselves. The chapter entitled "Let's Kill the Giants" is very good.

A **WEAKNESS IN THE BOOK**: I don't feel he gives teens too straight an answer. He is too evasive. He doesn't, in my opinion, come out much on separation from the world.

Mrs. Reuben Gunderson

**TRAINING CHILDREN** by Gustana M. Wonderly, price \$.50 (paperback)

This book gives the reasons why parents should start training their children very young about the Lord and the Christian life. Children are a heritage of the Lord and it is our Christian responsibility to see that they receive good Christian training from the time they are born. They should be taught Scripture passages, hymns and choruses. They are to be trained to be obedient as this is pleasing to the Lord. Also the kind of example we as parents are to them leaves a great impression upon the

child. They are to be taught to appreciate good literature and to love the Word of God.

I highly recommend this book. It uses Scripture to explain every point that it is trying to get across.

**ONE WEAKNESS**: I don't believe the author believes in infant baptism.

Mrs. Reuben Gunderson

**BASIC CHRISTIANITY** by John R. W. Stott, price \$1.50 (paperback)

Christianity is not just pious talk, not a catalog of rules, nor a string of moral exhortations. It is the Gospel, "good news," concerning God's Son, Jesus Christ. The great question of Christianity remains "What think ye of Christ?" Christ's character stands out in that He was without sin. Evidences of His resurrection are the changed lives of the disciples of Jesus, such as Saul who was changed into Paul the great preacher.

Man is a sinner and the Ten Commandments reveal it to be so. The consequence of sin is alienation from God and enslavement.

If man is a sinner, he needs a Savior and this is why Jesus came, to deliver from sin.

There is no Christianity without the cross.

Christ's call is to "Come, follow me," forsake sin, deny self and follow Him. This book is deep and takes much thought.

Mrs. Reuben Gunderson

(Ed. Note: A college friend recommended this book, **Basic Christianity**, to me. Now I take pleasure in commending it to you. A truly fine book.)

These books may all be purchased from the Bible Book Nook, 809 McHugh Avenue South, Grafton, N. Dak. 58237.

## ABERCROMBIE CHURCH TO HAVE ANNIVERSARY

Bethany Lutheran Church of rural Abercrombie, N. Dak., is observing its ninetieth anniversary, June 5-6. AFLC president Rev. John P. Strand will deliver the sermon at the Sunday morning service at 10:30. Greetings and special music will also enhance the anniversary sessions.

Pastor Larry Severson is presently serving the congregation.

## EASTERN NORTH DAKOTA WMF TO MEET IN BUXTON

The spring rally of the Women's Missionary Federation of the Eastern North Dakota District will be held in Ny Stavanger Lutheran Church, Buxton, on Saturday, May 1. Registration is at 9:30 a.m., and a program with a mission emphasis has been planned for morning and afternoon.

—Mrs. Donald Jacobson

## GO TO JESUS

Today was too hard for me to bear.  
They told me, "Go to Jesus, He will care."

I stumbled around on this strength  
of mine;  
I took one step forward and two  
behind.

I muddled and muddled, threw my  
hands in the air;  
They said, "Go to Jesus, He will care."  
I stopped for a time and I thought  
and thought,  
It wasn't He who made this mess  
I've got.

I kept carrying my burden all around,  
Till at last I tumbled to the ground.  
I cried and I cried in terrible despair,  
They said, "Go to Jesus, He will  
care."

I humbled my heart, got rid of my  
pride,  
I got to my knees, I called Him aside.  
I told Him my troubles and why I  
was there;  
He said, "That's all right, I really  
do care."  
He told me, "Be quiet and kneel  
over there."  
He'd straighten things out, He really  
did care.

It took some time to clean up the  
mess,  
But I was still and He did bless.  
I saw a stranger with a burden too  
hard to bear.  
I said, "Go to Jesus, He really will  
care."  
He stumbled along on his own  
strength and time  
He took one step forward and two  
behind...

—Mrs. Ronald Hansen  
Wyoming, Minnesota



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large wringer-like rollers powered by a horse going around in circles. The sweet green juice was put in a big pan over an open hearth. Then it was boiled and stirred for about two hours, until it turned brown and thick. Then it was scooped out and poured in molds on big green leaves to cool. Afterward we had a taste of the finished product which is sold in the many stores here. It wasn't bad tasting—but it certainly wouldn't pass the "pure food and drug inspection," because the flies and bugs liked the brown sugar, too, and they were mixed right into the syrupy stuff.

When a batch of brown sugar was completed, Sebestion, the best brown sugar maker, and son of Jose, wanted us to visit his home a few miles down the road. So we all piled into the Jeep and took off. He was a little worried about the road ahead because of all the rains, but I figured we'd give it an honest try. It wasn't long before the road became progressively worse and right ahead of us was a long stretch of mire. So I gunned the motor and floated over the mud until about half way across and finally we ground to a halt sinking in good and deep. I stepped out of the Jeep into mud nearly to my knees and when I tried to pull my feet up out of the mud my shoes stayed fast. After pulling and tugging the shoes finally came but one heel off my shoe is still buried there someplace deep in the mud. It was stuck faster to the mud than to the shoe.

(To be continued)

[Continued from page 3]

tent-making ministries which are gaining increasing popularity among Christians.

President Larson holds worship services monthly for each of the five remaining Synod groups. Four have church buildings—Nazareth, Centerville, South Dakota; Stall, near Jackson, Minn; Immanuel, between South Haven and French Lake, Minn.; and Bethania, Lodi, Wis. One congregation at Taylor, Wis., meets in members' homes.

Offerings are taken at each service in all the congregations except Stall

Lutheran, where an offering is gathered once a year.

A framed sign "Rules for Today" in the entry of Stall church demonstrates the group's attitude toward a direct approach to Christianity: "Do nothing that you would not like to be doing when Jesus comes; go to no place where you would not like to be found when Jesus comes; say nothing that you would not like to be saying when Jesus comes."

Annually a conference of the Eielsen Synod is held. There officers are elected, testimony to Christian living is given by most of the persons who come, and the President's report is generally a sermon based mainly on a number of Bible readings.

Worthy of note is that most historical references to the small Lutheran church body spell the founder's last name "Eielsen," whereas an "o" is substituted for the third "e" when the name is used within the Synod's membership: Elling Eielson and Eielson Synod. The printed copy of the "Old Constitution" also lists the founder's signature as Elling Eielson.

Present Eielsen Synod officers besides Larson as president are Martin Bystol, Lodi, Wis., vice president; Gladys Bystol, Lodi, secretary; and Thomas Johnson, Centerville, S.D., treasurer.

The next Eielsen Synod annual conference is scheduled for the rural Stall Lutheran church, some five miles northwest of Jackson, on June 5 and 6, 1971.

News Bureau, LCUSA

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The convention theme is "Walking in the Light." I John 1:5-10 is the Scripture basis for the various messages.

At the Saturday 8 p.m. service a colored documentary motion picture titled "Martyrs for Christ" will be shown. The film shows conditions under Communism. Parts of the film have been smuggled from behind the Iron Curtain.

We anticipate a larger than heretofore turn-out because a new Association congregation in Ortley will have a delegation of young people at the convention.

Our Savior wants to send showers

of blessing upon our convention. May we open our hearts to receive them.

—Karl Stendal  
Host Pastor

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## DO THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST

This biblical injunction of the Apostle Paul to Timothy declares what seems to have been a major concern in the apostolic church. "Do the work of an evangelist," he says. This charge to Timothy, and to the first-century church, is equally relevant to the Christian Church today. Admittedly, there is considerable emphasis given to "evangelism," at least in some segments of the church today. Yet, the specific ministry of the "evangelist" seems to be somewhat neglected.

The New Testament defines the roll of the evangelist as a specific calling or as a God-given gift. In His infinite wisdom and grace, God calls some as evangelists, others as pastors, teachers, etc. (Ephesians 4:11). Rare individuals may possess gifts and abilities in more than one field, but more often the gift of an evangelist is a specific endowment. The gifts of grace are all essential to the building up of the body of Christ. We, in the AFLC, who place a strong emphasis on "free and living congregations," ought of all churchmen to recognize the need of the evangelist and evangelistic activity. Our Fundamental Principles stress the importance of the "quickenings preaching of the Word of God," recognizing that not all church members are "living members," that is, true believers.

There is a vital ministry needed in the church beyond the preaching-teaching program of the pastor. It is the ministry of the evangelist. His is the "voice of a trumpet" calling for repentance. His is the task of proclaiming the "evangel," the Good News of salvation in Christ. Though the content of his message be essentially the same, he will be an effective supplement to the pastor's outreach. His presence is as that of a reaper, come to assist in the spiritual harvest.

Evangelistic meetings have long been an accepted custom in most of

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# CHURCH-WORLD NEWS

## BIBLE WORK OPENING UP IN COMMUNIST-DOMINATED COUNTRIES

New York — New openings for Bible work in Eastern Europe make work in communist-dominated countries more "encouraging" than in many years, the Rev. Sverre Smaadahl of Geneva, Switzerland, regional secretary consultant for Eastern Europe for the United Bible Societies, declared here.

Mr. Smaadahl, a Norwegian national who received his master of sacred theology degree from Yale Divinity School, was in this country for administrative meetings of the United Bible Societies held at the American Bible Society, 1865 Broadway. The United Bible Societies is a worldwide fellowship of 50 national Bible Societies.

While the extent of Bible work varies, Mr. Smaadahl said it is carried on in all Eastern European countries, with the exception of Albania, where "religion is forbidden."

Because there have been no fresh supplies of Scriptures for decades in the majority of the countries and churches have lost many of their privileges, he said, "Christians in Eastern Europe have experienced what it is to live under the Cross." Christianity "has survived."

In a "most realistic way" churches have been thrown back to the Biblical message as the final basis for Christian faith and life. "A deep love for the Bible has emerged, which has made the deep and uncovered needs for Holy Scriptures even greater," he continued.

Enumerating new openings last year Mr. Smaadahl said the United Bible Societies has contact with 13 translation projects including four in Yugoslavia, three in the Soviet Union, two in Czechoslovakia and one each in Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland and Rumania.

(Some countries have more than one translation project because several languages are spoken there.)

## DR. J. A. AGRIMSON ELECTED HEAD OF ALC'S SOUTHEASTERN MINNESOTA DISTRICT

Dr. J. Elmo Agrimson, Bismarck, N. Dak., was elected president of the Southwestern Minnesota District of the American Lutheran Church in a convention held at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn., in March. He will succeed Dr. Melford Knutson, Minneapolis, who will retire in June.

Mr. Agrimson, who has been serving as president of the Western North Dakota District, defeated the Rev. Erling M. Tungseth, Rochester, Minn., a former pastor in the Lutheran Free Church, on the fourth ballot.

A native of Peterson, Minn., Dr. Agrimson grew up at Sebeka, Minn., and in Harding County, S. Dak. He is a graduate of Augustana College, Sioux Falls, S. Dak., and Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. He served parishes at Reeder and Tioga, N. Dak.

Mr. Agrimson is married to the former Cordelia Huglen and the couple has three children: Ione, Mrs. Mark Hanson, New York City, and Robb and Renae at home. The family will move to the Twin Cities sometime next summer.

(Ed. Note: Mrs. Agrimson is a sister of your *Ambassador* Editor.)

## PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY FOR OSLO CELEBRATIONS

Oslo (LWF) — Three weeks of religious and cultural events are in preparation here for the celebration of the 900th anniversary of the Diocese of Oslo, starting on Ascension Day, May 20.

State dignitaries headed by His Majesty King Olav V, leaders of Parliament and church officials from Norway and neighboring countries will take part in opening ceremonies in the Cathedral of Oslo.

Guests expected to attend include the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Michael Ramsey; Lutheran Bishop Hanns Lilje of Hannover, Germany,

general secretaries of ecumenical organizations and leading Nordic bishops.

The celebration is being designed with two high points—the opening three days when several guests are invited to speak in churches of the diocese, and the concluding day, June 13, which also marks the end of the annual meeting of the Lutheran World Federation Executive Committee.

Several participants from Africa, Asia and Latin America also are invited to speak at public events and services and other programs will include historic plays, lectures at the University and concerts.

Organizers have expressed the hope that the celebration will underscore the obligations of the church for the care of the nation and the world.

Leader of the preparations is Bishop Fridtjov Birkeli, Primate of the Church of Norway.

## EMIGRATION DECREASES POLISH CONSTITUENCY

Frankfurt, West Germany—(LWF) —Due to the agreement concluded between Polish and West German governments, heavy emigration of Germans still resident in Poland from that country to West Germany will produce a loss of over 10 per cent of the present constituency of Poland's Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession (Lutheran).

Prof. Woldemar Gastpary of Warsaw's Christian Academy made this assertion at a conference here.

(The Lutheran chancery in the Polish capital reported its membership to the Lutheran World Federation information bureau at 80,000 this year —20 per cent from its 1970 figure.)

The Polish scholar noted that the emigration of an estimated 10,000 of the Polish Lutheran Church's parishioners will affect it considerably.

Heaviest emigration regions are Masuria (formerly in Eastern Prussia) and Upper Silesia. The great majority of Germans coming to West Germany from Poland are Roman Catholics.

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the congregations of the Association. Triumph Lutheran, at Ferndale, is no exception. Recently we had the opportunity of having Evangelist Knute Heggstad with us. Mr. Heggstad is in the employ of the Hauge Lutheran Innermission Federation. He is a very effective preacher of the Law and the Gospel. Issues of sin and salvation, heaven and hell, were presented in tones of urgency. No one, hearing his message, could go away in religious delusion. When the services ended, we sensed a new spiritual climate in the congregation. It seemed much more open for the pastor to preach and teach the Word. Hearts were strangely warmed. Fallow ground had been exposed to the cutting edge of the plow. Hearers were now more receptive and responsive to God's Word than before. These are some of the favorable results from a series of

evangelistic meetings. True, not all results are visible at the moment. The consistent preaching of God's Word cannot be evaluated by the number of "recorded decisions" alone. In fact, we must often leave the statistics to the Lord. We just praise God for on-going blessings after the evangelist himself has come and gone.

A concerned pastor once remarked at the close of an evangelistic service where there seemed to be little visible response, "Thank God, the Holy Spirit doesn't close His office at 9 o'clock on Sunday evening." The faithful preaching of God's Word will continue to bring forth fruit as the Holy Spirit energizes that Word. Let us heed the exhortation given Timothy long ago, "Do the work of an evangelist." God is still pleased "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1:21).

Pastor J. G. Erickson

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