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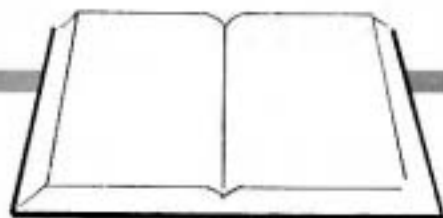
No. 16

# *LUTHERAN*

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SUNFLOWER



## *According to the Word*

Mark 4:26-29—The Kingdom of God is like the growing grain.

When we studied history in our school days, we learned that Alexander had a great kingdom. It covered the entire region around the Mediterranean Sea. But it was interesting to note how this kingdom grew.

Through the work of the warriors and the screams of the dying, the kingdom of Greece was established. That, my friends, is the way for all earthly kingdoms to grow. Look at our modern kingdoms today, how did they grow? Wasn't it by war and bloodshed, the bombers streaking across the sky, the tanks roaring across the earth, shells and bombs bringing destruction upon the cities and people? The moaning and crying of the dying—yes, that is how the kingdoms of the earth grew and grow.

In contrast to this, let us think about a kingdom which is much greater than that which has ever been or will be established. That, my friends, is the kingdom of nature. It doesn't take the roar of the bombers, the crying of the dying and wounded to produce this beautiful, peaceful and calm kingdom of nature; nor does it take the explosion of bombs or the voice of a human being to produce fine grain on our plains.

This is a kingdom of very quiet growth. In our foregoing scripture reading Jesus doesn't go after warriors of His day to start His kingdom on its way. In this lesson Jesus wants to explain His Kingdom to us by comparing it to nature. This kingdom is around us and we can see it. Jesus uses this kingdom of nature in contrast to set forth the mysteries of the kingdom of God, which man did not seem to know about.

But let us not dwell on how the kingdom of nature grows; rather, let us consider the growth of the kingdom of God. In our lesson Jesus wants to give us the assurance that if we but sow the seed it will grow. We won't have to worry over it anymore, "for the seed will grow and come forth of itself."

And the same is true with the Word of God. Jesus wants to encourage those who are acquainted with the Word. We may become discouraged in our laboring because we do not see results right away. Jesus tells us to be patient, as we find the example in our lesson. The seed came forth automatically; God made it grow and it took patience.

This same patience holds true in the kingdom of God. We must have patience. Jesus did. He had the entire world in which to sow His seed. We would think that Jesus would try to run up and down the

entire land and shout His message, and get His seed all over at once. But no! Jesus did not work that way. He restricted His mission entirely to the Jews and from there He knew His seed would spread by itself. It was difficult to see the progress the kingdom of heaven was making at times. The best fields were His disciples, but they showed so little fruit; the work was slow, but it took patience. The same was met by the Church of the Reformation; the same is true today.

God's Word will grow if we but sow the seed. Our church did not spring up all at once. It took time, it took patience, so we must not become discouraged when things do not always go as we think they should. Take a look at the people around about us; they seem to be so indifferent; the missions seem to be at a stand still. The heathen nations are working hard to disrupt the sowing of the seed, but be not discouraged, the seed will grow. It has come from God, and with God's power it cannot fail. He has promised us that it will not return unto Him void. What a comfort it is for us to be assured of that fact.

Therefore let us labor and sow His Word in all truth and purity. Let us do what we can and God will do what we cannot do. That is why God likens His kingdom to the growing grain.

G. H. Spletstoesser

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# THE WORLD CHURCH

SIXTH IN A SERIES OF MESSAGES ON THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES, entitled, "The World Church," preached at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Cloquet, Minnesota, by Pastor Herbert L. Franz.

Another one of the signs which will usher in the Second Advent of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be the rise of the World Church. This sign of the coming World Church is shaping up right before our very eyes. We live in the day of church mergers. Even the Roman church is making overtures to the Protestants to "come back home" and all will be forgiven.

There have been many reasons given for the tremendous desire for church unity today. One reason is the desperate moral and spiritual condition of the world. The love of many has waxed cold and as a result apostasy has gripped many a church. The church is frustrated and unable to cope with the moral deterioration of this generation. She is seeking a way out and she believes that uniting all of the churches will override the moral decadence of our generation.

Another reason for church unity is the mounting tide of materialism, atheism, cynicism and crime prevalent in our land today. This goes hand in hand with the "love of many waxing cold." For when love for the Lord abates then the love for sin abounds. Then add to this the aggressive missionary motives among certain non-Christian religions and you have reason for church officials to be alarmed.

We must admit that the church is a very impotent force today. We also admit that we need a stirring in the church. However, some people think that revival is synony-

mous with church unity. History, however, has taught us many lessons and one of these lessons is this: whenever the Church becomes BIG she soon becomes a repository of pride and power and gives very little attention to the spiritual needs of men. She no longer seeks the power of the Holy Spirit. She loses her sense of mission, which is to bring sinful men to Jesus Christ. She begins to compromise her basic convictions in order to appease the convictions of all denominations. What is the result? We have a church composed of complacent and indifferent members who have never been to Calvary and have never experienced a Holy Spirit-inspired work of grace in their hearts.

The Bible clearly points to the day when there will be a World Church. If we would have said this 20 years ago people would have said that we were out of our minds. But not so today. In many communities already, ecumenical services are being held. In the book of Revelation, 17:1-6; 13:8, 11-15, one finds set forth the four stages which will characterize the religious world in the end times. In the end times there will come a great world union of churches and religions symbolized by the figure of the "great harlot." It is on the horizon already. Secondly, this religious union will accept the support and protection of the world state, as symbolized by the "beast" on which the "harlot" rides. Thirdly, the religious union will swiftly be brought into complete subjection to the world state which supported it (Rev. 17:16-18). Fourthly, the final stage will see the absolute supremacy of the world state, the deification of its head, and the worship of this man ob-

jectified by means of a great "image" as revealed in Revelation 13.

The Lord would want every true child of God to come out from among such a set-up. In Rev. 18:4-6, we read, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

But sad to say, those who belong to the World Council of Churches, those who favor ecumenism, brand any division in Christendom as being sinful. Advocates of the World Church say a "divided church cannot proclaim the Gospel with authority to the world." They also say that one of the purposes of Christ's atoning death on Calvary was to gather all people into One World Church.

But what a devilish deception! Nowhere in God's Word are we taught that the unity of God's people must be an organic, visible church union of all churches into one great world organization. (This will happen in the end times but Christ never advocated it for His followers.) The unity which Christ speaks of in John 17 when He prays "that they might be one," is the unity of believers and not a merger of external church denominations into one great World Church.

I fear a World Church, not only what such a powerful Church did to Christians in the early history of the Church, but what it will do in the day preceding the Second Advent of Christ. It has been proved that when massive religious systems, or for that matter, mammoth secular organizations, become so powerful that they dominate all else, they then inevitably become intolerant and intolerable.

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# The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

by Mrs. T. L. Sand  
Spicer, Minnesota

If it were not for the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives, none of us could say, "I know I am saved and cleansed in the precious blood of Jesus," for II Cor. 12:3 makes it plain that no man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Father's love gift to every believer in answer to Jesus' prayer in John 14:16-17. Also in Romans 8:16 we read, "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

Every step in the experience of the new birth is wrought by the Holy Spirit in our lives. He first convicts us of sin (John 16:8). Without His ministry we would sleep on in our unconverted state until we closed our eyes in death and were lost for all eternity. Let us thank God for the convicting power of the Holy Spirit—showing us from the Word that we are sinful and unclean, yes, completely undone; our mouth is stopped and we become guilty before God. The Holy Spirit shows us also that the greatest sin would be to neglect receiving the "great salvation" so freely provided for such sinners who have nothing to bring to God. We become beggars and then the Holy Spirit leads us to Calvary. What a sight we see there! The very Holy Son of God himself taking the sinner's place and by faith we receive Him "who

knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God IN HIM" (II Cor. 5:21).

"I came believing, His love receiving  
Oh, how the bells of heaven did ring,  
I came confessing, new life possessing  
And now my heart can truly sing."

The Holy Spirit, as our Comforter, comes to indwell the true believer the moment he or she receives the Lord Jesus as personal Savior. But we need to yield ourselves anew each day to His leading and let Him control every area of our hearts and lives. Wonderful words of assurance are found in verses such as these: "But as many as received him to them gave he the power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12), and "The blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). The Holy Spirit reveals to us that the righteousness of Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross truly becomes ours by faith. God lays them to our account and we are free from the guilt and condemnation of sin in Jesus for He Himself said, "If the son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." The feeling of guilt and judgment because of our old sinful nature is gone, for the Bible says in John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me,

hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." No wonder there is a new song in the heart and on the lips as the Psalmist said, "And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." We can never cease to praise God for this wondrous salvation of which we, as saved sinners, have become partakers.

As the Comforter of the Christian, how blessed it is to experience His comfort from the Word in times of sorrow, testing, and trials of all kinds in this world of which Jesus said we are not a part, but we are kept from defeat if we will only obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Our attitude toward His promptings must be that of obedience if we are to experience the "abundant life" which Jesus promises shall be the portion of every Christian. We are His witness of these things; and so it is the Holy Spirit whom God hath given to them that obey Him. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

Are we obedient when the Holy Spirit reminds us of our failures and the sins of jealousy, gossip, backbiting and every known sin that grieves the Spirit of God? Are we confessing them to Jesus without reservation that His blood can cleanse us from them in order that we might have clean channels through which His grace can flow? Are we confessing our faults to one another and praying for one another as we are admonished to do in James 5:16? Christians cannot afford to be at odds one with another and grieve the Holy Spirit when earth's millions are waiting to hear the Gospel through our consecrated and cleansed lives. Let us be quick to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God that we might be fruitful and bring glory to our wonderful Savior, sharing Him with others, for the days are evil and dark. He is counting on us not to fail Him in reaching lost souls before He comes.





## I HAVE A QUESTION

Several questions have been received in which there is a request for the explanation of a passage in Scripture. We group several of these together today and attempt an explanation. To us most of these do not pose too much of a problem, as they seem to be self-explanatory. It may be that we have missed the point which seemed to puzzle the person who sent in the question. We do not aim to give a complete exposition of the passage in question, for that would more properly belong to a Bible study section.

1. I Timothy 5:8: "If any one does not provide for his own relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

A person who shirks his earthly responsibility cannot be a consistent Christian. Paul has been speaking in the preceding verses of duties that Christians have toward members of their families, especially then to a destitute parent. Children are obliged to make provisions for such. Failing to do so is the same as departing from the faith. He cannot be a Christian. It may seem more honorable to go on a preaching mission and let the members of one's family shift for themselves or be cared for by others, but God thinks otherwise.

One needs to be aware, however, that there are instances in which a son or daughter is unable to provide adequate care for ill or aging parents. So this passage of Scripture cannot be used to cudgel such into compliance, or read them out of the fellowship of Christians. Furthermore, in our day and coun-

try society has through aid and pension programs provided the means for the welfare of the aged. Yet it must be remembered that there is more to complete care for the older folks than simply to furnish them with bed and board in their declining years.

2. Ecclesiastes 1:18: "For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow."

Solomon wrote this, and he should know; he was the wisest of men in his day. It could be that this verse has furnished the background for the common saying that "ignorance is bliss."

It is a fact of life, however, that an increase in information places additional responsibilities on the shoulders of the one who has the knowledge. Chorazin and Bethsaida were more culpable than Tyre and Sidon because of their greater information and opportunities. Is it not also so in a local congregation? The people who have had greater opportunities of training and gathering knowledge have the greater responsibilities? They are placed on nearly every Board and Committee in the church, and find that they have simply added more grief to their lives. But the responsibility is upon them whether they like it or not. Knowledge increases grief.

We doubt that anyone would seriously contend that the troubles and sorrows in the world today are the result of the greater knowledge people have today than was the case in previous generations.

3. Proverbs 29:15: "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child

left to himself brings shame to his mother."

Spare the rod and spoil the child, we say. A child simply needs to be reproofed if he is to develop into a respectful and respectable person. Some may need it more than others, and the forms of punishment may differ from one parent and child to another. One thing we know from both Scripture and experience is that a child left to himself and subjected to no restraint will grow up to be an impossible adult. It is in the best interest of both the child and society that his natural tendencies are curbed and directed early in his life.

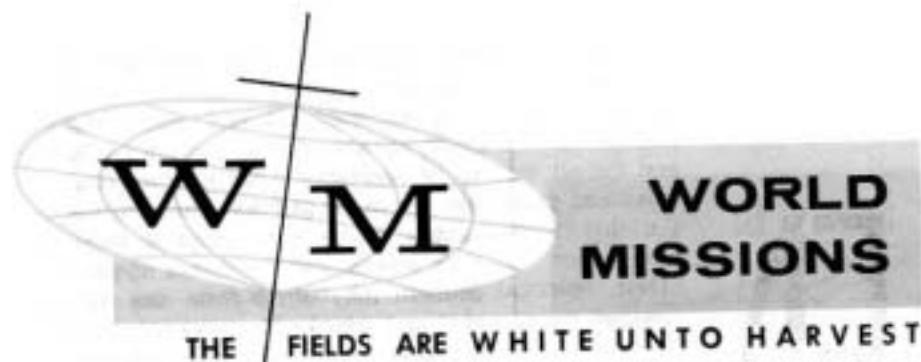
But punishment is not the only factor in child training. Encouragement toward what is good and right is fully as necessary. Perhaps we could say that the rod should be applied only as a last resort when all else fails, while encouragement should be given as much and as often as daily bread. The child whose entire conduct is fashioned by fear of punishment often develops into a warped personality. We have met persons whose chief memories from childhood are that father and mother always scolded or punished. Such have little respect for their parents later in life. Let the child know that you love him, and apply the rod only when it hurts you more than it does the child. It will harm no one to let the child see you weep too when you have punished him.

4. What is implied by the three negatives in John 1:13? "Who were born, not of blood nor the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

One answer could be that the piling up of negatives in Greek simply strengthens the negative. It is not so in English. Here two negatives make a positive—like "He did not want not to go." That means he wanted to go. Three negatives make it positive again—"He didn't not want not to go."

Sometimes in English we strengthen the negative by using the otherwise senseless phrase "at

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### NOGALES CHAPEL DEDICATED

The new Triumph Lutheran Church, Nogales, Arizona, was dedicated Sunday, July 9, 1967. Rev. Harold Schafer, Mission Director of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, was the speaker and directed the service of dedication.

The 44 by 60 foot structure is very serviceable and shows good planning. The work of completing the interior of the shell was carried on by Rev. and Mrs. Lawrence Dynneson and members of the congregation. Although God has abundantly blessed and much has been accomplished, there is more that needs to be done before completion. It was a great blessing to hear one of the young men volunteering his services for work.

It was a blessed experience to meet those Mexican, Negro and White believers whose lives have been transformed by the power of the Gospel. Truly it is a mixed congregation but there is a unity felt because of right relationships with Jesus Christ. The Dynnesons mentioned that this is the only Christian work that ministers to both the Mexicans and North Americans in Nogales. There were a couple who served as private interpreters to translate in whispers what was spoken in English.

In the afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Swanson left with a load of Bible campers for California. Then Rev. and Mrs. Dynneson, Molly, who served as interpreter, and Pastor Schafer entered Mexico to conduct services where Mrs. Swanson meets with a group regularly on Sunday afternoons for a

service in Spanish. We met in a one-room rented building about 12 by 16 feet which was used only for their church services. Two backless benches were on each side of the room with some small tables in front. The ceiling had cardboard tacked up on the inside with tin on the roof. The walls had cactus stalks upright closely spaced to serve as framework for the mud that was plastered on the walls and painted white. One must visit personally to really appreciate both the lives changed by the Gospel and the great ignorance which is being blotted out by the Gospel light. The homes show the extreme poverty and great wealth of the people.

Certainly there is a great need of sharing the Gospel more faithfully on the border and in Mexico. Lives are being transformed. May you, my reader, continue faithfully as God directs in going by prayer, purse and person to witness to the Mexicans.

Pastor Harold Schafer  
Mission Director

The Mission Board is seeking someone to teach the children of our missionaries in Brazil. Since the teaching would be in English it would not be necessary for the teacher to learn the native language. The Calvert course would be used and has been used by missionaries in the past. Anyone interested at all should contact the Mission Director: Rev. Harold Schafer, 112 West Milner Ave., De Kalb, Illinois 60115.

A semi-retired couple is much

needed in Nogales, Arizona, to assist Rev. Dynneson with repairs, gardening, yard work, painting and the like. A home can be supplied for them in which to live. This would be a wonderful way for a couple on social security to serve the Lord. It would release the missionaries for the work to which they are called. If you are interested, contact Rev. Lawrence Dynneson, Box 1211, Nogales, Arizona 85621.

### REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE OBSERVANCE OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On October 31, 1967, it will be 450 years since Luther nailed the Ninety-five Theses to the church door in Wittenberg, thus starting the Protestant Reformation. Lutherans throughout the world are taking note of this anniversary with appropriate observances, and it would indeed be well for us to do the same. Rev. Raynard Huglen, Mr. Robert Munter and the undersigned were appointed as a Committee to make suggestions for suitable observances of the anniversary among our people. We make the following suggestions:

1. That articles on the Reformation appear in the *Ambassador* during the fall months of 1967.

2. That the pastors preach a Reformation Day sermon on October 29 on the text for the day, and with the suggested theme, "The Children are Free."

3. That, while Parish or District Reformation rallies are not discouraged, it might be better at any rally—Youth, WMF, Parish Education, or District Meeting—to devote one session of such a meeting in the fall months to the theme of the Reformation.

4. That whenever feasible and desirable our congregations unite with other Lutheran congregations of similar mind in joint Reformation rallies in the various areas.

On behalf of the Committee,  
Iver Olson

*The Lutheran Ambassador*



(Our thanks to Margrete Fostervold for contributing this material which first appeared in the *Sunday School Counsellor*.)

### FOCUS ON CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP

Dorothy Lindgren Johns

A citizen is a member of a group, and citizenship is the outward expression of his responsibility to that group whether it be family, city, or nation.

A Christian has dual citizenship, in that he is a member, not only of earthly groups, but also of the heavenly kingdom. "Now therefore," states Paul, "ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19). The group to which every believer belongs is the body of Christ. Citizenship in it entails responsibility! A Christian, adhering to all the teachings of Christ, cannot live entirely to himself.

Heavenly citizenship has a profound effect on earthly citizenship! One question with which the scribes and Pharisees sought to trick Jesus centered about the responsibility of citizenship and the paying of tribute money (Luke 20:19-26). They evidently supposed that as long as Jesus preached about His own kingdom, He would be automatically opposed to paying tribute to Caesar's government. The Lord silenced them with His classic answer, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

### GOD LOOKS AT CITIZENSHIP

Christians should be the best citizens of the community. Every responsibility to man stems from our responsibility to God. God in His Word has given explicit instructions for good citizenship (behavior) in relation to all groups of which the individual is a part. Family, church, school, community, nation, world—the Christian has a responsibility to each.

God's Word has some interesting things to say

concerning earthly citizenship. Christians are instructed to pray for their earthly rulers. "I exhort, therefore, that . . . supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior" (I Tim. 2:1-3). Paul was not speaking about spiritual leaders of the church, but about heathen kings and ALL who are in authority. Surely the rulers of the Roman Empire were not Christian. If we are to believe Romans 13 and other passages in Scripture, then we must know that God rules in the affairs of men. Rulers rise and fall, not according to chance, but because God is working out His purposes on earth, obscure to us it may be.

Godly or ungodly, national leaders are in a special category, and it is the obligation of the Christian citizen to pray for them.

The Christian is commanded to obey the laws of his country. "Submit yourselves," spoke Peter through the Holy Ghost, "to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God" (I Pet. 2:13-16). Evidently from the very beginning some Christians have tried to use their faith as an excuse for escaping their community responsibility.

Laws are made because past experience has shown that certain behavior is necessary for the preservation of life and order. God has planned community living as surely as He has created man. He expects His people to do their part to keep community life running as smoothly as possible.

Whether or not every citizen agrees with every law is not the question. The Bible records that unfortunate period of chaos in the Old Testament that was the result of every person doing what was right in his own eyes. The Christian is not commanded to agree; he is clearly given the charge to obey. Romans 13 contains an excellent summary of the responsibility of the Christian citizen, going so far as to say that resisting the authorities is just like resisting God, since He has ordained community life. Believers, then, must obey the laws of the land so they may have a pure conscience before God and a good witness among their fellow citizens.

### HOW CHILDREN LEARN TO BE GOOD CITIZENS

Children learn to be good citizens of our society by first learning to be good citizens of smaller groups, that is, family, church, and school.

Undoubtedly the citizenship learned and practiced in the family group will largely determine the



child's citizenship in all other areas for the remainder of his life. The Sunday school's (or for that matter, the secular school's) function is to reinforce important concepts of citizenship which the child has received at home. It cannot do the job alone, for actually good citizenship covers the whole subject of Christian behavior—respect for rights and property of others, assuming the responsibility for the smooth running of the group, willingness to share and help others, obedience, thoughtfulness of others, and self-discipline. These are not only behavior traits; they become character traits. They are taught at home and in school in these three ways: by example, by direct teaching, and by disciplined group living.

**EXAMPLE.** If the child hears adults pray for national leaders, he will accept this as the thing to do. Conversely, if the child observes adult behavior that is thoughtless and disobedient to leadership, he will imitate that. It would be fruitless for the Sunday school teacher to stress obedience to the law and then exceed the speed limit on the way to an outing. Example is a most powerful force.

**TEACHING.** When it is accompanied by the right example, teaching citizenship is valuable. Teachers should use every opportunity to teach concepts of Christian citizenship. In what way did the characters of a Bible story show themselves to be good (or bad)

citizens? Do we behave the same way today? What would the student do in a similar situation? What does the Word of God teach about what our behavior should be? Superintendents can help by occasionally slanting the worship service toward teaching Christian citizenship, sometimes stressing responsibility to the group, sometimes teaching patriotism and responsibility to civil law.

**PRACTICE.** Teachers are often at a loss to know what to do about the bad citizen in Sunday school. Parents help must be enlisted. Hesitancy to contact parents must be overcome, not only for the sake of the erring child, but also for the sake of those children who are anxious to learn.

Children want to behave in an acceptable way. They are much happier when they know the boundaries of behavior and that someone is interested enough to keep them within those boundaries. The practice of good citizenship is little more than being a well-disciplined, self-controlled person. Whether at home or at school, the teaching of citizenship needs adults who will love children with the wisdom that will reveal to them the greatest needs of the child. Parents and teachers will need Christ-like love and courage to see that children are disciplined and controlled in their group living so they may become responsible citizens of the larger community.

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## The City of Everywhere

This is the tale of a man who might have been I, for I dreamed one time of journeying to that metropolis. I arrived early one morning. It was cold, and there were flurries of snow on the ground as I stepped from the train to the platform. I noticed that the baggage-man and the red-cap wore no shoes. My initial impulse was to ask the reason for this odd practice, but repressing it I passed into the station and inquired the way to the hotel. My curiosity, however, was immediately enhanced by the discovery that no one in the station wore any shoes. Boarding the streetcar, I saw that my fellow travelers were likewise barefoot. Upon arriving at the hotel I found the bellhop, the clerk and the guests were all devoid of shoes.

Unable to restrain myself any longer, I asked the ingratiating manager what the strange practice meant.

"What practice?" said he.

"Why," said I, pointing to his bare feet, "Why don't you wear any shoes in this town?"

"Ah," said he, "that is just it. Why don't we?"

"But what is the matter? Don't you believe in shoes?"

"Believe in shoes, my friend! I should say we do. That is the first article of our creed—shoes. They are indispensable to the well-being of humanity. Such cuts, sores and suffering as shoes prevent! It is wonderful!"

"Well, then, why don't you wear them?" said I bewildered.

"Ah," said he, "that is just it.

Why don't we?"

Though considerably nonplused I checked in, secured my room and went directly to the coffeeshop and deliberately sat down by an amiable looking gentleman who likewise conformed to the conventions of his fellow citizens. He wore no shoes. Friendly enough, he suggested after we had eaten, that we look about the city. The first thing we noticed upon emerging from the hotel was a huge brick structure of impressive proportions. To this he pointed with pride.

"You see that?" said he. "That is one of our outstanding shoe manufacturing establishments!"

"A what?" I asked in amazement. "You mean you make shoes there?"

"Well, not exactly," said he abashed, "we talk about making shoes there, and believe me, we have got one of the most brilliant young fellows you have ever heard. He talks most thrillingly and convincingly every week on this great subject of shoes. He has a most persuasive and appealing

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### HOW LONG SHOULD THE SERMON BE?

In recent literature on the subject we have found that the sermon has come in for criticism. It is maintained that the sermon may be on its way out in the modern Protestant service. After all, it has been reduced to an eight to ten minutes' innocuous homily on some topic thought to be of interest to the people, or a topic in which the people ought to be interested. It may be tied up with a word of Scripture, but it does not have to be; the matter is at hand in the milieu of everyday life, and the people should be interested in it. Some preachers seem to think it is their duty to keep the people informed on current events and to mold their opinion so as to produce a favorable reaction.

It is too bad that the very central part of a Protestant worship service should be criticized from the pew. It is still worse when there are good reasons for such criticism. In recent months we have heard several ten-minute sermons which have been too long. If the preacher has nothing to say, he should not waste the time of the people. The sermon may well be on the way out then. If what the preacher has to say is contrary to the Word of God, it should not be said from the pulpit at all. Can it be that the people have begun to sense that much of what they hear from the pulpit is foreign to what they have learned to be true and at variance with what they have come to know as the Word of God? And so they criticize the sermon for its length.

It has long been our contention that in a church in which the Word of God is considered to be the central part of the service, this should also be reflected in the proportion of time devoted to it. At least one-half of the time spent at a worship service should be given over to the sermon. We are not now arguing for longer or shorter services; what we say is that half of the time people spend in church on a Sunday morning should be devoted to hearing what God has to say to them. This is what the sermon is for. If the service is to last for an hour, the sermon should be at least thirty minutes in length. The rest of the time can then be used for singing, liturgy, announcements, offerings, and whatever else may be neces-

sary and useful. But let half of the time be used for preaching.

If someone should maintain that the Word is in the liturgy as well, we can only agree to that. But by the same token there is liturgy in the sermon as well. Somehow we do make a distinction between the sermon and "the rest of the service." Let the sermon be central in the service.

This places a great strain and responsibility on the preacher. It is his responsibility to see that he has something to say from the Word of God. He should fear no man, and be little concerned about saying something which for the moment might be pleasant for the people to hear. He preaches the Word of God. He should explain, expound and apply the Word; that is his responsibility as a preacher. He should always strive to say what he has to say in the best possible way. He should use the best language at his command, and ever strive to improve the form and delivery of the sermon. The best is none too good for the message which comes from God. He will find that thirty minutes is none too long when he has a message which has first gripped him. And when all is said and done, the people will not think it is too long a time either.

Let us maintain the centrality of the sermon in our services.

### FAMILY BIBLE CAMP

As this issue of the *Ambassador* goes to print, the Family Bible Camp at Lake Geneva, Alexandria, Minnesota, is in session. Your temporary editor is in attendance, and has responsibility for one of the hours of classes each day. Other persons on the teaching and preaching staff are Pastor Richard Snipstead, Missionary Arthur Olson, Pastor Herbert Franz, Pastor Jay Erickson, and Mrs. David Hanson. To list these, however, is to give an incomplete picture, for there are so many activities, responsibilities, and duties that most of the people who come have some things to do.

The Association people sponsor a proportionately high number of Bible camps each summer. In the Bible camp brochure which came out last spring there are listed eight weeks of Bible camp activities carried on by groups within the Association. We suspect that there are even more which are not listed in that pamphlet.

Of all these, the Family Camp at Alexandria is undoubtedly the largest one. As of Friday night about 450 campers were registered. This includes all ages from infants and up. Classes were held for children, youths and adults. For the evening and campfire sessions they were all together. The Spirit of God was at work both during the day and in the evenings. Bible Camp activities are undoubtedly in the front rank of evangelistic endeavors in the Church.

One final note: Just in the last minute before the absolute deadline for materials to be in the hands of

[Continued on page 12]

## THE WORLD CHURCH

[Continued from page 3]

Pastors Henry A. Buchanan and Bob W. Brown, writing in the *Saturday Evening Post*, said that the "ecumenical movement leads to the creation of an ecclesiastical power structure that bears no resemblance to anything envisioned by Jesus of Nazareth. What is worse, in striving after a super church, we may destroy the heritage of diversity that has enriched our spiritual life. And still worse, Protestants may be pressured or lured into creeds and positions that will compromise their religious beliefs." Then in summing up their thoughts on the Ecumenical Movement, they said, "We are afraid of the super church just as we are afraid of a super-state and not because we lack faith in God. What we recognize is the fact that man cannot be trusted without checks and balances upon his power and authority and this goes in the church also. The various branches in Christendom: the Baptist, the Methodist, the Lutheran, and so on, serve as checks and balances upon another, and they have a purifying effect upon one another, for they all show the glory of God in a different way."

What is the true basis of unity then? The true basis of unity is the unity found at the Cross. It is the unity of the Spirit of God. It is not a man-made unity but a unity Holy Spirit-created. This unity crosses all denominations. This unity is based upon the inspired Word of God.

The nature of true ecumenicity is clearly stated in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church. We read in the Formula of Concord (II, 11:96) "We have a heartfelt desire and love for such a unanimity . . . whereby God's honor is left intact, nothing is broken off from the divine truth of the holy gospel . . . poor sinners are led to real and true repentance . . . they are comforted by the gospel and brought into a new obedience."

The Lutheran Confessions give two basic requirements for true

unity: faithfulness to the Word of God in its entirety and preaching of the Word through the power of the Holy Spirit whereby sinners are led to repentance of sin, and then brought into living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and new obedience to the will of God.

Faithfulness to all of the Word of God is not found in many churches so how can one have fellowship there. How can one have fellowship with those churches who are out to destroy the pietistic heritage of our forefathers?

True unity is a unity of the Spirit not forced upon us but wrought by the constraining love of Christ. This unity is not decided by the hierarchy of the Church but by the court of heaven. Such unity will be made perfect in heaven. Enforced merger is the devil's big lie and carries no blessing of God.

I would like to close with the following quotation:

Dr. Wirt, editor of *Decision*, said: "If you love the Lord, if you know the One who has lifted you out of the pit, and if you are walking down the pilgrim pathway toward the city called heaven along the Emmaus road, I would like the privilege of walking along with you. But: don't make me grow a beard; don't make me wear a robe or collar; don't make me pray the way you pray; don't tell me I can't sing a gospel song on Sunday morning; don't tell the world you speak for me; just let me walk with you and learn to love you and the Christ in you."

The Seminary and Bible school will open on Monday, September 11, 1967, at 9:00 o'clock. Opening exercises will be held, followed by registration and the beginning of classes.

## THE CITY OF EVERYWHERE

[Continued from page 8]

way. Just yesterday he moved the people profoundly with his exposition of the necessity of shoe-wearing. Many broke down and wept. It was really wonderful."

"But why don't they wear them?" said I insistently.

"Ah," said he, placing his hand upon my arm and looking wistfully into my eyes, "that is just it. Why don't we?"

Just then, as we turned down a side street, I saw through a cellar window a cobbler actually making a pair of shoes. Excusing myself from my friend I burst into the little shop and asked the shoemaker how it happened that his shop was not overrun with customers. Said he, "Nobody wants my shoes. They just talk about them."

"Give me what pairs you have ready," said I eagerly, and paid him thrice the amount he modestly asked. Hurriedly, I returned to my friend and offered them to him, saying, "Here, my friend, some one of these pairs will surely fit you. Take them, put them. They will save you untold suffering."

But he looked embarrassed; in fact, he was well-nigh overcome with chagrin.

"Ah, thank you," said he politely, "but you don't understand. It just isn't being done here. The Fron families, well, I . . ."

"But why don't you wear them?" said I, dumbfounded.

"Ah," said he, smiling with his accustomed ingratiating touch of practical wisdom. "That is just it. Why don't we?"

As I came out of "The City of Everywhere" into the "Here," over and over again the question rang in my ears: "Why don't we? Why don't we?"

"Why call ye me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not the things I command you?" —Selected



## Luther League Activities

Ken Moland

### Rally Postponed

The youth rally that was to be held in the Cloquet area has been postponed to a later date due to the convention in Kalispell. Plans are to hold a weekend retreat later in the fall. Those in that area should watch for further announcements concerning this.

### Return From Convention

By the time this issue reaches the youth of our Association, the National Luther League Convention of 1967 will be history. We pray that the blessings of this conference will go with us day by day as we walk with God.

### Suggestions for the School Year

School time is not far off! Although writing a sentence like this is not the sure route to popularity, it is nonetheless the truth. In only a little over two weeks, most students will be back at "book-learning." Some are anxious—some are hesitant. What should the Christian attitude be toward going to school? How can we make the best of the years when our minds are somewhat pliable?

I'd like to express a few ideas about the Christian and his school. First of all, let's deal with the spiritual aspect of the question. The question is raised: What opportunities does my school offer as far as growth and action in the life of

a Christian? If there are opportunities, are we making use of them? If there aren't, are we responsible for creating some?

To us as students, our greatest mission is the students around us. We do have a responsibility to our non-Christian associates. We, as Christians, have the privilege of witnessing to those around us. Are we making the best of our situation? Let us take a look at some of the channels through which we might be able to work.

Youth for Christ is a national organization with local chapters found in high schools throughout the United States. YFC is an interdenominational group with an evangelistic emphasis. It is suggested that each local chapter meet at least once every two weeks.

If there is no such group in your high school, perhaps you should think about starting one. Here is a real chance for Christians to have good fellowship together and bring others into touch with the good news of Jesus. The meeting need not be long and the activities can be as varied as your imaginations.

You may want to plan special events from time to time, such as hayrides, snow activities and the like. Let others know that you are having a good time while still serving Christ. Always remember to finish up with a time of meditation. You may have a chance to have a special speaker from time to time, but just some thoughts from a fellow student can be effective too.

Take time to pray. The word "take" is a key one in this phrase. We can always find other things to do instead. But it is when we quiet ourselves before God in obedience to His will that we will see things happen. Acts says that the building shook when the disciples prayed. If you have an extra fifteen minutes at noon, how about spending it in prayer instead of running uptown or cluttering the halls. Get together in small groups and "let your request be made known unto God!"

As we mentioned once before, it is not the name of the group or the plan of attack that you use that will determine the success of your venture. Forms can be so shallow unless we put ourselves into what we are doing. It is not an advisor or pastor who is going to motivate you to success, but rather the power put within the new creation in Christ.

If the Christians in your school don't have any organization, maybe it is up to you to get the ball rolling. If there is a group, I feel the Christians are obligated to be active and show a real concern.

A program of this nature should not take the place of one's church, but should supplement it. Care should be taken to avoid clashes in the scheduling of events of your group and of churches in the area. This way all who would like to come will have the opportunity to do so.

The Ambassador would like to hear what your leagues are doing. Judging by the offerings in writing to the editor of the Youth Page, the leagues are not doing much. But we know this is not the case. Let's hear about some of those Bible Camps and other activities.

### Something to Think About Dept.

Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations . . . (Matt. 28:19).

For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and lose his soul? (Mark 8:36).

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel . . . (Rom. 1:16a).

[Continued on page 13]



## Editorials

[Continued from page 9]

the printer (in fact, after the deadline), we saw the three busses depart from the headquarters building at Medicine Lake, Minneapolis, carrying the young people for their convention and Kalispell.

### SUMMER IS OVER

It is not quite so for many of the readers when they read these lines. It is still August, and we can look forward to many days of fair weather before the autumn storms and winter winds appear. In fact, the days of autumn can be the most pleasant ones of the year—at least in the Midwest. It is as though the year has come of age and has ripened. Spring can be petulant and unpredictable; cold and heat alternate. Showers of rain disturb one's activity one day; excessively high temperatures may characterize the next. Summer comes with warm and at times unpleasant weather—at least as far as people are concerned. This is the season of growth. What the fall will bring is largely dependent upon what the summer is. The languid days of autumn are the days of harvest and gathering of crops. In time it is replaced by winter, which is the death of the year in nature.

In the work of the churches there are also seasonal alternations. For many the winterside of the year is the activity side. Especially is this so for the city churches. Now the Sunday school is in session, and the organizations begin their full activity. Church

attendance picks up after the lull of summer vacations. Special activities are planned for this season of the year; local evangelistic activities are carried through at this time. The local and churchwide budget situation improves. And so the work goes on.

Summer was a time of outdoor activity. Among us this has been reflected in Bible camp programs. What wonderful days and weeks they were. Decisions were made and souls were set for heaven, openly and secretly. Mostly it was teen-agers who came to camp, some because they were sincerely seeking something which they did not have and others because it would be a gala occasion for activity together with many other young people. Few came back from camp the same as before. Impressions for good were made; the seed was planted in the young hearts. Congregations were built. The young people may not be voting members of the congregations yet, but they will be before long. How they will vote and what they will do may in a large measure have been determined by the week at camp.

But now it is over, and we go back to work. While we enjoy the pleasant fall days, let us also put our shoulders to the wheel and work in the kingdom of God. We have had our rest and relaxation—much of what has been for edification. Our strength has been renewed "like the eagle's," and we are all set to go and move ahead. Whatever we do, let it be as unto the Lord.

God bless the unsung heroes in the army of the Lord who know their stations and perform their tasks in His name.

### ASSOCIATION OF FREE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS TREASURER'S PROGRESS REPORT

February 1, 1967 to July 31, 1967

	Fiscal Year Budget	Current Budget	Total Received
General Fund	\$39,980.00	\$19,990.00	\$12,942.80
Missions	41,000.00	20,500.00	19,154.80
Seminary and Bible School	29,000.00	14,500.00	11,040.61
Praise Program	30,000.00	15,000.00	* 6,254.70
TOTALS	\$139,980.00	\$69,990.00	\$49,392.91

Received for Seminary Library Fund — \$762.86

\* Funds received toward the One Grand Fellowship are not included in these figures. We have 23 that have indicated by pledge or by cash that they want to be included in this program.

### NEW ADDRESSES

Rev. Jonas Helland  
378 14th St. East  
Willmar, Minn.

Rev. Robert E. Rieth  
11611 NE. 140th St.  
Kirkland (Juanita), Wash. 98003

The Bible is like a telescope. If a man looks *through* his telescope, then he sees worlds beyond; but if he looks *at* his telescope, then he does not see anything but that. The Bible is a thing to be looked through, to see what is beyond; but most people only look at it; and so they see only the dead letter.

It is harder to build up character than reputation, but it is so only in the beginning. For mere reputation, like a poorly built house, will cost as much for patching and repairs as would have made it thorough in the first place.



## STEWARDSHIP

The summer is practically over, and we shall soon be into the "regular" program of work in the churches. Sunday schools will soon be in session again, and attendance at the services in the church will be more stable. We realize that in rural churches it is the summer months which are the active ones, and that is certainly fine.

During the summer months there is usually a slump in the contributions to our common endeavors. This may be partly due to the fact that special efforts are put forth toward the end of the fiscal year to reach the goals before the books are closed for the year. Then it is easy to take a little breathing spell before launching into the next year's program.

So let us now be up and doing, taking hold where we left off.

### ONE GRAND FELLOWSHIP

The term has been used before in the pages of the *Ambassador*. It refers to a group of persons who have pledged themselves to give a thousand dollars over a period of time to the building projects of the Association.

The first building to be erected is the dormitory and classroom building for the Bible school and seminary use. The Boards concerned are working almost feverishly with the plans for this building. Construction could begin soon. But the building will not be completed for use this year—at least for the first semester, but it should be ready before the opening of the school year in 1968.

The six graduating seniors from the seminary this spring sparked the One Grand Fellowship by

pledging over two thousand dollars to be paid over a period of three years. The fire caught on at the Annual Conference, and now there are pledges of twenty-three thousand dollars. We are confident that there are going to be many more before Christmas. Concentrated efforts will be made during the fall months to promote this program.

The purpose is to get as many people as possible who are able and willing to pledge one thousand dollars, to be paid over a period of time—like three to five years. This is over and above the regular stewardship program. It would defeat its purpose if the regular contributions to the common endeavors were to suffer. The same is true for contributions to the program of the local congregation. These must not suffer. We know that there are several congregations with building programs of their own, and these must not be forgotten.

Yet we feel that there are people who both can and are willing to do more. It is to these we are making our initial appeal. The fact that over twenty such pledges were made during two days at the Annual Conference gives support to the conviction that there are others who want to be along.

There may be people who would say that they will gladly give this amount if the Lord blesses them sufficiently so that they can do it. It may be that the Lord waits with His blessings until He sees what your intentions are. How would it be if you make the pledge first, and then see if the Lord will provide the means to make it possible? The pledge is made in faith, and the

Lord has many ways of providing the means. There will be no pressure exerted to collect these pledges—except possibly reminders from time to time. If a person cannot carry through on his pledge, there is nothing to do about that. It is only that a person is left with a feeling that he has made a pledge and has failed to live up to it.

But perhaps you should try the Lord on this point. You pledge in faith, and see if He will in grace provide the means to carry through on it. If He fails, it is not your fault. Many people have been surprised at how the Lord in unexpected ways has blessed those who have made a sincere promise to do something for Him. Only you can find out for yourself what He will do in your case.

We commend the cause of One Grand Fellowship to you who read these lines. More will be said on this point as time goes on. God bless everyone who is faithful.

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### I HAVE A QUESTION

[Continued from page 5]

all." "In him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:15). The Greek word here is actually three negatives joined together into one word. So in John 1:13 we would say that the three negatives simply nail down the fact of the statement: the Christian is born of God. Spiritual generation does not come through physical generation.

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### LUTHER LEAGUE ACTIVITIES

[Continued from page 11]

The night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light (Rom. 13:12).

For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery (Gal. 5:1).

Pray at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all saints (Eph. 6:18).

# NEWS of the Churches



## LEBANON CHURCH OBSERVES SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

The Lebanon Lutheran Free Church of Brinsmade, N. Dak., observed its seventieth anniversary on June 25, 1967.

The day was a beautiful one for the festal occasion. The church had been painted and decorated for the day, the cemetery and the grounds tidied up for the event. Pastor John Strand preached at the morning service, and the anniversary sermon was given by Pastor John Raimo, one of the former pastors of the Lebanon Church. Belle Mehus presided at the organ, and musical numbers were given by Mrs. Kenneth Hall, Mrs. William Bergstrom, Mrs. Arnold Anklam and Mrs. John Foss. Mr. Orion Mehus played a violin solo. Greetings were given by Oscar Myking Mehus of Branson, Missouri, Mr. K. I. Knutson of Mayville, North Dakota, and the neighboring pastor, M. J. Nelson, from Rugby. The history of the congregation was read by Mrs. Hilma Hofstrand. Dinner was

served at noon, and refreshments after the anniversary service in the afternoon.

Lebanon Lutheran Church was organized in March, 1897. The first church was built in 1899. This church was struck by lightning in 1937 and was burned to the ground. The present structure replaced it in 1938.

During the seventy years of its history the church has been served by ten pastors. They are as follows: E. O. Larson, A. J. Vartdal, H. O. Helseth, G. Norberg, P. Steen, H. C. Casperson, A. L. Larson, J. B. Dahlen, John Raimo, and the current pastor—Arnold Anklam.

Over the years there have been 253 baptisms, 187 confirmands, 91 funerals, 34 weddings, 18 silver weddings and 5 golden weddings.

About 250 guests were present for the anniversary, including 63 confirmands.

Mr. Marius Holm is the secretary of the congregation.

## SENIOR LADIES HONORED BY BETHANY AID

The Bethany Ladies Aid of Abercrombie, North Dakota, held a candle-lighting service at its church recently with a Cradle Roll party and membership awards.

Mrs. Orlando Hermo, WMF secretary, presided in honoring the following senior ladies: Mrs. Andrew Myron, Mrs. Emma Klubberud, Mrs. Anna Berg, Mrs. Maria Tverdal, Mrs. Art C. Johnson, Mrs. Gina Flaa, Mrs. Anna Hermunslie and Mrs. Laura Oscarson. Mrs. Clarence Hermunslie and Mrs.

Harold Hermunslie presented each of the honored guests with pins and certificates. The tables were appropriately decorated with candles and peonies.

During the program Mrs. Kenneth Nash read passages from Mark 10 and Luke 18, and Mrs. Ray Oscarson presented a Bible study on the theme: "Children, Our Great Responsibility," from Deut. 6:5-9. Music and singing was furnished by Mrs. Kenneth Nash, Mrs. Harold Hermunslie, Mrs. Marvin Oscarson, Mrs. Toby Johnson and Mrs. Maurice Myhre. Mrs. Ernest Nash, Cradle Roll Chairman, read from Matthew 18 and 19, and presented a certificate to Matthew Kinneberg, the only graduate.

## REFORMATION EXHIBIT

New York—A display of Martin Luther Bibles, medallions and other Reformation artifacts will be shown at the American Bible Society from July 5 through the end of October in observance of the 450th anniversary of the Reformation.

The exhibit will be open to the public from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, at Bible House, the ABS headquarters at 1865 Broadway.

Featuring the Luther Bible (1534, first edition) and a Saur Bible (1743, first edition), the showing will also include 70 medallions and coins relating to Luther's activities as well as paper currency of a century ago commemorating his work. The medallion exhibit is part of one which was displayed at the New York World's Fair.

Among the other articles of the Reformation period to be shown are an exact, solid gold replica of Luther's wedding band and an original, hand illustrated indulgence contract. In opposition to the sale of indulgences and some other church practices to which he took exception, Luther posted his 95 theses on the Castle Church door in Wurttemberg, Germany, in 1517. This action was one of many factors leading to the Reformation.



# CHURCH-WORLD NEWS

## SYNODICAL CONFERENCE DISSOLVED

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has given its approval to the dissolution of the Synodical Conference since "there is no useful purpose to be served by the continuance of this 95-year-old organization."

The organization came to be in 1872 for the purpose of doing mission work among American Negroes. In 1930 it established missions in Nigeria.

The Synodical Conference embraced about one-third of the Lutherans in the United States at one time, and was composed of four Synods: Missouri Synod, Wisconsin Synod, Norwegian Synod (Norwegian) and the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (Slovak). The Norwegian Synod (ELS) suspended fellowship with the Missouri Synod in 1955, and the Wisconsin Synod took similar action in 1961; in 1963 both withdrew from the conference. The differences which arose in the conference centered about the question of church fellowship and joint worship.

The missions which had been established by the conference have been taken over by the Missouri Synod. With the other member of the Synodical Conference, the Slovak Synod, Missouri has become a participant in the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A. (LCUSA) in a cooperative agency for theological study and Christian Service, established last January. The other participants in this agency is the ALC and the LCA.

Thus ends a significant chapter in American Lutheran church history.

## FIXED SUNDAY FOR EASTER

At its convention in New York last month the Missouri Synod expressed itself in favor of a fixed

date for the observance of Easter. Interest in establishing a fixed Sunday for Easter has been expressed by several of the larger groups within Christendom, Protestant, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox.

Currently, Protestant and Roman Catholic churches throughout the world celebrate Easter, commemorating the resurrection of Christ, on the first Sunday after the full moon on or after March 21. Easter Sunday can thus come as early as March 22 or as late as April 25. It is not known yet which Sunday may be chosen for Easter, but it could be the last Sunday in March or the first Sunday in April. We sincerely trust that this change will not have a disruptive influence within Christendom.

## ALC MOVES A STEP NEARER INTER-LUTHERAN FELLOWSHIP

Minneapolis (LC)—The first in a series of formalities expected to lead to official fellowship with other Lutheran bodies was taken by the Church Council of the American Lutheran Church here.

Resolutions which, when finalized, will declare pulpit and altar fellowship with three other bodies—probably in 1969—were given preliminary approval by the 45-member Church Council at its annual meeting ending June 28.

Named in one resolution are the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, with which the ALC has been in negotiations during the past several years.

Another resolution given preliminary approval aims at full fellowship also with the Lutheran Church in America. The LCA has offered fellowship to all Lutherans on the basis of existing confessional documents and has declined invitations to engage in negotiations toward

that end.

The two resolutions will be processed for action by the ALC's 1968 general convention in Omaha, Neb. They can become effective after ratification in 18 district conventions in the spring of 1969.

## FINNISH ARCHBISHOP DEFENDS RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOL

Efforts to abolish obligatory religious instruction in Finnish public schools were firmly opposed by Archbishop Martti Simojoki at a conference of Lutheran bishops in Finland.

Critics of the system have argued that religious instruction in the public schools should be optional. Answering the critics, the Archbishop maintained that the present practice is essential to "the roots of life of the Finnish society and the cultural life."

An estimated 93 per cent of all Finns belong to the Lutheran Church.

## CLOSER TIES BETWEEN FINNISH AND ESTONIAN LUTHERANS

Bishop Aarre Hauha of Helsinki expressed hope for development of closer contacts between the Lutherans of Finland and Estonia as he returned recently from a visit to the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The bishop, and other Lutheran pastors from Finland, had traveled to Tallin early in July as guests of the Peace Committee of Estonia.

## EVANGELICAL GROUP CITES INCREASES

Long Beach, Calif.—The Evangelical Free Church of America, which has its headquarters in Richfield, Minn., added a new congregation to its membership every 14 days during the past year.

The Rev. Arnold T. Olson, Minneapolis, president of the denomination, said 19 new congregations were added, bringing the total to 517.

He told delegates to the church's 83rd annual conference opening here today that the denomination now has churches in 36 states and has a total membership of 50,312. The church's constituency is estimated at 95,000.

Per-member giving in the denomination increased from \$243 to \$251 during the past year, the president's report revealed.

Earlier, at a meeting of ministers of the denomination, a Free Church theologian spoke about "two barriers" that would be involved in

preparing a common Bible for Protestants and Roman Catholics.

The Rev. Dr. Robert Culver, Deerfield, Ill., said one barrier is that "the Roman Catholic Bible contains 14 books or portions of books which are not inspired scripture in the eyes of Protestants and were not quoted as such by Christ and the Apostles."

The second barrier, he said, is that up to now "the Roman Catholic Church does not allow private interpretation of the Bible but insists that it be accompanied by notes to guide the reader."

Dr. Culver is a professor at the Free Church's seminary in Deerfield.

—Minneapolis Star

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