

December 2, 1975

The Lutheran Ambassador



THE FIRST SNOWFALL
Roger C. Huebner, D.D.S.

MEDITATION MOMENTS

Advent

1st Week in Advent

Zechariah 9:9: "Behold, your King
is coming to you;

He is just and endowed with salvation."

"Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates,

Behold, the King of glory waits!

The King of Kings is drawing near,

The Saviour of the world is here."

O blest the Lord, the city blest,
Where Christ the Ruler is confessed!

O happy hearts and happy homes.

Fling wide the portals of your hearts.

Make it a temple set apart

From earthly use for heaven's

employ,

Adorned with prayer for love and
joy.

Redeemer come! with us abide;

Our hearts to thee we open wide,

Let us thy inner presence feel,

Thy grace and love in us reveal."

2nd Week in Advent

Luke 2:28: "Straighten up and lift
up your heads, because your redemp-
tion is drawing near."

"Rejoice, all ye believers, and let
your lights appear!

The evening is advancing, and
darker night is near.

The Bride-groom is arising, and
soon he draweth nigh.

Up, watch and pray, and wrestle,
at midnight comes the cry!

Ye saints, who here in patience,
your cross and suff'rings bore,
Shall live and reign forever, when
sorrow is no more.

Around the throne of glory, the
Lamb ye shall behold,

In triumph cast before Him your
diadems of gold.

Our Hope and Expectation, O

Jesus, now appear;

Arise, Thou Sun so longed for,
o'er this benighted sphere!

With hearts and hands uplifted,
we plead, O Lord, to see

The day of earth's redemption,
that brings us unto Thee!"

3rd Week in Advent

Isaiah 40:3, 10: "A voice is calling,
'Clear the way for the Lord in the
wilderness; Make smooth in the des-
ert a highway for our God'...
Behold, the Lord God will come with
might, with His arm ruling for Him.
Behold, His reward is with Him, and
His recompense before Him."

"Then cleansed be every breast from
sin,

Make straight the way for God

within,

And let us all our hearts prepare

For Christ to come and enter there.

For Thou art our Salvation, Lord,

Our Refuge and our great Reward.

Without Thy grace we waste away
Like flowers that wither and decay.

All praise, eternal Son, to Thee,

Whose advent sets Thy people free,

Whom, with the Father, we adore,

And Holy Ghost, forevermore."

4th Week in Advent

"My soul exalts the Lord, and my
spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior"
(Luke 1:46-47).

"O come, Thou Dayspring, come
and cheer

Our spirits by Thine advent here:

Disperse the gloomy clouds of
night,

And death's dark shadows put to
flight.

Rejoice, rejoice! O Israel."

Psalms 19:7 ff: "The law of the Lord
is perfect, restoring the soul;

The testimony of the Lord is sure,
making wise the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;

The commandments of the Lord is
pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean, en-
during forever;

The judgments of the Lord are true;
they are righteous altogether.

They are more desirable than gold,
yes, than much fine gold;

Sweeter also than honey and the
drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover, by them Thy servant is
warned;

In keeping them there is great re-
ward,

Who can discern his errors? Acquit
me of hidden faults, Also keep back
Thy servant from presumptuous sins;
let them not rule over me; then shall
I be blameless, and I shall be ac-
quitted of great transgression. Let the
words of my mouth and the medita-
tion of my heart be acceptable in thy
sight, O Lord, my rock and my re-
deemer."

Lawrence C. Dynneson

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The Shepherds Were Ready

Rev. Ragene Hodnefield
Vancouver, Wash.

Text: Luke 2:8-20:

8 "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. 12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. 15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. 17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. 18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."

Advent is a word that tells us of the coming of an important event. The word has dignity and is not to be used casually. Advent is the first season



Rev. Ragene Hodnefield

of the church year. It begins on the Sunday nearest November 30, and continues four weeks until Christmas. It announces a beginning and speaks of the time when God will be revealed with special vividness. The purpose of the four weeks is to allow time to prepare the heart and mind for the momentous event of the coming of Christ.

Christmas does not begin with Christmas Day, anymore than the football season starts with the first game. There is bound to be a long period of training and practice. You hear it said that Christmas has become commercial and frantic. People think desperately of all the things they have to get ready. It is not only Christmas, however, that suffers corruption. Advent does, too. People are left frustrated from energies that are mis-spent. The festivities are planned, while proper meditation is neglected. Only when this season is used rightly will there be the spiritual blessings.

We read in these verses how the birth of the Lord was first announced to man. The birth of a king's son is usually announced publicly and with

great celebration. However, the birth of the Prince of Peace was announced privately and at night. No worldly fanfare accompanied it.

Who first received the news that Christ was born?

The tidings of Christ's birth first came to shepherds. One night as the shepherds watched their sheep, the glory of the Lord shone round about them. Fear gripped the shepherds. But the angel quieted their fears with these words: "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." It was not the priests and rulers, nor the scribes and Pharisees who heard first. God had this great message proclaimed to those who would receive it. Though the Jews at that period of time held shepherds in low estimation, God still entrusted these shepherds with a message heralded by an angel of the Lord. These men were prepared in their hearts and lives to be the recipients of the glad tidings. They were ready and willing to believe that the Messiah had really come.

James wrote: "Hath not God chosen the poor of the world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" (James 2:5). The shepherds had only a small income. Yet the things of God are often hid from the great and noble and revealed to the poor. Being poor shepherds did not prevent God from speaking to them. God speaks to any who look up and listen. The unnoticed are often called before the mighty. The prepared heart was what God needed.

Why was there such great joy in this message?

A Savior was born into the world. The way to pardon and peace with God was about to be thrown open to all mankind, including the Gentiles. And the head of Satan was about to be bruised. Liberty was about to be proclaimed to the captives, and the blind would receive sight. God would justify the ungodly for Christ's sake. Salvation would be seen face to face. The knowledge of God would now be offered to Jews and Gentiles alike. God's kingdom was about to be set up on earth.

What was the hymn of praise which the heavenly host sang to the shepherds?

They sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." The highest degree of glory now comes to God, by the appearing of His Son Jesus Christ in the world. Christ, by His life and death and resurrection, will glorify God! His justice, holiness, mercy and wisdom have never been seen so clearly.

The shepherds were also told: "and on earth peace among men." The peace of God which passeth all understanding has come to earth. Christ would purchase with his own blood the perfect peace between a holy God and sinful man. He offered this peace freely among men. God's power was seen in the creation. His justice was seen in the flood. And now His mercy is fully revealed by the appearing and atonement of Jesus Christ.

Let us note the prompt obedience of the shepherds. We are told of no doubts, or questions, or hesitation by them. They acted upon what they had seen and been told. They went to Bethlehem in haste. Of course, they found it all just as they had been told. Their simple faith received a rich reward. They were the first of all mankind, except for Joseph and Mary, to see with believing eyes the newborn Christ. Afterwards, they went back glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen. It all happened just as the Lord made it known to them.

The shepherds had a wonderful attitude and spirit. May our hearts be like theirs. They were prepared for this great event. They were ready in heart and mind to believe completely and to act right away when the path of duty was clear. May we respond

to the Lord's words, believing that the Savior has come. We have time, and must take time, in the weeks before Christmas to prepare our hearts to worship our Savior and God on Christmas. We can share some of the feelings of the angels, their love and compassion for sinful man and for their salvation. Let us seek to know a greater awareness of our sinfulness and then we shall have a deeper thankfulness for our Savior and redemption. The joy of Christ's birth was not for them alone. This "great joy shall be to all people."

The Shepherds' fear would have remained if they had not received the glad tidings. But the joy of Christmas came to them as God dealt with them that night. They let the Christ Child take a rightful place in their lives. They went to see and worship the newborn Child. No, Christ is not a newborn Child whom we can see this Christmas. But he is still the Savior, who is Christ the Lord. The weeks in advent are a time for us to meditate on what God gave to us in Christ.

Not only has God spoken to the shepherds, but he speaks to all people today who will hear his voice. In the weeks of Advent, God will place the joy of Christmas in your heart anew. "Do not be afraid; for . . . there has been born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord."

**NEW COMPLETE BIBLE
TRANSLATION OUT
BY DR. WILLIAM BECK**

A new translation of the Old Testament joins the previously published (1963) New Testament in *An American Translation of the Bible in the Language of Today*. The translator was Dr. William F. Beck, now deceased, a teacher in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Other scholars and language experts went over Dr. Beck's unpublished Old Testament manuscript and prepared it for printing.

Of his work on the OT, Dr. Beck said, "My translation on the soundest textual basis gives the church every Old Testament promise of the Savior

and every doctrine given in the text. For this reason my translation deserves a place, not merely as a help, but at the center of the Christian Church so that every sinner will hear the richest doctrinal voice of his God giving Christ to him and every Christian truth God wants us to have."

Dr. Beck was long devoted to the cause of simplifying the English Bible for people of all ages. He published over 1100 pages of Bible stories in picture form, wrote a variety of plays, Bible study aids, a textbook on New Testament manuscripts, and a harmony of the Gospels. Pastor Beck (Th.D, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis) was also at home in the fields of science, psychology and philosophy. He had one driving purpose—to help others understand the Bible.

Here are two samples of his translation work in the New Testament: "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son so that everyone who believes in Him doesn't perish but has everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"Don't worry about anything, but in everything go to God, and pray to let Him know what you want, and give thanks" (Philippians 4:6).

An American Translation was offered at pre-publication rates of \$4.95 (hardcover) and \$3.00 paperback up to Dec. 1. Regular bookstore prices will be somewhat higher.

(Ed. note: I enjoyed Dr. Beck's translation of the New Testament and look forward to reading the Old Testament in *An American Translation*.)

IT COSTS LITTLE

How little it costs, if we give it a thought, to make happy some heart each day!

Just one kind word or a tender smile as we go on our daily way.

Perhaps a look will suffice to clear the cloud from a neighbor's face; And the press of a hand in sympathy a sorrowful tear efface.

It costs so little! I wonder why we give it so little thought.

A smile, kind words, a glance, a touch—what magic by them is wrought.

—Anon.

AROUND THE HUMP AND UP THE AMAZON

By Pastor John H. Abel,
Missionary to Brazil

Part III—Concluded

Night comes early in the Amazon, so we were in our hammocks by about 9 p.m. But it was only a few hours later when the night watchman was banging on our hotel window, saying, "Get up! Get up! Quickly. The ship is rounding the sand bar and will soon be here." It didn't take us long to literally tumble out and throw our few things into the open suitcase, the hammocks into the big duffle bag, and drag everything across the street and watch the big river boat, the "Leopoldo Peres," dock. What a stream of people getting off and on. A hustle and bustle everywhere, as we looked at the lower, open sides of this three-decker river boat. We could see that it was strung with a mass of hammocks. We learned later that 500 people can sleep in the third class, lower deck area. In trying to be economical, our family had agreed that we would rent only one four-place cabin, for Dad and Mom and the girls, while Paul and Nano would grab their hammocks and fight it out for space to hang their hammocks among the third class gang.

I was down there with the boys after our ship got underway, for really it took the ship only about 20 minutes to tie up, load and then cast off. I want to say that it was nice and breezy on the lower, open deck as the ship ran along at about 15 miles per hour. The boys finally found a place to squeeze in their hammocks and rolled in for a few hours of sleep in what remained of the night. They were to have four nights swinging in the breeze and at times they said it was hard to get to sleep as babies cried, old women fought and people in general jostled each other trying to exist through another day. The price was cheap enough, \$15.00 per passenger, including eating in the soup line each day, this for a four-

day voyage. Our boys fared a little better, as we made arrangements for them to eat in the dining hall on the second deck with us and then they also could take showers in our big cabin, these luxuries cost an extra \$4.00 apiece for the trip, but they felt it was worth it. I'm sure they have a better appreciation of the battle for life, however, having seen it on the third class level.

Sunday was a quiet day. We had our own little church service in the cabin and decided that one way we could be a witness, as we now began to get to know the passengers, was to have little singing groups and hand out tracts to those we got to speak to. Lydia and Paul were especially effective with this. I noticed many times during the day that they had a dozen or so young people singing with them and the guitar in various parts of the ship. We discovered there were teenagers from Germany, France, Portugal, America, Uruguay and Brazil on board. It was a real mission field.

Our four nights and three days on the ship went rapidly. It was so interesting to see the Amazon in flood stage. A flood in this region is not as disastrous as in a city like Recife. You see, they are accustomed to a yearly flood here so all the homes are built on poles perhaps six or more feet off the ground. This time, however, due to unusual rains, many islands in the river were underwater and many river bank and island dwellers had taken to their boats and moved back up to higher ground. The water was going down now and some were moving back to the islands. We saw cows up to their bellies in water foraging for what they could find. In other places poles had sunken and houses were tipping toward the water. Some had just collapsed. The Amazon often looks no wider than the Mississippi, perhaps two or three miles wide, but then one sails around the bend and sees it was only a long

island. The river really stretches out for several more miles on the other side. Well, we enjoyed the freedom to roam on the ship. Passengers could be down on the lower, water level third class deck, or three decks higher near the captain's bridge. Many took sun baths on the large flat deck space over the bridge, having to watch out for the high voltage radio antenna wires.

We had many interesting conversations and experiences in these few days on board, not the least being called to share some dysentery medicine we had with us with two sick children on board. The experience we praise God for most was the last night on board when a young fellow named Gilmar was standing by the ship's rail in front of our cabin, at just about sunset. I had heard Paul and Lydia speak about him. He was the likable young fellow who had acted in a few Brazilian movies and was now working part time in T.V. dramas. Gilmar had been much attracted to the Gospel singing and the testimonies the kids were giving. He was on his way home to visit his parents after an absence of about four years. After visiting a few minutes with him, I asked, "Gilmar, there wasn't something special you wanted to talk about?" He answered, "Pastor, I would really like to be a Christian." I thought, what wonderful surprises God sends our way, and said, "Gilmar, to be a true Christian there are five things you must know. I have my Bible in the cabin. Please come in for a few minutes and I will show you what God says.

We were only a few feet from the cabin and in it I had the privilege of going over the way of salvation with this young man. Just as we were nearing the final verse, son Paul came it, for it was almost time for our family devotions. Paul joined us as we went over the point of "the necessity to receive Christ." Gilmar prayed for Christ to forgive him his sins and enter his heart. Afterwards, a few verses on assurance of salvation and Gilmar again prayed, thanking the Lord for salvation. Paul and I prayed. What a joy to see the rejoicing in the face of this young man. He said to me, "Pastor, I've heard that my parents have become "believers."

Now I can go home and tell them I am a believer also." Lydia, Mother, Nathanael and Priscilla were now coming into the cabin, so we asked Gilmar to stay and partake of our evening devotions with us. We shared Bible verses and prayed. All of us were rejoicing and more conscious of the Lord's presence than ever, for we had seen the Holy Spirit prepare a heart and save a seeking soul.

Arriving in Manaus, often called the "queen city" of the Amazon, a metropolis of almost one-half million people, 1,000 miles up the river, we stood wide-eyed on deck as our ship sailed through hundreds of small boats and by large floating gas stations in the river and came to dock right in the downtown section. We had the telephone number of Dan and Joan McInroe, hostesses at the New Tribes Guest House, and soon two taxis had hauled our gang up to the big gate that stands in front of a large ranch-style home and another two-story modern-looking office building that marks the New Tribes headquarters in Manaus. We were shown to an apartment and were soon seated at the breakfast table, for it was still an early Wednesday morning in the Amazon.

It was now time for us to get a few last minute souvenirs, repack our bags and be ready for a Saturday flight to Bogota, Colombia, and then to the States. Dan and Joan made us feel right at home. They have room for about seven families at the guest house and usually are full. Later in the day we went downtown to check on our flight reservations, and visit points of interest. We visited the Indian museum, famous gold opera house of the 1890's and many shops and parks. We were told we could catch a small riverboat the next morning and make a five-hour trip out to see the New Tribes Mission School for missionary children. This sounded interesting to all of us except Mother and Priscilla. There was a lot of packing and repacking, washing, etc., to get ready, so they wanted to stay behind. The trip in the small boat along the river shore was interesting. We stopped to let off and take on passengers from dozens of farms along the way. When we pulled into the school area, right on the

banks of the river, the dock was full of teenagers jumping off the diving board and dock and having a great time. It was their daily swim period.

Paul, Lydia, Nano and I were shown around the dozen or more buildings that make up the school and homes for the teachers and missionary staff. My children went swimming with the others and found it interesting to make acquaintance with a group of 30 teenagers who were out on a summer mission work program. These kids had paid their own way to Brazil to be in on a summer mission project. They were building a school building and in their six weeks' tour would leave the building complete and ready to function. What an experience for them, seeing missionary life in the jungle and living and working and visiting with missionaries and natives. Many testified that it had burdened their hearts and changed their entire understanding of missions. Many had tested their supposed call to missions and many would go back firmly committed to prepare to live their lives as missionaries. We had supper in a large screened-in dining hall, looking something like a Bible Camp building with over 100 missionary children, then some visiting, and to bed, listening to monkey calls and bird noises at night.

We slept under mosquito nets that night for there is plenty of malaria in the jungle. Then up early, for the sun rises about 5 a.m. and sets around 6 p.m. all the year around in the Amazon tropics. Arriving back in Manaus, it was a rush to get everything in our bags and have a bit of lunch before one of the missionaries hauled us off in his station wagon to the new airport about five miles out of the city. A beautiful afternoon for flying, and as we lifted up over the dense rain forests of the Amazon, we could, with joy swelling up in our hearts, say, "Thank You, Lord, for a blessed and memorable trip. To visit and to live among your great missionary family is indeed marvelous. "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage... Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:6, 11).

MISSIONS IMPOSSIBLE?

This was the very thought-provoking theme of a missions conference sponsored by Victory In Christ Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minnesota, on October 10-12.

Guest speakers included:

Pastor John Abel, his wife Ruby, and their family, of Parana, Brazil, AFLC Mission.

Mr. Bill Erickson, his wife Pat, and their two children, of Irian Jaya, Indonesia, under Mission Aviation Fellowship.

Mr. Theodore Manaen and his wife, of the World Mission Prayer League.

Slides were presented by each speaker of their particular work, with challenging messages which the Holy Spirit used to stir each heart. Special music was provided by the Abel family. Portuguese Gospel melodies, as well as English songs, were shared.

Some challenging overriding themes from the conference are as follows:

"The church is missions—missions is the church."

"Inspiration without involvement leads to indifference."

"Give until it hurts."

"Opportunities exist everywhere."

John Abel stressed that "opportunities exist everywhere." He told of a village in Brazil where the mayor was willing to give a piece of land in the middle of the village on which to build a church. To this date, no one has gone back to that village to build a church because there are not enough workers.

Theodore Manaen presented a challenge with these statements: "The church is missions—missions is the church" and "Inspiration without involvement leads to indifference." The mission field is in our own neighborhood, at work, and at school, as well as across the sea. Every Christian is a missionary.

Bill Erickson and his family have just recently accepted an assignment to Indonesia. Their love and willingness to serve the Lord was very apparent as they shared what Bill's job would be as an aviation mechanic specialist and Pat as a missionary's wife, tending the radio and becoming involved with women's groups.

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Women For Christ

RICE LUTHERAN SCENE OF NORTH CENTRAL MINNESOTA WMF MEETING

The WMF of Rice Lutheran, Bagley parish, hosted the Fall Rally for the North Central Minnesota District Women's Missionary Federation on Saturday, October 11, 1975. The theme was "The Abundant Life," based on John 10:10: "... I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." The theme song was "Surely Goodness and Mercy."

With Mrs. Kenneth Johnson, district president, presiding, we opened our rally by singing "Alleluia" and then "Crown Him With Many Crowns," giving all our praise and consideration to God for our rally that day. Special music was provided by the Maple Bay Women's Sextet. The morning Bible study hour was shared by Mrs. Orville Olson, McIntosh, and Mrs. Bruce Dalager, Bagley. Using the theme verse, Mrs. Olson explained that abundant life means there's more than enough for us so we can share it with others also. However, to have (spiritual) life, we must first come in contact with the Giver of life and then come to repentance as we are called by the Holy Spirit. Mrs. Dalager, referring to Ephesians 1:11, 13, 14, spoke of our inheritance in heaven, put into heavenly bank accounts. These accounts are waiting for all of us who are Christians. The priceless gifts that come with these accounts are in abundant life now and eternal life later.

During the business meeting the following officers were elected: president—Mrs. Haldor Hegg, McIntosh; secretary—Mrs. Jerome Voxland, McIntosh. Other district officers are vice-president—Mrs. Bob Bilden, Bagley, and treasurer—Mrs. Darrel Johnson, McIntosh. A letter from Mrs. Kenneth Moland to the district cradle roll secretary was read to introduce the cradle roll packets now available to us. An invitation was extended by Trinity Lutheran, McIntosh, for the spring rally. The WMF Retreat at Bethany Bible Camp, Bemidji, has been set for Monday, July 26, 1976. The offering taken is to go to Home Missions and the General Fund. Pastor Gerald Mundfrom reviewed several good books from the Book Nook area at the rally.

The afternoon session began with a prayer time, led by Mrs. S. E. Odegaard, with prayer requests from the ladies. Special music was provided by Mrs. Bill Goodman, Bemidji. The afternoon mission speaker was Mrs. Gerald Knudsvig of Buxton, N. Dak., a former missionary to Madagascar. After giving her own personal testimony as to how God called her into missionary work, she presented her challenge to "Fling Out the Banner," based on Psalm 20:1-6. Why should we fling out the banner? How can the world know what Christ is like except we show them? Where? Where not? How? Let go and let God! Why? We are dead to sin and alive to Christ. Every congregation is a missionary society.

Every Christian is a missionary. Each person doing little things accomplishes great things when joined by others, she said.

The rally was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Mrs. S. E. Odegaard
Secretary Pro-tem

SECOND MISSION FIELD TOUR PLANNED

Take this opportunity to visit four countries in South America and our AFLC mission field in Brazil. New Departure Tours, Inc., Mr. Henri Pol, Jr., president, has set up, together with Missionary John Abel, an interesting tour that will include LaPaz, Bolivia; Asuncion, Paraguay; a week on our mission field in and near Campo Mourao, Parana; Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia and Manaus (on the Amazon River) all in Brazil; and Bogota, Colombia, in the Andes.

The dates of the tour are February 23 to March 15 (21 days). The last tour, two years ago, was a great blessing, both to the missionaries on the field and to all who went along. The missionaries are anxious that many more of you brethren should have the opportunity of seeing South America and the mission work there first hand. We must have your application, or letter of interest, by the end of December. The tour cost is being finalized and a folder and information letter will be sent to anyone who writes. The cost at this time is estimated to be about the same as the previous tour, or in the neighborhood of \$1100.

Please write soon to Mr. Henri Pol, 3444 Girard Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408, or Pastor John H. Abel, Country Manor No. 36, Fergus Falls, Minnesota 56537.

J. H. A.

FAITHFUL WMF MEMBERS AT MOLAND HONORED

Mrs. Anna Mattson, age 98, mother of four children, and Mrs. Ragnhild Grande, age 92, mother of six, members of Moland Lutheran Church, Mason, Wis., received Honorary Memberships in the Women's Missionary Federation, with pins and certificates,

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Wonderful Experiences in the Work of God's Kingdom

THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD OVER THE HEART OF A SINNER

During a seamen's festivity in the year 1932, the well-known and zealous city missionary, Pastor Olaf Eger, from Los Angeles, California, was present and gave the festival speech. In his address, he recounted the following, and we shall let him tell the stories himself:

"It may seem strange that I as a city missionary in Los Angeles, California, should tell you something of the work here in Seattle, but what I tell you, I know and can tell it as absolutely reliable as I have a personal acquaintance with the individual concerned in the story I tell.

"There was a young man, by name F. He had been in the penitentiary in Walla Walla, Washington, for quite a term and his heart had become hard and embittered, and he had sworn revenge. As soon as he had been released from the penitentiary he came here to Seattle. About the first thing he did was to purchase a revolver, intending on the following night to go out on robbery. This was to be done later at night and as the evening was young the time for the proposed crime was somewhat delayed. In order to kill his spare time, he entered the Seamen's Mission, about eight o'clock, just as Pastor Slettedahl had begun his sermon.

"During the sermon, the Word of God impressed him so strongly that a great, drastic change took place in his heart. Instead of going out on robbery, he threw the revolver away and gave his heart to God. This meeting marked a complete change in his life.

"This same young man is now a devout Christian and an active member of our church in Los Angeles. Two years ago, he was married to a pious young woman and their home is one of the happiest in the city of Los Angeles."

A Similar Episode

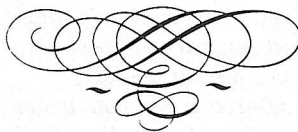
During one of our evening meetings, a strong and well-built Norwegian seaman got up and spoke as follows:

"Three years ago, I came as a strange seaman here to Seattle. One evening, I came in here at the Seamen's Mission during a service with a bottle of whiskey in my pocket. On that night God met me by His Holy Spirit and saved me. Since that night God has given me the grace to live as a Christian man."

Thereupon he fell with tears upon his knees in prayer, and thanked God for the cleansing blood which has such transforming power in the heart of a sinner.

"For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

—E. B. Slettedahl



The Christ came
To a rough barn in Bethlehem,
As a poor Child upon the straw,
But angels sang and shepherds saw
The love of God revealed to them.

The Christ comes
To us. We celebrate His birth.
Once more the bells of Christmas
ring.
Once more we hear the angels sing
Above the noises of the earth.

The Christ comes
Into the dark of empty lives.
With light, hope, peace and joy He
comes,
With victory that He has won—
His is the gift of Paradise.

The Christ will come.
Face to face shall we see Him then,
Eternal Ruler of the earth,
King of Kings who gives rebirth—
O let us be prepared for Him.

Marlene Moline
Lansing, Iowa

[Continued from page 6]

The conclusion of the conference was: missions are possible if we as individuals and as a church are willing to give in love and full surrender of our time, our talents, our money, our prayers, our children and ourselves to the Lord and say, "Here am I Lord, send me!"

—Barbara Parsons, Secretary
Victory in Christ Lutheran Church

Now a Tradition

The Annual Christmas Concert at Association Free Lutheran Bible School

Sunday, December 14, 4 o'clock
Minneapolis, Minnesota

The Senior Choir and the Ladies' Choral Club
under the direction of Mr. Donald Rodvold.

A light supper will be served following the concert.

editorials

WE ESCAPED THE "FAVELA"

Recently we read a rather lengthy article about life in the "favela," the slums, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It was a touching story about wretched living conditions—families crowded into small shacks with dirt floors. Of wet and muddy floors when it rains, with hardly a dry place to find, ideal conditions for fostering and prolonging illness in children and adults. Of rats that can sometimes be as large as cats because they scavenge in the garbage which is simply thrown outdoors as there is no sanitation department on "the hill." The rats are not poisoned because then they would crawl into inaccessible places under the shacks and die and the smell of a dead rat is worse than having living ones around.

Reading about life in the "favela" is not pleasant. But it does have a redeeming side, the reading about it, that is. It reminds us to be thankful for good and bountiful circumstances in which to live, all through life. It is doubtful if any *Ambassador* reader has ever lived in conditions as pitiful as those of the favela. Yes, the things from

which one has been spared may often be the chief causes of gratitude.

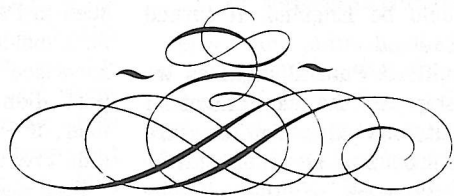
In the midst of all the material blessings which are ours, it is well to think of ways in which we may help to share in the poverty and wretchedness of the world's millions. Appeals for help cross our desk with regularity. Help for all kinds of needs. Assistance to bring hope to victims of all sorts of tragedies in life. You have those which come to your home and office. Great wisdom is needed to eliminate those appeals that are less worthy, and there are those. Sometimes a cause appears more challenging and worthwhile from a distance than it does when viewed near at hand.

When the validity of appeals has been determined, we believe it is good to contribute to relief work in other countries, in our country and in our state and/or community. In other countries, because even as the Gospel must be brought to all nations, care for the physical and material needs of others must not stop at the water's edge. In our country, because we are bound by ties of responsibility to all others who share the same land. There are no absolute boundaries of states or regions. Finally, concern must be evident for the needy of one's own community. It is simply not understood by the world if one who professes Christ does not manifest His love toward the unfortunate near at hand. John, the Apostle, expressed some of the same puzzlement when he said, "But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and truth" (I John 3:17, 18).

Christmas is coming, that happy season of giving and receiving. There will be plenty to eat for most of us in comfortably-heated homes. Our children will be given many things to gladden them and warm the hearts of their parents as they watch their joy. We will travel with ease to attractive churches in order to praise God in word and song for His greatest of gifts, the Lord Jesus.

With all of these good blessings and benefits, let us find it in our hearts to share gifts of generosity with those who for some reason or other are denied the good things of life which have come our way. What we have of this world's goods may be due in part, if it be not heresy to say it, to our ingenuity and industriousness, but let us never forget that but for the grace of God we might be pondering the purpose of life in an almost hopeless "favela" of Rio or in a slum tenement of New York City.

God will bless those who give the figurative, and the literal, cup of cold water to the one in need, out of love for the Savior, who said, "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40).



HOW MY ATTITUDE TOWARD SOCIAL DRINKING CHANGED

By Rev. Gerald F. Mundfrom,
Grafton, N. Dak.

It was while in the Army, during World War II, that I first met Paul W_____. Little did I realize, when I first saw Paul, what a true and intimate friend he would turn out to be.

We were never formally introduced. In the Army, where you continuously see new faces, and rub shoulders with all kinds of soldiers, both Christian and non-Christian, you do not very often wait for a formal introduction.

In the war, during this time, such things as drinking, smoking, cursing, swearing, gambling, adultery, as well as every other known sin, were very prevalent. The Christian was able to keep himself free and clean from these things, but, nevertheless, he could not withdraw from such worldliness and live completely independent from them. It was very depressing to the Christian because of how he was compelled to live right in the midst of all this sin. There was never any escape from it. He was ever in the center of all this worldliness.

I was not overly impressed with Paul, but quite the opposite, the first time he came to my attention. We were about to board ship at Palermo, Sicily. Our company was an evacuation hospital unit. In Sicily we had taken care of many sick and wounded soldiers who were brought to us from the front lines as the battle raged in Sicily and Italy.

But now the battle in this area was practically over and our unit was being shipped someplace else. We did not know for sure where we were going, but for some reason we suspected that it would be England. It turned out to be England.

I first noticed Paul at night as we boarded ship. In the excitement of moving out, not knowing for sure where, Paul became so drunk that he could hardly walk. Neither did he have any sense of direction as to where he was going.

Everyone was busy. No one had time to take care of a drunk. A large net affair was being used to hoist the barracks bags onto the ship. Just as another net load of barracks bags were being hoisted onto the ship, someone tossed Paul on the top of these bags and that is how he got aboard.

As I witnessed this, it was all very disgusting to me. The war we were fighting was serious business and, besides that, I was homesick. If only the war would soon be over so I could go home. I felt it was the duty of every soldier to help win the war, and not to be a burden to the Army by getting drunk when there was work to do.

I remember the thought that went through my mind, of which I repented later on.

"Why does God allow a worthless bum like this to live and stand in the way at a time like this? Of what earthly good are such as Paul?"

As a Christian, I found comfort, strength and encouragement in my Bible and often read in it. My plans were to continue my education in preparation for the ministry after receiving my discharge from the Army. I was nicknamed "preacher" and I did not mind this name, but rather felt honored by it. This nickname made me feel that my light for Christ was shining at least a little bit.

It so happened that while on ship Paul's bunk was not far from mine. Sometime after Paul had sobered up and while I was sitting on my bunk reading my Bible, he came to me. I was not very happy to see him or to have him single me out as he did. Feeling somewhat embarrassed to be seen in Paul's presence, I felt a coldness inside of me towards him. I am surprised that this coldness on my part didn't drive Paul away. However, if Paul sensed any coldness, he didn't reveal it.

Paul showed a great interest in the Bible as he saw me reading it. He seemed to have a hunger for its truth

and wisdom and asked me some heart-searching questions in relation to the Bible. He was especially concerned about what was sin and what it meant to be a Christian.

At first I suspected that Paul only asked these questions in order to ridicule, to mock, or to poke fun at my piety. But Paul did not ridicule. He did not laugh or mock in any way. And he kept on coming to me again and again, and he kept on asking questions. He told me that as a young lad he had once given his heart to Christ. (Paul had been in the Army for a number of years and was older than the average soldier.) He also admitted that he had fallen away from Christ, and that he was deep in sin.

My heart began to warm up to Paul. We talked about many things and had good fellowship in a Christian sense on our trip to England and after we got to England. We became friends.

One of the questions that Paul had asked was: "Is it a sin to drink just a little? Is it a sin to drink moderately or in a social way as long as you do not let yourself become drunk?" My own feeling, at this time, on this question was that it was not a sin to drink moderately and I told Paul how I felt about it. I even said that I felt that moderate drinking in a social way had its place and could be used of God. I felt that it might give opportunity to witness for Christ. Paul made no remark to this. I never did see Paul drunk again after that night we boarded ship at Palermo. He no longer went drinking with his old buddies.

One evening Paul and I, on the basis of what I had said about drinking, decided to visit a near-by pub. (England is known for her pubs as a place to drink cider. These pubs are as common as the beer taverns in America.) Paul and I planned to have a drink or two of cider and no more, throw some darts and come back to camp. (Many of the pubs have dart boards as a form of recreation.) We had now concluded that there was no sin or anything unchristian in such recreation. I would prove and demonstrate this to Paul, and reassure myself of the same. As yet Paul had made no confession in being a Christian and did not think of himself as such. However,

[Continued on page 12]



SCHOOL NEWS

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Prof. Ole Ledang, music director at Fjellhaug Mission School in Oslo, Norway, has visited our campus a number of times this fall and on Nov. 12 he was the speaker at joint chapel. He and Mrs. Ledang will leave for Norway on Dec. 16 after their stay in the U.S., where he has visited a number of schools to study their music programs.

Mr. Anker Harbo and a Gospel team presented a program at Green Lake Lutheran Church, Spicer, Minn., on Nov. 16.

That same evening the Choir and Choral Club, under the direction of Mr. Donald Rodvold, sang in a Thanksgiving Service of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs at Medicine Lake Lutheran Church, Minneapolis. The church's pastor, Rev. J. G. Erickson, gave a brief meditation.

Miss Mary Rolf, dean of women,



Ivar Berge, left, brother Arne, and Debbie Wire at noon lunch.

showed slides of Brazil at the Oct. 27 meeting of the Mission Club. Rev. Amos Dyrud showed slides of Madagascar missions at the Nov. 17 meeting.

Allen Herset, Kila, Mont., Pattie Erickson, Roseau, Minn., and Tony Stockman, Tioga, N. Dak., were speakers at student chapel on Nov. 17. Paul Kylo, Kenyon, Minn., sang a solo. Pattie and Tony have completed their work for graduation. A student chapel is planned for once each quarter.

An all-school hayride was held on Friday, Nov. 14. Afterward refreshments were served in the rec room and a singspiration closed the evening.

Faculty and staff members spent Friday evening, Nov. 14, at the Kenneth Moland home. It was a housewarming for the Molands, who moved to the Cities this past summer. Rev.



AFLBS dining hall during noon lunch. Pastor and Mrs. Dyrud are shown at the left.

Amos Dyrud had Scripture and prayer and presented a gift to the Molands.

A youth rally will be held on Saturday, Dec. 13, the night before the annual Christmas concert. Some young people and parents will be coming in on Saturday to take in these activities at AFLBS.

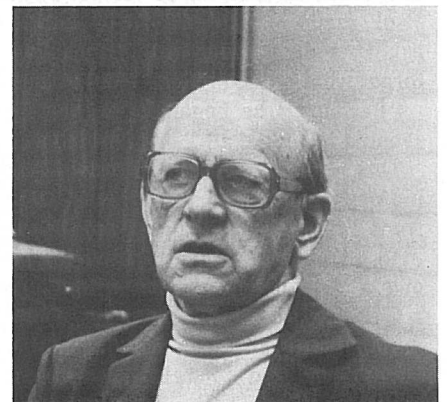
The all-school Christmas party will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 16. The Social Committee is planning this special school fellowship and social.

The proctors and deans had their appreciation dinner at the Golden Valley Steak House on Mon., Nov. 24.

CONQUERORS OPEN LEAGUE SCHEDULE WITH A WIN

The AFLBS basketball team, the Conquerors, opened its 1975-76 season in YMCA competition with a 62-31 win over Salem Lutheran. The Conquerors have more height than usual this year, always a good commodity. Members of the 12-man squad are: Arne and Ivar Berge, Binford, N. Dak.; Reuben Quanbeck, McVille, N. Dak.; Paul Haagenson, Jim Hjelden and Jon Rognlie, all of Minnewaukan, N. Dak.; Paul Kylo, Goodhue, Minn.; Dave Grothe, Thief River Falls, Minn.; Cary Dietsche, Sand Creek, Wis.; Lou Valdez, San Antonio, Tex.; Duane Strand, Abercrombie, N. Dak.; and Doug Johnson, Sacred Heart, Minn.

Rev. Ken Moland is coach of the team this year. League games are being played at North Community YMCA, 1717 West Broadway in Minneapolis, and future contests will all begin at either 7:30 or 8:30 p.m.



Prof. Ole Ledang, Oslo, Norway

I did claim to be a Christian.

It was a clear moonlit evening as we started out for the pub. It was in early December. The weather was cool, but not cold. (The weather never gets much below freezing in southern England.)

It was about two miles to the pub. We had our drinks of cider as planned, threw some darts, and started for home.

On the way back to our company there seemed to be something wrong. We found it difficult to carry on interesting conversation. For some reason I felt depressed and so did Paul. We walked much of the way in silence. After a bit we came to a big tree by the side of the road. It was still early in the evening, so we decided to wait under the big tree a while and enjoy the beauty of the evening before going back to camp. While relaxing under this tree, Paul asked me another question, a different type of question this time.

"Did you have a good time to-night?"

I paused for a moment before answering. I was not doing so well in proving my point about social drinking. It was obvious that the evening had not brought the enjoyment and relaxation that we had anticipated and hoped that it would.

"No, Paul," I had to admit, "I can't truthfully say that I had fun. Something seems to be wrong."

"I feel the same way," added Paul.

We tried to figure out what was wrong, and why we felt like we did. We tried to figure out what it was that made the evening so boring. Then Paul made a statement instead of asking a question, and I shall never forget what he said.

"Perhaps," he began, "a Christian shouldn't drink at all."

This remark stunned me for a moment as I realized that it came from Paul, who had been a drinking man. It put me under the conviction of sin. And it was not a preacher or a Christian that so convicted me, but a non-Christian, one who as yet made no claim to being right with God.

No words came to me so that I could defend my position on social

drinking. I had felt that for Paul's sake it was necessary to defend drinking in a limited way, if I was to help him to find Christ. But now I suddenly realized that I was a stumbling block to Paul and that I was going about this business of witnessing for Christ in entirely the wrong way.

Greatly humbled, I now said, "Yes, Paul, maybe so, a Christian shouldn't drink at all." I now admitted mostly to myself that I had been wrong and the drinking question truly became settled for me from that time on. I have been practicing total abstinence ever since.

A short time after this Paul became sick. He was taken to an Army station hospital not far from our camp. It was several weeks before I saw him again.

When Paul was discharged from the hospital, he came to see me. I well remember the look on his face. It was one big smile. There was a sparkle in his eyes. Paul had good news to tell me and he was eager to tell me.

"I have found Christ, Jerry," he exclaimed. "I am saved. I now have peace in my heart. Jesus has forgiven all my sins."

"Good for you, Paul," I answered, eager to hear more. "I am glad. Tell me all about it."

And so Paul did: "When I arrived at the hospital, I was truly worried about my health. I was afraid that my sins were catching up with me. I tried to pray, but didn't know if God heard me or not. I felt a strong need to possess a Bible and did truly long for one with all my heart. The Chaplain sold me one for 75 cents. I began to read and search the Scriptures. For two days I read the Bible. I do not know what others in the ward thought of me, but I didn't care what they thought; I kept on reading.

"Finally, on the second day, about the middle of the afternoon, while reading in the Psalms, I sensed God speak to me through the Psalm I was reading. He gave me His peace. He assured me that He had heard my plea and that my sins were forgiven. I knew that which I was experiencing to be real and of God. I knew that I was again a child of God. I was so overcome with joy that I shouted out. I couldn't help it. Some

looked at me sort of funny-like and may have thought me to be "nuts," but having just obtained God's peace, I could not contain myself. I was truly happy and filled with joy.

"And, Jerry," continued Paul, "that is not all. God has been merciful to me in another way. I am no longer sick. All blood tests are normal. God has given me health. I feel like a new person, body and soul."

I rejoiced with Paul. In the days that followed our fellowship was as brethren in Christ. And it was truly sweet. I remember how we used to steal away into the woods, or to some quiet place, for prayer. We would share what we had been reading in the Bible with each other. Sometimes a couple of other soldiers, also Christians, would join us and we would have a prayer meeting. God was very close at such times.

Paul stood fast. He truly was a different person. He was a new creature in Christ. Everything seemed changed in Paul. His language was different. Smoking and drinking were never a part of Paul after this. Paul testified that God even took away the desire to participate in these things. When he saw others doing these things, it went against him. It did not tempt him.

There was also something else about Paul now which was different. He had a burden for lost souls to become right with Christ. This burden for souls was added proof that he was now truly a saved man.

Neither was Paul ashamed of Christ. He let the whole camp know that he was now a Christian. There were those who said that he had gone nuts over religion, but this did not stop Paul in his zeal to speak for Jesus. Some predicted that Paul would soon go back to sin, but Paul remained true to his Lord.

Paul went back to his old buddies, the ones he used to drink with. But now he did not seek them out in order to drink with them as he once had done, but he sought them out to tell them about Jesus and to invite them to do as he had done, to come to Jesus.

I have seen Paul a number of times since our Army days, and we have kept in contact by letter. He still loves Christ, who so marvelously for-

gave his sin and saved his soul.

I thank God that His patience is greater than mine, and that He can save to the uttermost, even those who seem beyond hope. I am also thankful that when a sinner like me proves to be a stumbling block, instead of a light, that God can still save, and sometimes does. God be praised! And I am thankful that the question of social drinking has been settled for me once and for all.

HARK THE GLAD SOUND!

Hark the glad sound! the Savior comes,
The Savior promised long:
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne,
And every voice a song.

He comes, the prisoners to release,
In Satan's bondage held;
The gates of brass before Him burst,
The iron fetters yield.

He comes, the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of His grace
To bless the humble poor.

Our glad Hosanna, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim,
And heaven's eternal arches ring
With Thy beloved name.

P. Doddridge

(from *Hymnal for Church and Home*)

NEW MEMBERS AT BADGER CREEK

Seven new members were received into the membership of Badger Creek Lutheran Church at Badger, Minnesota, Sunday, October 19th at the morning worship.



Pictured from left to right in the photo, front row, are: Mrs. Mable Trangsrud, Mrs. Hilda Johnson and Mrs. Milford Lange, and back row: Paul Klema, Milford Lange, Glen Haugen and Melvin Johnson.

A fellowship dinner was served in their honor following the service.

It is with much joy that we welcome these fine people into our congregation.

Gustav Nordvall, lay pastor

[Continued from page 16]

tween conservatives and moderates in the Synod. The statement has raised questions and varying interpretations from both sides. Said Dr. Preus:

"It always surprises me that in this so-called age of communications, people, including myself, can't communicate. Some evidently interpreted the phrase 'moving more into the middle' as referring to my doctrinal position and read no further. I would like to reassure any who might be concerned that I continue to maintain and uphold the doctrinal position of the Synod as I always have. Perhaps I should have said that in dealing with one another we need to be of a more conciliatory spirit. If I have been too blunt and sharp at times in my zeal to protect the doctrinal integrity of the Synod, I am truly sorry. And I would plead with all to join me in striving for a more kind and brotherly discussion of the important issues that confront us. There are those who will divide the church by embracing a new doctrine foreign to the theology of the Missouri Synod and there are those who may easily divide the church through hasty and harsh actions before sufficient pastoral steps are taken to win the brother. We dare not let the pendulum swing either to the extreme of indifference to the doctrine of God's Word or to the extreme of lovelessness in our dealings with each other."

[Continued from page 7]

recently, in recognition of and appreciation for their years of faithful service to the Lord in the Ladies Aid. "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:23, 24). May God continue to bless these ladies. Rev. Ronald Knutson is the pastor of Moland Church.

—Corr.

Do you have a copy of the Association's own book of daily devotions? If not, order now, for yourself and for your friends.

WATERS IN THE WILDERNESS

Edited by Dr. Iver Olson

Price per copy—\$3.50

Order from: Devotional Book
3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP GIVEN AT BUXTON

Mrs. Christ Knudsvig, right, was awarded an Honorary Membership



in the Women's Missionary Federation at a recent meeting of the Ny Stavanger Ladies Aid, Buxton, N. Dak. Shown making the presentation is Mrs. Ruben Gunderson. Mr. Rodney Stueland is lay pastor of the congregation.

COMING IN THE CHRISTMAS ISSUE— NEXT TIME

Memories of Christmas in a Danish-American home... Something about Christmas in Australia and Ecuador... Christmas fiction from the land of the Crees in Canada... The legend of the palm tree... A sermon for Christmas... Beautiful poems and pictures... The first WMF Bible Study for 1976... And more, in the 1975 Christmas issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador*, next issue. Watch for it. Order copies sent to relatives and friends.

NEW ADDRESS

New address for Rev. and Mrs. Marius Haakenstad (retired) is Pine Lawn Ranch, 910 West Gurley, Prescott, Arizona 86301.

Napoleon's Confession

Napoleon the Great was filled with ambition, pride, and self-conceit. After his achievements as a conqueror and founder of a world empire, he met with a downfall which seeks its equal. He ended his career as an exile on the lonely island of St. Helena. Here God gave him ample time to ponder his ambitious plottings. During his isolation he began to think of the things that are eternal. Throughout his isolation he gave serious thought to the personality of Jesus Christ.

One day Napoleon asked his companion, General Montholon, "What think you of Christ?"

He answered, "Sir, I must confess that I have never seriously thought about Him."

"So much worse for you," replied the Emperor.

Napoleon then gave the following discourse about the personality of Jesus:

"In the days of my glory I was honored by many people who readily would have died for me. However, it required my attendance, the power of my eye, the voice of my word, the force of my example in order to inspire my soldiers. And now, after I am exiled at St. Helena, who will fight for me? Who will conquer the empire for me? Who has remained faithful to me? This is the fate of great men! Thus it happened to Caesar, and to Alexander the Great. We are soon forgotten.

"Ludwig XIV, the powerful King of France, had barely died when people left him in his death chamber. He was no more ruler; he was a powerless corpse. A few days and the same fate will be mine. What a difference between my destiny, which has changed

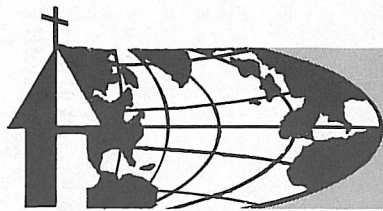
so soon, and the glory of Jesus Christ. What a great abyss is between my downfall and the eternal regime of the Son of God!

"Even before I am dead, my work is destroyed. Christ died 1800 years ago, but His work still exists, just as it did when He lived on earth. He never thought that He had to fear anything by His death. He rather expected it with great confidence. Christ is more powerful after His death than during His earthly career. And time, which changes everything, has not only established His kingdom but has constantly enlarged it. Almost in all parts of the world His Word is preached, and Jesus is loved and worshipped. What dead man still makes conquests—while His soldiers go joyfully to war and to victory for Him? I am still living, and in spite of it my troops have forgotten me.

"Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, I myself, have established powerful empires. Upon what did we build our power? We have built upon force and violence. Jesus Christ has built His kingdom upon love, and up to the present time there are thousands of men who give their lives willingly for Him.

"Jesus is a conqueror who truly unites—not only nations but the whole humanity. What a miracle! The human soul finds itself united, with all its faculties, with Jesus Christ. And how is this done? By a miracle which exceeds all miracles. Christ wants the love of man, which is the most difficult thing to gain. He demands the human heart. That is all He asks, and He receives it. This makes clear His divine existence.

—The Lutheran Messenger



CHURCH-WORLD NEWS

THE CHURCH AROUND THE WORLD

**Seventy thousand converts were baptized into Mormonism last year. The church has 20,000 missionaries worldwide; mostly young men, but with increasing numbers of young women and married couples. By comparison, North American missionaries associated with distinctively evangelical boards total about 21,250.

**5.6 million children (aged 2-11) are watching TV at 11:00 p.m., and at 1:00 a.m., 1.1 million of these children are still up, watching the tube!

**Four hundred out of 600 people in a small town on Taiwan recently became Christians after the town witch accepted Christ. Evangelistic rallies sponsored by the Pocket Testament League have been drawing thousands in Taiwan and the Philippines where Scripture distribution has accompanied the preaching.

**American church membership has apparently peaked. Total 1974 membership was 131.2 million, down 180,000. This is the first time a decrease in total membership has ever been reported. In Latin America, it's a different story. Five thousand new evangelical churches were established there last year, and evangelical churches are growing faster there than anywhere else. There are now more Christians in the emerging countries than in Europe and North America. (Ed. note: We question this report, the last sentence, but pass it on to our readers anyway.)

—Tyndale House Publishers

LUTHERAN CHURCHES KEEP PACE WITH PROTESTANT GIVING

New York—(LC)—U.S. church members, including Lutherans, are giving more than ever to their churches, but the rate of increase is somewhat below the pace of inflation, according to the Commission on Stew-

ardship of the National Council of Churches.

In its latest annual survey, the NCC reported that members of 44 national church bodies contributed over five billion dollars in 1974 at a record-breaking per capita rate of \$116.77.

But while giving rose by 9.1 per cent over the previous year, the dollar lost 11.0 per cent of its purchasing power in 1974. Thus, like many other institutions, the church is falling behind in terms of real income.

An all-time high figure of \$4.20 billion was earmarked for congregational expenses, while benevolence giving, chiefly for mission purposes, totalled \$1.07 billion, also a new high. The per capita breakdown for the two categories was \$93.02 for the former and \$23.75 for the latter.

Six Lutheran bodies in the United States that reported their income to the NCC again exceeded the Protestant average of \$116.77 per member for total contributions and of \$93.02 for congregational expenses in 1974. Again, only four of the six bettered the rate of \$23.75 for benevolences.

Again, as it did in 1973, the Church of the Lutheran Confession led its sister churches in total contributions with per capita giving of \$181.99 from its adult or confirmed members and in congregational expenses with \$151.16, and was second in benevolences with \$30.83.

In the latter category, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod was first with per capita giving of \$34.87, representing 23.4 per cent of its total contributions, also highest among the Lutherans.

In total contributions, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod was second with \$151.32, followed by the WELS with \$148.81, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod with \$146.17, the Lutheran Church in America with \$125.82 and the American Lutheran Church with \$120.30.

In parish or congregational expense, the LCMS was second with \$123.92, followed by the ELS with \$116.04, the WELS with \$113.94, the LCA with \$105.27 and the ALC with \$98.24.

In benevolences, the ELS was third with \$30.13, followed by the LCMS with \$27.40, the ALC with \$22.06 and the LCA with \$20.55.

For the third year running, most major Protestant church bodies in the survey reported that a decreased membership is giving more money in their support. Ten "Mainline" denominations, including the LCA and the LCMS, with 27,443,000 members—1.3 per cent fewer than the previous year—reported 7.7 per cent greater contributions income.

Churches where tithing is practiced showed, as is customary, the highest rates of per capita giving. As they have for a number of years, the Seventh-day Adventists topped the list, with a figure of \$486.48 per member. More than 70 cents of each dollar was earmarked for benevolence or in support of missions—contrary to the pattern of most churches where a similar amount supports local congregational expenses.

In Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada led its sister churches in total contributions with \$94.77 per member and also in congregational expenses with \$75.85. The ELCC was second in benevolences with \$12.59.

DR. PREUS OF LCMS CONFIDENT "CHURCH WILL STAY TOGETHER"

St. Louis (LC) — In a letter to all pastors, teachers and lay leaders of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Dr. J. A. O. Preus, president of the 2.8 million-member denomination, stressed "the fact that the church continues to remain as faithful to God's

Word in 1975 as in its founding days 128 years ago."

"I am just as confident," he added in his October 30 message to the Synod, "that the church will stay together."

Acknowledging that "there may well be a few congregations which may leave" as a result of the activities of Evangelical Lutherans in Mission (ELIM) and Lutheran Church in Mission (LCM), Dr. Preus observed:

"Though we regret deeply that any congregations may leave, all present indications are that the number will be very small. I strongly believe that

more and more individuals are recognizing that their joy in the Lord and their ministry for Him can best be realized within the Synod."

First elected to head the LCMS in 1969 and reelected in 1973, he noted that, "I have always had three basic goals for our Synod: 1) to keep it faithful to God's Word; 2) to keep it together and at peace; and 3) to help it grow."

Dr. Preus also sought to clarify a statement which he made in a similar letter to church leaders last August that he was "moving more into the middle" of the doctrinal dispute be-

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