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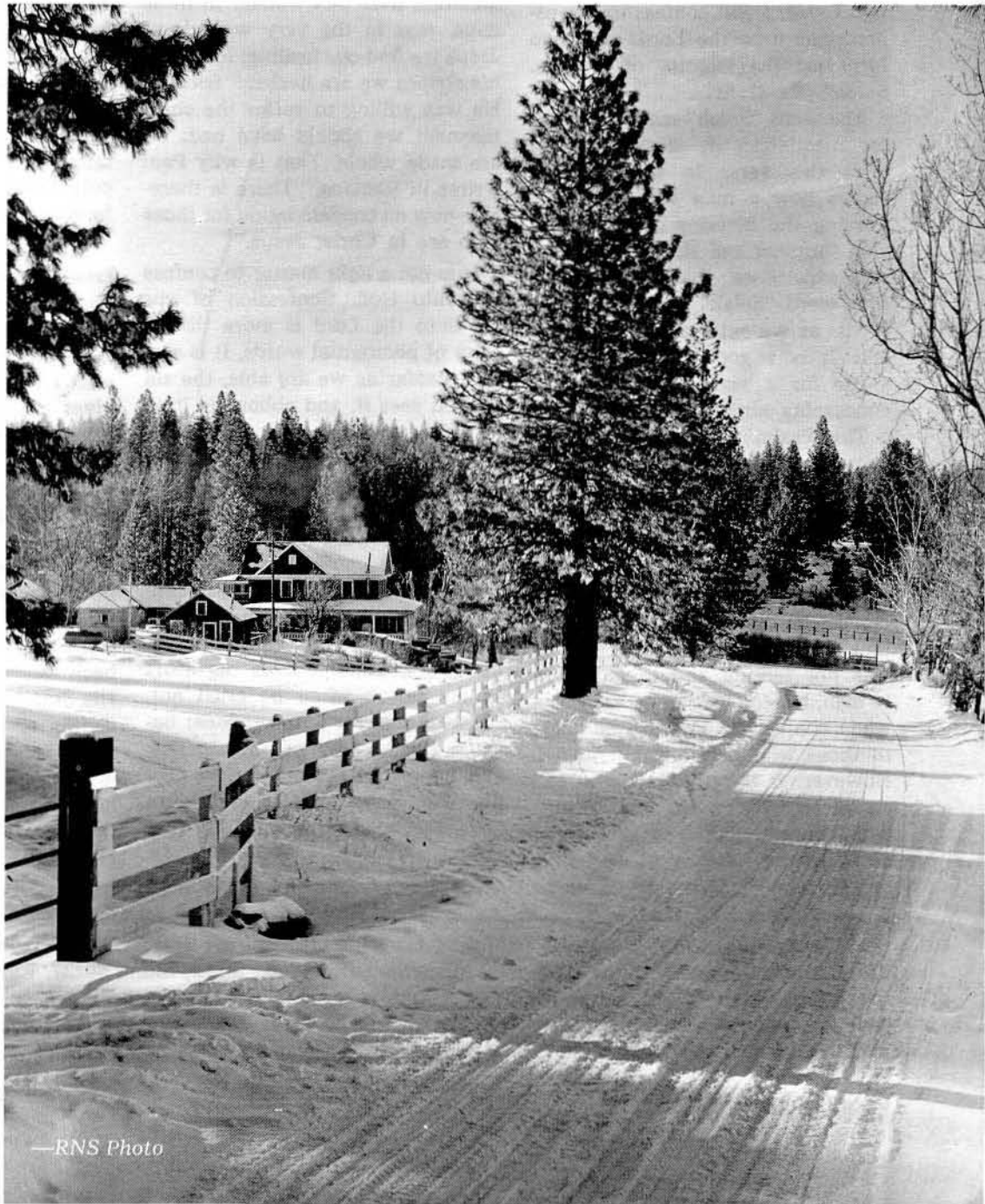
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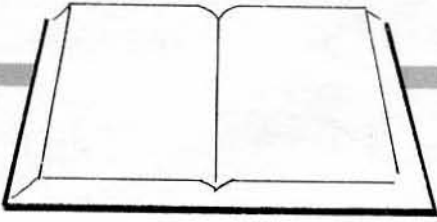
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LUTHERAN

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—RNS Photo



According to the Word

THE BLESSEDNESS OF FORGIVENESS

"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah" (Ps. 32: 5).

The word "Selah" means a pause for meditation. It is well placed after this verse in which David shows how a man who has been missing the blessing of transgression forgiven and sin covered may yet experience that blessedness. This word "Selah" is a good word for us as we enter the Lenten season. It is a good time for us to pause for a season of meditation concerning our sin.

The Psalmist tells us that the way into the blessed state of being forgiven by God is to come by the way of confession of sin. When guile goes and sin is acknowledged, forgiveness comes. There are two significant phrases connected with confession in this verse, "unto thee" and "unto the Lord." David was not talking about confession to man, but to God. There are times when confession needs to be made to those who have been wronged. However, it is only God who can completely cover sin and forgive our transgression. You and I deserve to die because of our sins; but God in His grace loved us so

much that He sent His Son to die in our stead. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." Let us meditate over this wonder in these days, that in the very wounds of Jesus we find our healing; for "with his stripes we are healed." Because He was willing to suffer the chastisement we should have had, we are made whole. That is why Paul writes in Romans, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

It is not a light matter to confess sin unto God. Confession of our sin unto the Lord is more than a form of penitential words. It is seeing, insofar as we are able, the sin as God sees it, and abhorring it as an unholy thing. To confess our sin is to realize that our sins are an affront to our blessed Lord who died that we might not do the thing we have done. Let us beware of thoughtless confession especially during the season of Lent when confession often "becomes the thing to do." Rather, as we view our sin, may we confess it from the heart as did Isaiah when he cried out, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

A young explorer in Canada spent

his last days alone in a hut. When his body was found long afterwards, on the table there lay a letter which said, "The sun is shining, Mother, but I feel so cold. I have not eaten for so long. I haven't seen another human being for forty days now. There are some magazines here, but the stories are so silly. I have some cards, but I don't want to play solitaire. The only thing I want, the only thing I worry about is God's forgiveness for my sins!"

When David had made true confession to God there was rejoicing. He now knew the blessing of transgressions forgiven and of sin that God had covered. The Word of God also tells us that when God forgives sin He also forgets it. Too often our enemy brings back the memory of sins of the distant past to torment and trouble our conscience. But God has declared, "I will remember their sin no more." What a wonderful way to show us how completely our sins have vanished from His sight when we have confessed them to Him! They have been washed away by the blood of His Son. He has cast them into the depths of the sea, as the prophet says. Whenever we are reminded of our sins, we should also remember that for Jesus' sake God has forgotten them. He has said so in His Word.

—R. Snipstead

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Father, Forgive Them



Pastor Raynard Huglen

Read Luke 23:24a

LUKE, the beloved physician, alone recorded the Word of Jesus to the penitent thief and he is the only one of the Gospel writers to relate the prayer of Jesus for His enemies.

A beautiful word it is, too, "Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing" (NEB). And yet Jesus would have prayed for His executioners even if He had had to say that they knew what they were doing. Such is the wonder of His love.

Someone has said that this Word tells us four things: who He is (the Son of God), what He is (our Mediator), what we are (sinners in need of forgiveness), and what we should be (free from the power of sin).

Now we shall proceed in another manner today as we consider this Word from the cross, but it may be that these four points will find elaboration in the process.

First of all, we are to notice that Jesus accused His tormentors of ignorance. Let us always keep in mind that those who were physically present at the crucifixion represented us, too. But to get back, didn't these people, especially the Jewish religious leaders, know who Jesus was? No, they didn't. If they had known and so believed they wouldn't have performed such a dastardly deed.

They could have known, indeed,

should have known. They are not excused for their ignorance. Jesus had gone about among them. They knew that He was born in Bethlehem and had in other ways fulfilled prophecy. Yet they would not believe. Sin had blinded their eyes and hearts.

A lot of sin is like that, isn't it? They, we, do not know what we do.

Sin doesn't make sense when you stop to think about it, does it? We are all familiar with the old adage "crime doesn't pay" and in our hearts we know that is correct. The guilty usually are caught and if perchance they avoid capture they are still trapped by their own consciences.

Let us take the sin of false witness as an example of sin's senselessness. I speak evil of someone and three are hurt. The person of whom I have spoken is hurt, I have hurt myself and I have offended God. In fact, every sin which involves a second person has those results and in every sin the offender and God are involved.

As God looks at us and our misdeeds He must ask, why do you do that? And in our hearts, too, we ask ourselves, why? Yet this is in no wise intended to mean that we are therefore innocent. No, we are guilty.

The prayer of Jesus for His enemies reveals something very great. It tells us that there is forgiveness in the heart of God. God is a forgiving God.

But notice this. Just because

Jesus offered this prayer doesn't mean that all were forgiven. A little later we will show who they were who received forgiveness.

Let us picture a mother's attitude toward a wayward son. The son may be away from home or living at home, but he is disobedient and has brought much sorrow to his mother. The mother, being like many mothers, forgives her son in her heart and may even tell him so. This means that from her side all is clear. She holds no resentment and has only love for him.

Is the son therefore forgiven? No, the forgiveness has done him no good. Consider the father of the Prodigal Son. There was forgiveness in his heart, but the boy had to come back to get it before it was effective. When the wayward son we were speaking about is willing to say, "Mom, forgive me," then his heart is open to receive the pardon that was present all the time.

It's the same way with God. He doesn't want to condemn the world. He wants to save it. Sin has brought judgment upon the world but God has the plan, the only plan, for deliverance.

Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them." Who were really forgiven according to the standards of which we were just speaking? Perhaps the centurion who stood by, not knowing what was really happening, and who testified "Truly this man was the Son of God."

But let us move on to the day of

[Continued on page 7]

Pastor Knut Gjesfjeld,
Thief River Falls, Minn.

THIS time we are dealing with a portion of Scripture that has caused much dispute and quarrel among Christians, namely Romans 7:14 and the rest of the chapter. To me, it looks like verse 14 is the introduction to the thoughts presented to us in the verses following, including verse 25.

In verse 14 we read the solemn statement: "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin." There comes the question: Is this experience of verse 14 the experience of Paul as a Christian, or let me rather say, as a saved man, or is it Paul awakened and working under the law in order to be right with God?

Everyone who has become a saved man or a saved woman knows that to be working under the law is self-righteousness and condemnation, not salvation! There is a lot of "I" in this portion of Scripture. Is this "I" Paul himself or is this "I" the new man created by God when a person is born again? Here is very likely where the confusion begins.

Almost anyone is able to discern that we have an inner man and an outward man. The inner man has the ability of discernment. He is able to distinguish between wrong and right. A natural man may have a strong conviction of sin and still live in it. Many unsaved men and women are able to discern what is wrong and right preaching. They even know that they should repent, but they don't do it.

If man did not have the ability of discernment, of knowing right from wrong, he would have no responsibility. Without responsibility there could be no judgment and no condemnation.

Paul knew the requirements of the law. He knew the law demands the will of the holy and righteous God. Any natural man who has become acquainted with the law realizes that the law is the demand

UNDER THE LAW-- THE RESULT

from God and feels the guilt to some degree.

In verse 25 we learn that Paul is serving the law. He himself gives the words plainly enough: "I of myself serve the law of God." In this verse some good Christian finds the proof that Paul was a saved man because he said these words. I have heard the statement by some that it is impossible that there can be this much good in a man that is not saved. But to be serving the law is to be under a curse (Gal. 3:10), "For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse." Have you been conscious of the fact that the Holy Spirit is not mentioned through all these verses, Romans 7:14-25? That Paul is not serving in the power of the Holy Spirit he makes plain by saying, "I of myself serve..."

What does Paul find to be the result of serving the law? The answer is: "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" What does Paul say in these few statements? He says that when Jesus comes into the situation He will deliver out of the slavery you have been in. That is to say, you are no longer sold under sin. You shall be set free from the law of sin and death. Don't make the mistake of believing that you must continue in the slavery described in the previous verses.

A great change takes place when Jesus comes into the heart. Just listen to what Paul says in this same chapter, verse 6, "But now we

are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old code but in the new life of the Spirit."

In this portion of Scripture (Rom. 7:14-25), Paul has put in all his energy to improve or reform the old Adam by being obedient to the law, and the experience is exactly what the Scriptures say would take place: "Through the law comes the knowledge of sin." "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" In Romans 6:6, Paul tells us how this body of death is destroyed. "We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that the sinful body might be destroyed."

So that is a reality that our sinful body is destroyed. How? It has changed masters. Before you were saved your old Adam was the master of your sinful body and used it in the service of sin. After you were saved the new man took the place of the old man and used this body in the service of righteousness. In this way the body of sin is done away with. A destroyed body, a body that is done away with can't be sold under sin.

Paul, in Romans 7:14, does not speak of our body with the new man as master. But he speaks of our body with the old man as its master. After that old man, which is our old self, is crucified with Jesus, then he is not able to control our body. In Galatians 5:24 we read: "And those who belong to Christ

CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY

Col. 1:27

Pastor Lars Stalsbroten,
Eugene, Ore.

Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." Paul says in Romans 7:14: "I am carnal, sold under sin." How can Paul say anything like this? His body of sin is destroyed, done away with. His flesh with its passions and desires is crucified.

If the body of sin is destroyed, if the passions and desires of the flesh are crucified, then he cannot be sold under it. Being crucified is to be made powerless. Paul could not be sold under anything that is crucified and has no power. To teach that Paul was a saved man but sold under sin is contrary to the teaching of the Scripture.

Compare Romans 7:14 with Romans 8:2. In 7:14 he says, "I am carnal, sold under sin." In Romans 8:2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death."

In the first passage he is sold under sin and in the next he is set free from the law of sin.

Here are two different experiences, the one contrary to the other. Are they both from the same kind of man? Or from the same kind of heart? Such teaching is enough to make anyone confused.

In order to make the whole passage from 7:14 to 7:25 clear, or maybe I should say, our view, clear, I have to say something about verse 22: "For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self." Yes, we must have verse 23 also in order to understand verse 22. Reading verse 22 alone, some will say that Paul must say that and could not say it, if he was not a saved man, if he was not a new creature in Christ. In verse 22 he says: "I delight in the law of God." Paul is still in the law. But you may say, "He delights in it." Here we also read verse 23: "But I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members."

Here we ask ourselves the question, is Paul yet a *captive* to the law of sin, although he is delighting in the law of God? Captive to the

law, that is a strong statement. The dictionary says it is to be a slave, a prisoner.

We have the same meaning as in 7:14, where he says, "sold under sin." Delight in the law of God and still captive to the law of sin. Even in verse 22 and verse 23 we come to the conclusion that Paul is in the law and sold under sin. He has not died from the law yet.

It is possible that a natural, unsaved man can delight in the law of God. Paul admires the law of God when he says it is spiritual and says it is good and holy. In 7:22 he says he delights in it. But he acknowledges that he can't fulfill the demands of it. Well, if he did not fulfill the law, then it condemns and kills him. In spite of it, he delights in it.

It is possible, though, to delight in what you are not able to do. Let me use an example. You delight in good music although you can't play yourself. When you touch an instrument you make disagreeable noise.

This is the experience of Paul in Romans 7:22 and 23. In 22 he delights in the law of God, in 23 he is taken captive by the law, which is the same as to say I am a prisoner under the law. This is the same as he said about himself in 7:14, "I am sold under sin." Paul delights in the law for what it is in itself and not for what he has accomplished by the law. This section of Scripture, Romans 7:14-25, is to reveal how a sinner becomes guilty before God, hopeless of salvation and dies from the law.

"Who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (Gal. 1:4).

"For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:19, 20).

HELLO everybody! It is so nice to have a little chat with you again and share some of the blessings that God has given to me. I know it is awfully hard for us to be quiet and take time for the one thing that is needful. We are rushed to death. Pastor Fredrik Wisloff says, "We have hardly time to say good morning and good night to the Lord." Then we live such meager, undernourished Christian lives.

It is a miracle of God's grace when He gets us to be so quiet that we can see the need of talking right out of our heart to Him, and even better to let Him talk to us. When did the hearts of the two disciples on their way to Emmaus start to burn? When they talked to Him, or when He talked to them? Listen to their testimony: "And they said one to another, did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32).

That's it! That was the time it happened—"while he talked with us" and "opened to us the scriptures." My dear reader, how long is it since you had a similar experience?

Spurgeon tells about a woman who was confronted by a modern agnostic who asked her: "What are you reading?"

"I am reading the Word of God," she said.

"Who told you it is the Word of God?" he asked.

"He told me so himself," the woman answered.

"I'd like to know how you can prove that," the agnostic said.

"Well, that's easy," she said. As she looked skyward she inquired: "Can you prove to me that there is a sun up in the sky?"

"Why of course; the best proof is that it warms me, and gives me

light."

"That's it!" was her joyous reply. "The best proof that this book is the Word of God is that it warms my heart and gives me light in my soul."

Praise the Lord, that is something that the modernist can't take away from us.

This little phrase from Colossians 1:27 became so precious to me the other day: *Christ in you, the hope of glory*. Not only Christ in heaven at the right hand of the majesty. Not only Christ in the Word, but *Christ in you*. This was the last thing I thought about as I went to sleep last night and the first thing that came to me as I woke up this morning. Can it be possible that Christ dwells in me? In such a messy, mean, dirty, wicked neighborhood? How can He, "the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy" (Isa. 57:15), endure to live in a place like that? These were some of the questions that went through my mind this morning.

Well, I came to the conclusion that if it were not for these two following reasons I could never believe it: (1) "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7); (2) His Word. He says so himself (John 15:5; 17:23).

It is nothing less than a miracle; Paul says it is also a mystery.

Does Christ gain anything by living in you and me?

Yes, he gains an *instrument* through which He can flash His light upon some other darkened souls. He gains a medium through which He is able to touch other sin-sick souls with the "balm in Gilead" (Jer. 8:22). He gains a *channel* through which He can let His blessings flow to some thirsty souls (John 7:38).

But if you and I are to be—oh matchless miracle of grace—instruments, mediums, and channels for Him, what do we gain?

We gain all His resources. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell" (Col.

2:3, 9). All His fulness is at our disposal to be used to His glory.

Not only that, but let me repeat again what Paul says: "hope of glory." "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Hope of glory. What does that imply?

There is no hope in this world without Christ. We have all sinned and for that reason we all have an appointment with death. "It is appointed unto men once to die" (Heb. 9:27). Death is an enemy, but it is a defeated enemy. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin." Jesus took away both the sin and the sting of death by the sacrifice of himself. "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 15:55-57).

Jesus is our resurrection hope. Death has not the last word, but life. Jesus dwells in every true believer by His Spirit. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11).

Christ in you, the hope of glory. We have the guarantee of our new resurrection life right within us. A life that death has no claim on. Jesus is our living hope. He is in us as the hope of glory. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

We will exclaim with all the saints in heaven and earth: "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:13).

"We love, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19).

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" (Rev. 5:12).

O BREAD OF LIFE FROM HEAVEN

O Bread of life from heaven,
To weary pilgrims given,
O Manna from above:
The souls that hunger, feed Thou,
The hearts that seek Thee, lead
Thou,
With Thy most sweet and tender
love.

O Fount of grace redeeming,
O River ever streaming
From Jesus' holy side.
Come Thou, Thyself bestowing
On thirsting souls, and flowing
Till all their wants are satisfied.

O Lord, this feast receiving,
The word of truth believing,
We Thee unseen adore:
Grant when our race is ended,
That we to heav'n ascended,
May see Thy glory evermore.

—Anonymous, Latin
Tr. Philip Schaff

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NEWS

of the Churches

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

Fifty-seven persons were received into membership at Medicine Lake Lutheran Church, George Soberg, pastor, on Sunday, January 23. The congregation worships and conducts its program in the Association headquarters building at 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., in suburban Plymouth Village.

BAGLEY, FOSSTON, MCINTOSH, MINN.

Grace Lutheran Church, Bagley, had the joy of worshipping for the first time in their "new" church on January 30. The church was filled even though the weather stopped many from coming.

Mt. Carmel Lutheran Church, McIntosh, has been meeting in their new church since the Sunday before Christmas. To celebrate the fact of these two wonderful events, special services will be conducted in each church during May. Mt. Carmel will have Rev. Sterling Johnson (Lutheran Evangelistic Movement evangelist), May 15-19; Grace Lutheran will have Rev. Kenneth Ellingson (also from the LEM), May 22-27.

Prior to these services, however, another festive occasion will occur. On Sunday, March 20, Pastor John Strand, president of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, will install Pastor Hubert DeBoer in the parish, at morning services, after which the ladies of Mt. Carmel will serve dinner at the church. The dedication of Mt. Carmel will take

place that afternoon with Pastor Strand participating.

The parish and pastor wish to extend a warm welcome to all to join in these services,

WEBSTER, S. DAK.

A series of cottage Bible studies and prayer meetings have been concluded in Tabor Lutheran congregation, Webster, S. Dak. Two hundred and ninety-two persons of confirmation age and above attended the twenty meetings held in twenty different homes. The studies centered around Lutheran doctrines with the pastor leading each session. The congregaion was divided into north and south groups, each one meeting ten times.

THOU TO WHOM THE SICK AND DYING

Thou to whom the sick and dying
Ever came, nor came in vain,
Still with healing word replying
To the wearied cry of pain;
Hear us, Jesus, as we meet,
Suppliants at Thy mercy-seat.

Still the weary, sick, and dying
Need a brother's, sister's care,
On Thy higher help relying,
May we now their burden share,
Bringing all our offerings meet,
Suppliant to Thy mercy-seat.

May each child of Thine be willing,
Willing both in hand and heart,
All the law of love fulfilling,
Comfort ever to impart,
Ever bringing offerings meet,

Suppliant at Thy mercy-seat.

Then shall sickness, sin, and sadness,

To Thy healing power yield,
Till the sick and sad, in gladness,
Rescued, ransomed, cleansed, and healed,

One in Thee together meet,
Pardoned at Thy judgment-seat.

Ludv. M. Lindeman
(from *The Lutheran Hymnary*)

Father, Forgive Them

[Continued from page 3]

Pentecost, about 50 days after the resurrection of Jesus. Remember how Peter preached in the might of the Holy Spirit? He told the audience, "You crucified Jesus." Like David before Nathan, many accepted the charge and were convicted in their hearts. "What shall we do?" they cried. "Repent, and be baptized," said the Apostle. About 3,000 were admitted to the kingdom of God that day. Maybe some of them had actively participated in the howling mob when Jesus was before Pilate.

Jesus prayed—and anyone who said in his heart, "I'm guilty and I don't want to be opposing God," was forgiven.

It's the same way today. Anyone who in faith realizes that Jesus died for him and who is sorry for his wrongness, owns up to his sins, detests them and turns from them, he is the forgiven one.

How about your own life, dear reader? Is anything wrong that you haven't faced up to in His presence? God has a heart of forgiveness. Remember that. It is His business to forgive. The prayer that opens your heart to His already open heart is "Lord, forgive me." Then name whatever wrong things from your life that you feel that you should. You will know what these are.

Then the miracle happens. The Lord forgives. He lifts the burden. The Bible guarantees this. Try it and see.



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Edited by Mrs. David C. Hanson

With the approval and authorization of the last annual conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, the Committee on Publications and Parish Education has established a Department of Parish Education. Such a department did not exist in the Lutheran Free Church as we knew it. Consequently, we have no experience, no records that might be helpful, no guidelines that have been set for us. We must look only to the Lord as we ask the question, "Where do we go from here?" "How can we best serve our congregations?"

INVENTORY

It seems good to take inventory at this time and a letter is being sent to each of our parishes asking for information that will give us a picture of the work in Christian education in our churches. Names and addresses of superintendents are to be listed in order that a monthly newsletter can be sent to each of them.

NEWSLETTER

The newsletter will be used to transmit information about teaching aids and resource materials that are available. We hope it will become a place where our Sunday schools will share ideas, and it will be used to review materials. Since Augsburg, Concordia, Scripture Press, Gospel Light, and Standard are all presenting completely new courses in their Bible school materials this year, one of the first newsletters will contain reviews of these materials.

We have already begun to establish a library of resource materials that will be available to our Sunday schools. Our infant beginning consists of two sets of teachers' training materials that have been used in workshops the past two years, and a set of filmstrips that would be valuable for teachers' meetings within the congregation. The eight filmstrips are entitled "Successful Teaching" (Moody Bible Institute) and deal with the following subjects:

1. The Teacher
2. The Pupil
3. The Language
4. The Lesson
5. The Teaching Process
6. The Learning Process
7. Review and Application
8. The Final Test

They are available on a rental basis (50 cents per filmstrip), and we would suggest that only one of the series be used at each teachers' meeting. Another series from the American Bible Society (4 filmstrips) entitled "How the Bible Came to Us" will soon be ours. In time we hope to illustrate stories of the work in Nogales and Brazil so they may be distributed to each of our Sunday schools. Plans also include a series of small, inexpensive booklets that will be helpful to teachers as they assume responsibility for the various age groups within the congregation. We are looking forward to the day when we will have a room at our headquarters building that will contain cupboards filled with a variety of resource materials.

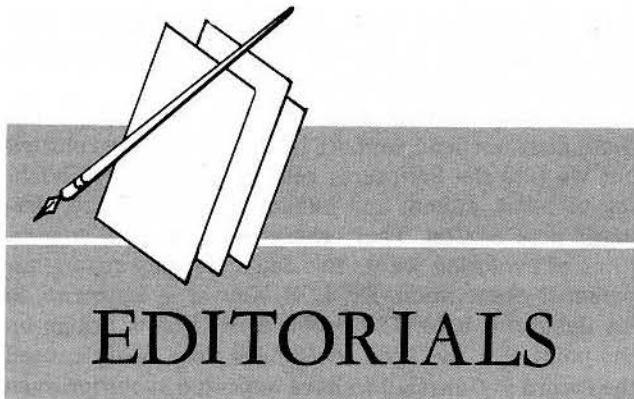
SCHEDULE FOR 1966

The schedule for 1966 (and we hope you'll mark this on your calendars) will include Bible school workshops on Saturday, April 16, at Fargo, and Sunday, April 17, at Thief River Falls. Both sessions will begin at 2:00 p.m. Training for district instructors will again be held at Fargo on September 24 and 25. The theme for this year is "A plus Sunday School." Sessions will be entitled:

1. A Plus Sunday School Is Spiritual
2. A Plus Sunday School Is Personal
3. A Plus Sunday School Is Teaching
4. A Plus Sunday School Is Growing

Subject to the approval of the Bible Camp Committee, we are considering an afternoon workshop at Family Bible Camp in August.

To this small beginning we pray that the Lord will add blessing and growth. We are aware that many have been praying that we may someday publish our own teaching materials, and this thought is also in the minds and hearts of the committee. Please pray with us that our thoughts and desires will be so tuned to the will of God that our Department of Parish Education may be used in any way that He chooses for us.



WHAT DIFFERENCES ARE ALLOWABLE?

In holding the creationist view of the beginning of plant and animal life upon earth, as we do (as opposed to evolutionist theories), we occasionally may be asked about the leeway granted to differing opinions *within* the creationist position.

Before we proceed, perhaps we should define that word "creationist" a bit further. It is the belief that the Lord God brought into being various kinds of plant and animal life by direct creative acts rather than sending all life through the tedious process of evolution, requiring millions of years to complete, if indeed it is ever completed.

But, getting back to our original question, must the days of creation in Genesis 1, for instance, be taken as days such as we think of them? Some Christians are very determined that that is the only way in which they can be taken and still maintain the integrity of the Bible. Others, again, noting that the word "day" is sometimes used in the Bible to denote ages of time, feel that the days of creation may so be interpreted without violence, and without being a concession to the theory of evolution.

Dr. R. A. Torrey, world-renowned evangelical leader of another year, one-time head of the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, and, indeed, an associate of the great evangelist, was one who believed that the days referred to ages of time as indicated in his book *Difficulties in the Bible*. He cited St. Augustine as a scholar who also advanced this possibility.

One may disagree with Torrey, but one must be careful not to label him as a liberal or neo-orthodox. Torrey goes on, in the above-mentioned book, to suggest that there may have been a pre-Adamic race of men on earth, that is, that God created people before Adam and Eve, these being subsequently destroyed by their sins. Now this idea is personally unacceptable and yet who can consign a man of Torrey's stature and reputation among the spiritual giants of the American scene to the ranks of the apostate (or fallen)?

Much more at hand for our investigation is Halley's *Pocket Bible Handbook*, given new life through the recent Billy Graham promotion. This book contains the following statement: "The six days are commonly thought of as representing long successive periods, as the Prophets sometimes spoke of the whole era as 'that day.'" Halley goes on to say, "But whether a literal day, or a period, or an interlude between periods, each day's work took shape as a result of the Fiat of GOD."

The *Handbook* is really a very fine evangelical Biblical tool for the layman, as you will know if you have used it. The above quotations from it may shock some, but they only serve to prove that we must be careful in drawing limitations of acceptable belief. In addition to these two sources we have cited, there are a great many more professional theologians who accept the "days of Genesis" as possibly referring to

Another in a series on the Apostles' Creed

MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

"In the beginning God." What majestic words with which to open the sacred Scriptures. Before there was anything else, God was, the great I AM.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The Hebrew word for "create" is *bara*. It indicates bringing into existence something that had no previous existence. The writer to the Hebrews puts it this way, "By faith we understand that the *world* was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear" (Heb. 11:3).

The Greek word in italics denotes more than the planet earth. The New English Bible translates the word in question as "universe."

God called the earth and universe into being out of nothing. The Latin term for this is *creatio ex nihilo*.

"Of old thou didst lay the foundation of the earth,
and the heavens are the work of thy hands."
Psalm 102:25

"For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood forth."
Psalm 33:9

With each passing day scientists discover new evidence which only magnifies the glory of God's creation. Furthermore, it becomes increasingly obvious that the universe is much larger than imagined heretofore.

We understand from the Bible that man is the highest point of God's creation and that he was made to have fellowship with God now and in all eternity. The presence of sin works against this communion, but through Jesus Christ, God's Son, the fellowship can exist. This is God's will.

There is divine intelligence behind the world and the universe. It is not all an accident or happenstance. There is order and purpose and meaning. Every day, in every person, in every living thing I see, and in earth and rocks I behold the mystery and wonder of being and existence which speak to me of God the Creator.

O Lord God, how great Thou art!

long periods of time.

This brings us to the whole matter of the date of creation. A certain Bishop Usher promoted the belief that the earth was created in 4004 B.C. This would place the present age of the earth at less than 6,000 years. But who actually knows how old it is? It may be very old and yet it may be much newer than the scientists say as they shuffle millions and billions of years around as easily as they do a sheaf of papers.

To believe that it may be much newer is possible for those who hold that God could and did create some things with an "appearance of age" rather than start everything at "point zero" (and who determines when that is?) and that the Genesis flood can account for some of our geological phenomena which others can trace only to old age.

Of one thing we can be sure, the exact time of creation of the world and of the universe will never be discerned unless the God of eternity chooses to set the date down for us in a measurement of time which we can understand. In the meantime resist two temptations, to take the *theories* of science as *fact* and to make a particular age of the earth an article of the Christian faith.

WHILE WE ARE AT IT

While we are on this scientific kick, admittedly hazardous waters for us, we may as well touch upon the subject of evolution. Without being technical, we laymen mean by evolution the evolving of all complex plant and animal forms out of very simple ones, the process taking millions of years. Today people who believe that God began and guides the evolutionary theory process are called "theistic evolutionists" in opposition to atheists who must of necessity hold to evolution as the means by which life on earth began and developed.

It seems to us that a theistic evolutionist (one who holds belief in God) maintains his position for one of two reasons. One, God was not able to bring man forth, for instance, in a single momentary act of creation, or a tree, or a cow, or a fish. Two, the scientific evidence is such today that no one in honesty can deny that all living things have evolved from simpler forms of life.

The first of these reasons must be dismissed quite summarily because a Christian is committed to the belief that God has all power and could create the world in six days as we know them, or six seconds, if He chose to do so, and did, in fact, create the universe out of nothing. The other reason perhaps (the weight of evidence) deserves more attention. The *evidences* of evolution, what are they? That *some* scientists believe that evidence is unassailable cannot be doubted. But proofs have not yet been shown to the man in the street and he wonders about their authenticity. Aside from the fossil remains, and these

seem inconclusive, what proof can be given? Can man demonstrate in one lifetime what is supposed to have taken millions of years to accomplish?

We must confess that our own reading of the Bible does not lend support to the theory of evolution but we find the Scriptures setting forth the establishing of plant, animal and human life by definite, dramatic acts of God. That others read and find suggestions of evolution we do not deny, we only report our personal observation. Dr. L. S. Keyser, a Lutheran, in his delightful book *The Problem of Origins* brings up the point that the Lord could have very easily caused the record in Genesis 1 to have indicated evolution even in an unscientific generation by writing verse 26 thus: "And God said, Let us cause one of the animals to grow (*tsamach*) into a man in our image, after our likeness." But instead the writer used the verb "make."

Holders of the theory of evolution do not always give credit where it is due. As an example, we do not deny that development has taken place within various plant and animal families. And who will deny that there are more breeds of dogs than there used to be? But animals have stayed within their own "kind."

Furthermore, we believe in the survival of the fittest among both plants and animals. However, this stern struggle began after the entry of sin into the world and wasn't a part of the original world upon which God looked and saw that it was "good." And it is entirely proper to recognize that both plants and animals have made adaptations to environment through the ages.

Some think that it is incredible that the Lord would create in an instant, even though conceding that it is possible that He could do so. Others of us, also lacking eye witnesses to the events and confessing that many things are shadowy, find it no problem to believe that God brought all things forth in a series of dramatic acts. That He should subject all His living creatures, particularly man, to the almost motionless, tedious process of evolutionary development is difficult indeed to comprehend, and we do not.

LENT'S MEANING

Already our eyes are directed toward Calvary. In a very deep sense they ought always be looking there. The cross is central in our theology and our faith. Each time you see it remember that it speaks of the presence of sin in the world and the death of Jesus, God's Son, for that sin.

But in a special sense our gaze is directed toward Calvary now. For Lent is beginning and we are to re-live with Jesus those days of infamy and glory. With shame we recall the treachery of those who were physical participants in the death of Christ and our own sins for which He did most surely die. With thanksgiving we contemplate in our poor, inadequate way the immense love of the Savior in being obedient

[Continued on page 14]



Luther League Activities

**A Bible Study for
League Presentation
(A program suggestion)**

LIFE'S CHOICE

Read Joshua 24: 1-33
Joshua 24: 14-16

Think about the word "choice." What makes us decide the way we do? How do the decisions we make influence our lives? Can we make a decision without making a conscious choice?

One day a farmer hired a man. He asked him to paint the barn. He estimated it would take three days—the man did it in one day. Then he asked him to cut up a pile of wood. He estimated that that would take four days—the man did it in one day. Then he asked the man to sort a pile of potatoes. He wanted them divided into three groups: one pile that he could use for seed potatoes, one pile that he could sell, and one pile to use to feed the hogs. He estimated that he would do that in one day. At the end of the day he went to see the man to see how he had done and found three little groups. He hadn't even started on the pile. He asked what was wrong and the man said, "I can work, but I can't make decisions."¹

It isn't easy to make decisions in life but it is impossible to live without them. What shall I wear today? What subjects shall I take next year? Where shall I go to-

night? What do I want to do in life? Should I be a Christian?

Yes, the latter is an important decision—one that will influence our whole lives. Joshua, when he was an old man, called the people of Israel together and put this question on the line. You see, he knew it was so important and he was afraid that some would go through life without deciding. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell." There was the question. Choose! Choose ye today! Then Joshua went on, "but, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

What This Decision Meant to Joshua

What three things did God do for Abraham? (Joshua 24:3)

When the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt, whom did God send to deliver them? (Joshua 24:5)

What miracle did God perform to show His divine presence? (Joshua 24:6, 7)

How did Joshua lead the people into the land of Canaan? (Joshua 3:9-13)

Why was this miracle even greater at this time of the year? (Joshua

3:15)

Joshua went on and on telling the people again how God had been with them and how He performed miracle after miracle to help them.

Remember how God delivered the city of Jericho into the hands of the Israelites? Review Joshua 6. What do you suppose the people of Jericho thought of Joshua and his "armies" as they marched slowly around the city blowing horns? Do you think his own armies doubted what Joshua was commanding them to do?

What was the result of their following God's orders? (Joshua 6:20)

Read about the great victory at Gibeon in Joshua 10:7-14. Who was the actual "general" of the battle? (Joshua 10:8) What was the promise?

The men of Joshua were successful in battle and the enemy turned and fled. God had promised that not a man should stand. What did God cause to happen? (Joshua 10:11)

Oh, how Joshua trusted in the Lord! God is still able to show us great things but we often limit Him by not trusting in His power. What Joshua did next proves the faith he had in the power of God. Read aloud Joshua 10:12-14.

Can't you see Joshua standing before his men, a strong man, respected by his army. "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon." Nothing like that had ever happened before! Joshua could have been laughed at and his reputation ruined. What faith he had! What did happen?

Could this have happened if Joshua had doubted the power of God to stop the sun?

What Will a Decision for Christ Mean?

Should I become a Christian? It will mean making a conscious effort to put Christ first in my life. It will mean putting evil out of my life. That won't be easy—but then,

God doesn't say it will be easy. He does say that He will be with us and will help us at every time of need. It won't be easy to stand alone and not follow the crowd.

We'd have to try to be like Joshua—stand for the Lord, have faith in Him and His almighty power. We'd have to trust Him to help us. But that was so long ago. Will God still be with us today? What promise do we have in Matthew 28: 20b?

One more thing—we'd have to let God USE us, really USE us. Joshua was used over and over again to show the power, the glory, the strength, the wisdom of God. That means I'd have to pray, read God's Word and LISTEN to what He says. I'd have to let Him live through me.

Joshua's Choice

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!" That was his decision! What a triumphant life he led. But he couldn't decide for his people so he asked them to choose. What was their choice? (Joshua 24: 18b)

Your Choice

What would I gain if I decided to live for Christ? SALVATION! And the joy and peace of knowing my sins are forgiven. I would have a purpose in life.

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve." Have you decided for Christ? Is the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart? What will you do about it?

(Prepared by Mrs. Robert (Marion) Reith, Stacy, Minnesota.)

* *The Speaker's Sourcebook of 4000 Illustrations*, compiled by Eleanor L. Daan, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1964.

SOUTH DAKOTA DISTRICT SETS CONVENTION DATES

The annual Luther League Convention of the South Dakota District will be held on April 23 and 24 at Bethel Lutheran Church, Faith, Rev. A. L. Hokonson, pastor. Leaguers are urged to travel on Friday in order to be on hand for the convention's opening on Saturday morning.



HOME MISSIONS

PROGRESS IN HOME MISSIONS

"For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth" (III John 3). We are indeed happy when there is growth in the Christian life and when there is growth in numbers as well. We are happy for the progress that has been made in a number of our parishes which have been receiving a Home Missions subsidy. St. Paul's Free Lutheran Church in Fargo, N. Dak., ceased receiving assistance to their budget the end of January, 1966. This is a good step forward. They are still receiving free use of the church and parsonage from the Missions Committee, however.

The Hatton parish, also in North Dakota, is composed of three congregations and has been receiving

assistance, but is planning to become self-supporting the end of June.

After a couple years of struggling along with alternating pastoral help from 57 miles away from the Grace Lutheran Church, DeKalb, Ill., the Lutheran Mission Church of Beloit, Wis., has secured a pastor whom you friends are also supporting through the Mission Committee. In a city of over 30,000 there is opportunity for growth. Support has also been given to the Grand Forks-Grafton parish in North Dakota, beside other areas.

We ask you to rejoice with us because of the progress that has been made and to continue to labor that we might enter new fields, or assist other struggling groups. God is counting on each one to do his part.

Harold Schafer

Mission Director of the AFLC

MRS. GROTHE CONFINED TO BED

Word has been received by the Mission Committee that Mrs. Alvin Grothe, wife of Missionary Alvin Grothe, is suffering from a case of infectious hepatitis and is currently confined to bed for a month's time. Remember the Grothe family in prayer. They are living in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Mrs. John Abel, wife of Missionary John Abel, had surgery on her hip before Christmas and is progressing well in her recovery, but must remain off her feet yet as much as possible. The Abels live in Campo Mourao, Brazil. Pray also for them.

SEMINARY NOTE

Rev. Ernest J. Langness, McVillie, N. Dak., has been named to fill the

vacancy on the Board of Trustees of Free Lutheran Seminary which occurred upon the resignation of Rev. Fritjof B. Monseth, Valley City, N. Dak., recently.

The WMF Executive Committee is desirous of keeping an up-to-date list of all the district officers and of the officers of all the women's groups in the Association. Will you therefore be sure that a list of the officers of your group has been sent, after each election, to Mrs. R. M. Konsterlie, Route 1, Willmar, Minnesota. Will you also let us know approximately how many women there are in your group?

CHURCH INFLUENCE ON RISE IN NATIONAL LIFE, NLC TOLD

We are printing this NLC news release in full for your own perusal and judgment. Mr. Van Deusen speaks of a growing church influence, in contrast to the opinion of a Minneapolis judge (see Church-World News). His comments on the church-state situation are interesting and demand our attention. Our own evaluation of the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 may be found in THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR, May 4, 1965 ("The Gates Were Opened").—Editor

New York (NLC) — A Lutheran authority on government asserted here that the influence of religious groups in national life is steadily increasing.

Commenting on trends in church-state relations during the past year, Dr. Robert E. Van Deusen of Washington, D.C., said that heightened interest and activity in national affairs by churches holds true for both Roman Catholics and Protestants.

Dr. Van Deusen, who is Washington secretary of the National Lutheran Council's Division of Public Relations, called last year "a milestone in the achievement of objectives long held by the Roman Catholic Church."

"The passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 provided substantial benefits to children in parochial schools," he noted, "and went a long way toward recognizing the Roman Catholic school system as an integral part of the American educational enterprise."

The Lutheran national affairs

specialist, who has observed the federal government for more than two decades for the NLC, said that in the expanding anti-poverty program, the principle was "increasingly accepted" that church-related institutions are eligible for federal grants to carry out specified programs.

"The distinction between welfare and educational programs became blurred," he added, "and some very large grants were made to parochial school systems."

Dr. Van Deusen said the final session of the Second Vatican Council also improved the image of the Roman Catholic Church by its declaration on religious liberty, its ecumenical spirit, and the changes in the life and liturgy of the Church, even though "it disappointed an expectant public in failing to deal forthrightly with the question of birth control."

Protestant influence, he told the NLC at its 48th annual meeting here, was evidenced in the affirmative position taken by many churchmen on the implementation of civil rights and the active support of the Voting Rights Bill.

In addition, he said, Protestant leaders and agencies, along with those of Catholic and Jewish groups, helped to bring about passage of the amendment to the Immigration and Nationality Act which eliminated the national origins quota system.

"Lutheran Immigration Service was particularly effective in emphasizing the long advocacy by Lutheran agencies of revision of the immigration law," he added.

Where Protestant and Catholic

churchmen have had similar views, according to Dr. Van Deusen, the impact of the churches has been strong.

"It was the willingness of Protestant and Roman Catholic representatives to modify their former rigid positions on federal aid to education and to find a middle ground that was acceptable to both groups that paved the way for the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act," he said.

"In the administration of the Act, Protestants have championed and Roman Catholics have accepted the principle that administration of programs which include children in parochial schools must remain in the hands of a public agency."

Dr. Van Deusen pointed out that the proper relationship between church and state "has come into the spotlight of public interest and has become one of the most controversial areas of public policy."

He said that court cases are now in progress testing the constitutionality of several emerging patterns of church-state cooperation and that one or more of these is likely to reach the Supreme Court during 1966.

Reporting that hearings were scheduled to get underway in February on legislation to provide for judicial review of the constitutionality of federal grants or loans to church-related institutions and programs, he observed that "if this law is passed, it will hasten the process of Supreme Court review of laws involving church-state relations."

In a related area, Dr. Van Deusen cited dramatic examples of "a growing tendency on the part of church agencies and institutions to accept financial aid from the government."

He said that federal grants available under several government programs "have been applied for and received in unprecedented volume by church-related welfare institutions, colleges, parochial schools, welfare agencies, and even congregations. Some organizations, he

added, have come into being for the purpose of receiving government funds to carry out religiously oriented programs.

"This is perhaps the most significant change of the past year with implications for the future of church-state relations," he commented. "Partnership with the government in achieving mutual objectives is coming into ever wider acceptance as a proper relationship."

Dr. Van Deusen stressed that the growth of influence by religious groups, as they increasingly insist on their right to take public positions on controversial issues, is engendering resistance by those who disagree with their viewpoints.

He pointed out that this is already happening in the "growing disfavor" in which the National Council of Churches is held by many individuals and groups.

"This appears to be partly," he said, "because of the Council's advocacy of civil rights, partly from a genuine difference of opinion over the propriety of a church group's speaking out on social and economic issues and engaging in political action."

Dr. Van Deusen added that "the resistance has taken the form of extreme criticism often coupled with lack of accurate information, withdrawal of financial support, and the raising of questions about the Council's eligibility for continuing tax exemption."

He noted that similar resistance

is encountered within denominations when statements are made on public issues by church leaders or agencies.

Dr. Van Deusen said that the right of church groups to take positions on controversial issues and the acceptance of public subsidy by religious institutions have not yet produced an open clash. However, he predicted that sooner or later it would seem that these two trends are bound to come into collision.

"A foreshadowing of it may be seen in the growing intensity of the feeling against those who, for religious or other reasons, oppose U.S. policy in Vietnam. The time could come when acquiescence in public policy is expected of church groups which receive public funds."

Although a year ago Dr. Van Deusen emphasized that tension will continue over the way in which the religious element in public life may validly be expressed, he told the NLC that this predicted tension seems at the present to be at a low point.

"One can sense certain trends, however, that call for a degree of caution," he pointed out, one being the tendency to invest the concept of the "Great Society" with a religious orientation, thus diminishing the inclination to subject its political objectives to continuing appraisal.

"Another is the hardening of lines of support and criticism of U.S.

policy in Vietnam," he continued, "so that dissent is viewed by some as disloyalty."

A middle ground must continually be sought in which "devotion to the nation is not confused with devotion to God," Dr. Van Deusen concluded, and in which "the Christian citizen retains the right of continuing evaluation of public policy on moral and ethical grounds."

"Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Rom. 5:18, 19).

MORE MISSION SLIDES AVAILABLE

A set of slides has just arrived which show the Alvin Grothe family landing in Brazil and contains more shots of the area around Campo Mourao where the John Abel family is working. These slides are free to be used by any Sunday school, Ladies Aid or at Sunday evening services. They may be had by contacting Pastor Harold Schaffer, 112 West Milner Ave., DeKalb, Ill.

Editorials

[Continued from page 10]

unto death.

When we consider the hundreds of thousands of Americans and Canadians who will in this Lent attend midweek services in their churches, it is an awesome thought. Why they are not there in all the other midweeks is another matter, but during Lent *they are there*. What an opportunity for the blessed Gospel to go forward! May we preach it for what it is—balm for hearts that are not hardened against the good news of God's grace toward mankind in Jesus Christ.

How sad that in some churches this Lent speakers will try to fashion a message for their people out of

a "God is dead" theology or some very similar creed. These orators will endeavor to get people to follow a Jesus whose origin they do not know and whose purpose they have missed. What a tragedy!

How much better to accept the Bible's message as it is, as it has been handed down. What is that message? It can be said in many ways, but we choose these two. "But God shows His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8) and "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

We will have many themes for Lenten services, many sermon topics, but may the unmistakable red thread run through it all—Jesus, sent of the Father, is the Friend of sinners and the only Savior.

CHURCH-WORLD NEWS

GLEANINGS FROM AN EDITOR'S READING

Speak, therefore, with God about your daily experiences. They need not be great or important. Speak with Him about the little things which make up your daily life. Tell God when you are happy. Let Him share your joy. That is what He is waiting to do.

Tell God when you are sad, when you are worried, when you do not know what to do, when you are anxious. He is waiting to hear about it because He loves you. This being the case, nothing is inconsequential or unimportant. Everything that concerns you interests Him.—O. Hallesby in *Prayer*, Augsburg Publishing House, 1931.

Does he consider it "tough" for a Christian to follow the Lord's way on campus (University of Michigan)? To that question, he shakes his head and smiles, showing his gleaming white teeth.

"Not if you select friends who have the goals of getting an education and living a Christian life. I think it would be hard for me to try to lead two lives—one during the week and one in church on Sunday. But if you try to live for Christ all the time, it isn't hard."

And that's Cazzie Russell, the razzle-dazzle Wolverine, who's shooting for the winning goal.—Jim Hefley in *Campus Life*, February, 1966.

What he believes is hardly typical of a bishop. "I've jettisoned the Trinity, the Virgin Birth and the Incarnation," he told *Look* in his Cambridge flat recently. These were the heresy accusations of last fall. Bishop (James A.) Pike also rejects the accepted views of God and prayer. "Everything I'm saying has a question mark at the end," he explains. Even his musings will be

controversial when he comes home.—Christopher S. Wren in *Look*, Feb. 22, 1966.

Among juvenile offenders

JUDGE SAYS CHURCH INFLUENCE DECLINES

by Willmar Thorkelson

A juvenile court judge told delegates to the annual meeting of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches Monday night that the importance of the church seems to be declining while "false gods are growing."

Judge Lindsay G. Arthur, of the Hennepin County Juvenile Court, said this is the conclusion he has reached in presiding over thousands of cases involving juveniles in his court.

Most of the juveniles he sees have a church affiliation but few of them hold to the "old morality" based on the Ten Commandments, he said. "They have achieved a new morality," he noted.

The commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," means little to many of them, with stealing rampant and growing rapidly, he said.

He reported that both Dayton's and Donaldson's have had to hire additional security officers to protect their stores against juvenile shoplifters.

Much of the stealing is for luxury articles and for excitement, he noted. And when a car is stolen it is usually just "borrowed for a joy ride."

One of the reasons for the juvenile thefts, the judge said, is that youngsters have no chores left to do.

More needs to be said about the responsibilities of persons, rather than just their "rights," he added.

Arthur said it is difficult to teach people the commandment "Thou shalt not covet," since every magazine, every newspaper and every television show would have us covet something that is adver-

tised.

The commandment against bearing false witness also is broken regularly — even in courts, the judge said.

To many juveniles, Arthur said, the church appears to be old-fashioned, but he declared that "not all is lost."

He suggested that marriage laws be tightened up and that clergymen not marry couples if they think there is a possibility the marriage will not last.

—The Minneapolis Star

Tired of empty churches

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Copenhagen (AP) — Tired of preaching to empty churches, a defiant Danish Lutheran vicar has demanded that parents who have a child baptized in his church agree to attend services once a month for 14 years.

So far, six couples have pledged to obey the "mild church discipline" of Rev. Ludwig Husum, 29, vicar of the twin parishes of Sobber and Store Ajstrup, in central Jutland.

But one couple refused to pay what they thought was a stiff price in churchgoing. They lodged a complaint with the bishop of the diocese. Trouble is brewing all over the place.

"I have decided to stay and fight," says the vicar. "I take my guidance from the New Testament rather than from church laws. I am a priest, not a lawyer."

The bishop has warned him, advising him to take six months' sick leave to think it all over. The ministry of churches has told him, quite flatly, that it is against the law of the land to make people go to church by coercion.

The vicar faces possible trial by a consistory court, but he says he won't budge, even if he ends up being kicked out of the Lutheran State

5/66 R-1
STANLEY HOLMAAS
NEWFOLDEN MINN

Church.

"I don't want Jesus to disown me on judgment day because I was a coward," he says.

He wants the laws changed to make it compulsory for parents to be regular churchgoers from the day their child is baptized until the day of his confirmation at the age of 14.

Why just once a month?

"I figure the Lord will be satisfied with that," the vicar says.

He preaches in two churches every Sunday. In one the attendance never surpasses eight percent of the parish population. In the other, attendance frequently is down to four percent.

Most other Danish vicars are no better off. Though 98 percent of all Danes are members of the Lutheran "people's church," fewer than seven percent of them are regular churchgoers. They become automatically members of the church when baptized, but may quit anytime and escape church tax.

Only the king is constitutionally bound to be a member of the Lutheran church which, in fact, is no real state church. It is autonomous, and though the ministry of churches covers all its costs from church tax revenues, it rarely intervenes in ecclesiastical affairs.

—The Regina Leader-Post

WORK COMPLETED ON PLANS FOR NEW LUTHERAN COUNCIL

New York (NLC) — Three years of planning and preparation were concluded here to establish a new cooperative agency for American Lutheranism.

The Inter-Lutheran Consultation, a committee named to conduct the negotiations in behalf of four Lutheran church bodies, held its seventh and possibly last plenary session on Jan. 31 and Feb. 1.

In the two-day meeting, the 28-member committee completed arrangements for the constituting convention of the Lutheran Council in the United States of America, to be held in Cleveland, Ohio, Nov. 16-18.

The LCUSA, scheduled to begin operations next Jan. 1 as the successor to the present National Lutheran Council, will pursue a joint program of theological study and Christian service.

Pledged to partnership in the new agency are the American Lutheran Church, Lutheran Church in America, Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. More than 95 percent of the nation's nearly nine million Lutherans are represented in the combined membership of the four bodies.

PICKEREL LAKE BIBLE CAMP PLANS BEING MADE

Bible Camp week for South Dakota young people who are through grade 6 or are 12 years old by time of camp will be held at Pickerel Lake Lutheran Bible Camp, Grenville, S. Dak., June 27 to July 3. The week is available to campers at the rate of \$9.50 each, two or more from one family, \$8.50 each. Rev. Willard Olsen, Waubay, is in charge of the advance registration. Rev. Raynard Huglen, Roslyn, is camp dean.

"So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him" (Heb. 9: 28).

FAMILY BIBLE CAMP DATES SET

The fourth annual Family Bible Camp of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations will be held at Lake Geneva Bible Camp, Alexandria, Minn., August 8-14, Monday through Sunday. Registration will take place Monday afternoon and the first public service will be on Monday night.

Dean of the camp will be Rev. A. L. Hokonson, Faith, S. Dak.

BIBLE VERSES

"So from that day on they took counsel how to put him to death" (John 11:53).

"I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4).

"For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:18).