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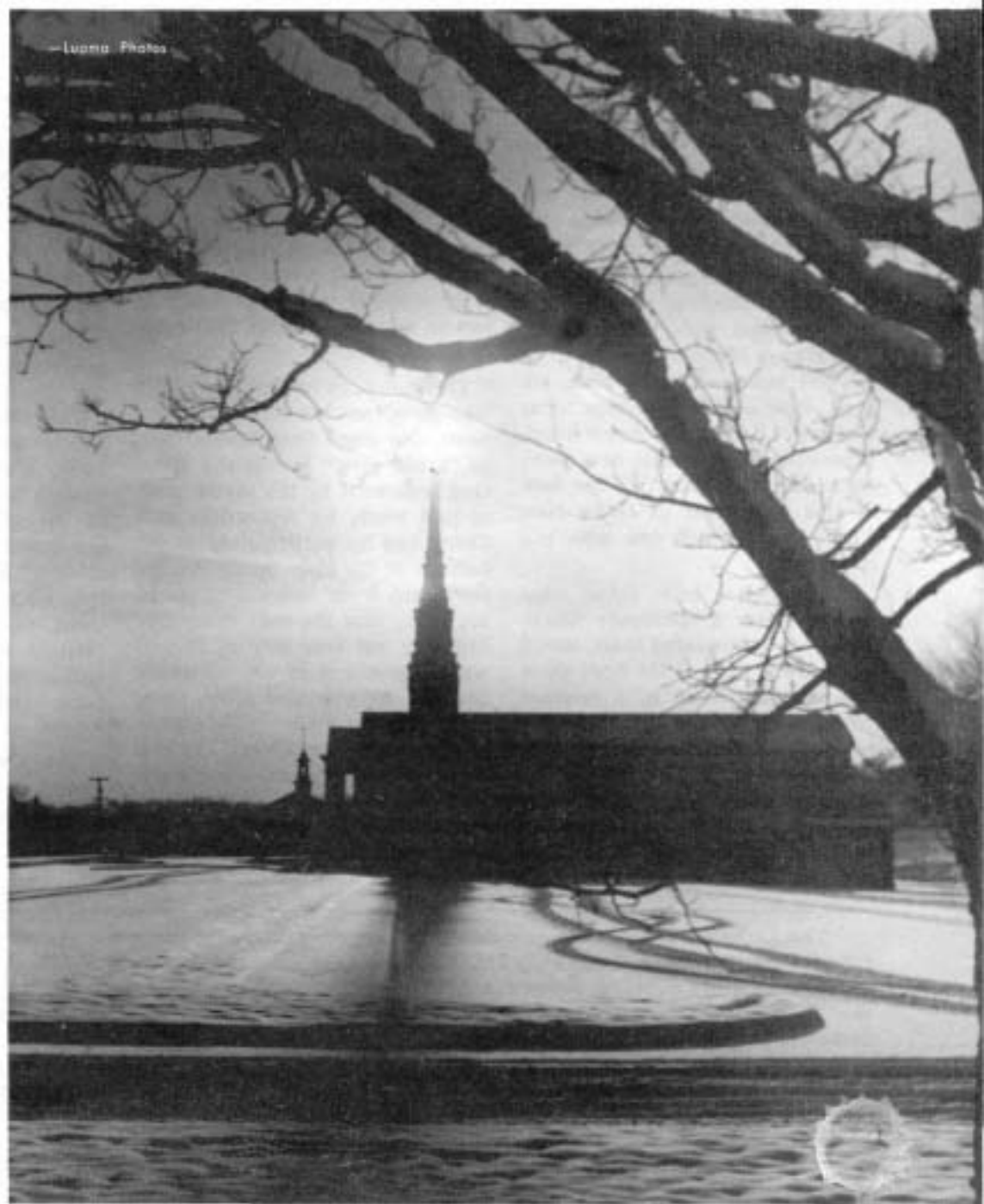
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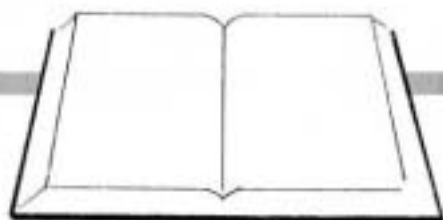
January 10, 1967

No. 1

LUTHERAN

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According to the Word

GOD'S NEW YEAR GIFT

"A new heart also will I give" (Ezek. 36: 26).

We are standing on the threshold of a new year. What will this new year bring to us as individuals, as congregations, as an Association, as a nation? Will the Lord come during 1967? Will the Communists be contained during this year? Will we see the end of the Viet Nam conflict in the next twelve months?

Questions of great magnitude confront all thinking people today. How to cope with the problems isn't always evident. In order to be as well equipped as possible, we need, first of all, to accept what God offers here to us—a new heart. Especially to meet this new year, we need a new heart. We can look at this new heart as God's New Year's gift to each one who will receive it.

Let's think a little about what this involves: a spiritually illuminated and regenerated heart, which has had the light of the Lord shine into it and cleanse it; a penitent heart; a praying and believing heart; a pardoned heart, one that by rights is condemned, but by God's grace, pardoned; a pure and holy heart; a sensitive and morally tender and responsive heart. Today we sense that sin has been

seemingly made so respectable that it's no longer a case of black and white, but rather gray. Yes, this also involves a loving and philanthropic heart, an obedient heart, and if we were to make this into an equation, we would say that all of these would equal a HAPPY heart. Each one of these thoughts conjures up before our minds' eyes, resolutions and deep longing... "oh, if we could only experience these things!" And the truth of the matter is that God wants us to have truly a happy new year. And this can be so when He gives us His gift of a new heart.

Please let us remind ourselves who gives the blessings of the new heart. Our verse from Ezekiel tells us "I will give." God is the giver. God bestows it by His saving power and truth, by fellowship with Christ and by participating in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. We are instructed from many avenues in life today that the only thing that can save our free way of life, as we experience it in our nation, is that we have a God-given, Holy Spirit-inspired revival. God's power hasn't been diminished, His arm hasn't been shortened, nor has His will been changed. He still desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. In the past this simply meant a

spiritual concern for the souls of men. Now we sense, unless God intervenes (and we respond to His promptings), our freedoms and privileges as a free nation shall expire.

Whereas we are prone to be coaxed to give good gifts, your heavenly Father is WAITING to bestow them upon His children (if we but ask, seek, knock). He will do so to all who truly want to receive from Him and show it by their sincere desire in prayer and supplication.

I wonder how many people shall glibly cry, "Happy New Year," during this season, and will know nothing about how that greeting can become a reality also in their lives. We who are in the true Church have this reality as part of our spiritual inheritance from our Savior. May we, above all else, during this new year, seek to bring this kind of living knowledge to those who know only the words "Happy New Year" and not the reality of happiness that can only come through knowing and being known of Christ!

The promise then is: get and spread this gift, and the year 1967 will be the happiest you have ever known.

Hubert F. DeBoer

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Free Lutheran Seminary to Graduate First Class This Year



These five men will be the first graduates of Free Lutheran Seminary. Left to right, they are: Howard Kjos, Anoka, Minn., Robert Rieth, Stacy, Minn., Richard Gunderson, Minneapolis, Minn., Edwin Kjos, Minneapolis, Minn., and David Molstre, Grafton, N. Dak.

The first class to be graduated from Free Lutheran Seminary, Minneapolis, Minnesota, theological school of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, will take part in commencement exercises in May of this year.

The class has five members. Four of them, if they have accepted calls from parishes or world missions by that time, will be ordained at the Annual Conference of the Association, June 14-18, 1967, at a place yet to be determined. The fifth member of the class, Mr. Edwin Kjos, is a transfer student from another seminary and will complete a requirement before his ordination, likely in the fall.

Free Lutheran Seminary is in its third year of operation. There are 18 full-time students at the school

which is located in the Headquarters building of the Association on the shores of Medicine Lake, west of Minneapolis. Men who are interested in pursuing Lutheran theological studies at this school either this fall or at some future time are invited to make preliminary inquiries now to the acting dean of the school, Dr. Iver Olson, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55427.

TESTIMONIES FROM OUR BIBLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

I'm so happy that Jesus led me to come to our Association Lutheran Bible School this fall. It has been such a blessing to me so far and I know it will continue to be through the year.

What we need is to get grounded in the Word of God. This is the main purpose of Bible school. We know that either the Word keeps us away from Satan or Satan keeps us away from the Word. Hebrews 4:12 says the Word is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.

Besides studying God's Word, a Christian needs the fellowship of other Christians. It's been so wonderful to be with other Bible school students, having fun together, studying, and just talking and sharing our ideas. I feel this is a very important part in a Christian's life.

I'm so glad that God opened this door for our Association to have a Bible school. It has really meant a lot to all of us and we pray that it will grow physically and spiritually in coming years.

Jean Presteng
Grafton, N. Dak.

(Jean is employed as the Bible school librarian.)

[Continued on page 4]



SCHOOL NEWS

FIRST QUARTER STUDENTS OF ASSOCIATION LUTHERAN BIBLE SCHOOL



First quarter students at Association Lutheran Bible School are shown here. Left to right, top row, Connie Broden, Fertile, Minn., Richard Aasness, Doran, Minn., Joseph Miller, Binford, N. Dak., Louie Falk, Buxton, N. Dak., Ralph Peterson, Thief River Falls, Minn., and Richard Anderson, East Grand Forks, Minn. Bottom row, Maureen Hartsock, Ray, N. Dak., Jean Presteng, Grafton, N. Dak., Rosemary Hanson, Portland, N. Dak., Annita Haugen, Portland, N. Dak., Jeanette Have, Ray, N. Dak., Norma Nest, Fertile, Minn., and Bonnie Ferguson, White Earth, N. Dak.

Testimonies

[Continued from page 3]

When I first considered Bible school, I was a bit reluctant to come, but various events in my life seemed to direct me to the AFLC Bible School, and now I'm here and am very glad of it.

Since arriving, I have received many blessings and have enjoyed the fellowship I have found here, both with God and with my fellow men.

Joseph E. Miller
Binford, N. Dak.

(Joseph is employed at Penny's Super Market.)

CHURCH VOTES AFFILIATION

The Sunnyside Community Church of Martin Lake, Post Office-Stacy, Minnesota, voted at their quarterly meeting on November 7, 1966, to affiliate with the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. Prior to this time they were an inter-denominational community church consisting of about 30 families.

Martin Lake is approximately 30 miles north of Minneapolis.

NOTICE

The article "A Fly in the Ointment" which appeared in *The Lutheran Ambassador*, October 4, 1966, by courtesy of the Tract Mission, was written by Dr. Oscar C. Hanson.

WINTER BIBLE CONFERENCE DATES SET

The 5th annual Winter Bible Conference will be held in the Dalton, Minnesota, parish of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, Harry C. Molstre, pastor, February 9-12, 1967. Details of the conference will be announced later.



STEWARDSHIP

ALL THAT I HAVE
IS THINE ALONE

We are now in the home stretch for the ingathering in the AFLC. The fiscal year ends on January 31. We thank all who have contributed so generously of their means again this year. No special pressure has been exerted and no great campaign has been conducted. As long as our people are aware of their responsibility in this area, and send in their gifts as they are led by the Spirit, there is really no reason to disturb this quiet work.

But we have not quite reached our goal as yet, though we are nearing it. You should know both of these facts. The percentage of time which has elapsed since last Febru-

ary 1 and the contributions which have come in so far just about coincide. But no one wins a race by coasting in the final lap. That one calls for a special and final exertion. So it is with us, too. We hereby urge all who have not done what they would like or intended to do to take this matter in hand right now and send in their gifts before the end of the month. Others, who already have given, may find now that they can and would like to add to their previous gifts. God bless you. May all be done to the glory of the great God whom we serve.

Iver Olson
Chairman, Stewardship Board

LEM. MIDWINTER CONFERENCE SET

"Called to Christian Maturity" will be the theme of the annual Midwinter Evangelistic Conference to be held in Minneapolis, Minn., January 24-29. The conference is sponsored by the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement and sessions are held at Augustana Lutheran Church, 7th Street and 11th Avenue South.

Featured speaker at the fellowship gathering which brings together Lutherans from throughout the United States and Canada will be Dr. John Hunter of England. A teacher, preacher and author, Mr. Hunter will speak at eleven o'clock each morning on the general topic of the conference. He will also preach at the evangelistic services each night, Tuesday through Thursday at 7:45.

Rev. Arthur Kaul, director of the Concordia Tract Mission (Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod), will speak at the Friday and Sunday

night services.

Saturday will be devoted to youth sessions at First Baptist Church, 10th Street at Harmon Place. Over 2,200 young people are expected to attend.

Some of the other speakers participating in the general sessions of the midwinter conference are Pastors Omar Gjerness, morning Bible teacher of Romans, Nelson Trout and J. O. Gisselquist, and layman Don Fladland of the Lutheran Bible Institute in Seattle, Wash.

Prayer hours will be led by the LEM evangelists, Sterling Johnson, Nels Pedersen and Kenneth Ellingson.

Rev. W. E. Klawitter is the director of the organization which is described as "a free, spontaneous movement within Lutheranism, which has as its purpose, by God's grace, to revive and deepen the spiritual life and fellowship of believers, to reach and win the lost for Christ, and to encourage the use of spiritual gifts for the extension of Christ's kingdom."

GOD'S BOOK

God's Word, today has been discarded
By men, like garments old and worn,
Who proudly claim they have discovered
A fuller meaning of His Word.

They take this book that God has given
For saint and sinner as a guide,
And from its pages truths have riven;
They even claim that God has died.

Some say that Adam ne'er existed;
It's but a myth and nothing more.
And Jonah never had been swallowed,
In three days cast upon the shore.

These are the learned, but rejecting
The truth that's found in Holy Writ,
May cause some soul to doubt and stumble,
Eternally in darkness sit.

How long, O God, will men, but mortal,
Insist to tear thy truths in twain
And turn to fables and frustrations
Where light of lights instead should reign?

This Book of books is God's creation
And will forever fill the need
For souls who seek in true contrition
Forgiveness for their evil deeds.

So, soul, take heart and search its pages,
Its words were writ' by God's own hand.
The truth therein will guide and lead you
At last into the Promised Land.

—O. W. Wehlander
De Lamere, N. Dak.

Quotations from the Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible are by permission of the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.



Luther League Activities

Edited by Jane Thompson

KATHY WAS A CHRISTIAN

Kathleen Bodie, aged 14, murdered by a fellow schoolmate on an early November morning, was a member of the Association congregation in Cloquet, Minnesota, Herbert Franz, pastor. Luther League editor Jane Thompson wrote to Pastor Franz and asked if he would share some thoughts about this tragedy and the following article is the result. The testimony of this young girl's life is a good one to take into this new year.

ON the morning of November 17, a terrible tragedy struck our city of Cloquet, Minnesota, when Kathleen Marie Bodie, 14-year-old high school girl, was brutally slain. I am sure many of you heard the news or even read the news in your local paper.

I was on the West Coast closing a series of evangelistic meetings in Calvary Lutheran Church, Everett, Washington, when I received the sad news. After the initial shock wore off, I thought of Kathy's relationship to Jesus Christ. Was she ready to meet her Savior? I thank God that Kathy was a true child of God. In 1964, at our Family Bible Camp, sponsored by our church, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Cloquet, Minnesota, Kathy surrendered her heart and life to Jesus Christ. And she lived for Christ every day. On my return home by plane from Seattle, Mr. Clifford Johnson, a deacon in my church, who, in my absence, also was in charge of my confirmation class of which Kathy was a member, assured me that Kathy had died in the faith. It was

at confirmation the night before the tragedy that Kathy once again expressed her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Kathy had a deep hunger for the things of God. She had been persecuted by other young people because of her strong Christian convictions. Yet, she would not allow anyone to steer her away from that one true goal in life and that was to live Christ every day. Through Kathy's parents I have learned that Kathy had purposed in her heart to become a missionary. At our last missionary conference, held in our church in October, her burden for missions became even stronger. However, God works in mysterious ways, I told my people that Kathy perhaps will reach more people for Christ through her death than she could reach through her life. Many people have been awakened in our community through her glorious witness.

I had a wonderful opportunity to tell 400 of Kathy's classmates at a memorial service held in our high school about the Christ whom Kathy loved so very much. Kathy prepared well for life because she prepared well for eternity. She was no fool. She lived with two worlds in view at all times. She was ready for death and being ready for death she was ready to live. Her physical life came to an end on November 17, but the influence she has left upon her classmates continues to go on. I thank God for the glorious hope of the Christian faith. Jesus

said, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:18). The road is open through the cemetery. Christ is coming back to claim His own. At that time we shall be reunited with those who have died in faith. What a glorious reunion that will be.

To impress upon each young person the tremendous faith of Kathy and also to challenge each young person to walk the way that Kathy walked, I want to close with 12 resolutions which Kathy made when she was 12 years of age. These were found by Kathy's mother several days after Kathy's home going. They were made on December 27, 1964, several months after her dedication unto the Lord and they were resolutions for the year 1965.

1. To talk with God at a certain time each day.
2. To ask myself before doing anything if God would approve of it.
3. To try not to grumble, sass, or displease anyone.
4. To put my full heart and soul into my Sunday school lessons, schoolwork, flute playing and housework.
5. To wash my face, comb my hair, and brush my teeth at least twice a day.
6. To try and be more quiet and studious in school.
7. To act less like natural man: proud, selfish, boastful, greedy, covetous, ungrateful, sassy, or in other words, just plain mean; but instead, be kind and gracious so as to get along with others as well as with my God.
8. To try and take better care of my clothes and my possessions.
9. To not waste a second of precious time God has given me.
10. To keep some sort of diary.
11. To better myself in every way I possibly can.
12. To be a true child of God.

I trust that these resolutions will be your resolutions this coming year.

Pastor Herbert L. Franz
St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Cloquet, Minnesota



WOMEN *for Christ*

TO HIM BE THE GLORY

Mrs. Lars Stalsbrotten

Eugene, Oregon

Did you ever plan a trip and then lie awake wondering if this were really the right thing to do? When such is the case how good it is to get a word from the Lord, a green light that erases all doubt. Such was the case when we planned our trip to Norway last summer. My husband had received an invitation to speak at a youth Bible camp in the Midwest at the time we planned to leave. Since he felt this was of the Lord, it would mean that our son Oliver and I would go alone without him. In times like these with war, air strikes and crashes, was such a trip justifiable and would we be reunited again as a family? It was at such a moment of doubt that the Lord gave release by a word: "My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest."

The literal fulfillment of this promise made our trip exciting and different. Only because we had His Word could we relax in the flight from Portland to New York and then from Kennedy Airport to London at breathtaking speed. We marvelled how anyone could doubt the existence of God as we beheld His majesty in the heavens and on the earth.

We arrived in London during the

Billy Graham Crusade and although we made several attempts to attend the meetings at Earl's Court, we never got in. People came running from all directions, mostly teenagers—many with long hair. The impact of the Crusade was certainly felt in London, and it filled one with a sense of awe to know that again this great metropolis of the world was being visited. For want of hotel accommodations we shortened our stay in England by taking a ferry from Newcastle, straight across to Bergen, Norway. There we were met by Alida Grimstad from Astoria, Oregon, who was visiting her sister at Hunven, just outside of Bergen. The welcome and the good rest was just what we needed before the next stop in Bergen where Lars and I had spent such happy years when he was pastor of the Free Church there in 1946-1948. Old familiar places had not dimmed but rather seemed more attractive, for Bergen has a charm all its own. The highlights as we visited in the homes of our former people cannot be related here; only that to see our young people of 20 years previous now married with families of their own and still active in the church was indeed heartwarming. The older people, some of them retired, were rejoicing in the finished work of Calvary. One man said, "Be sure to tell Stalsbrotten that now both my

wife and I are saved, and we know it." Tears streamed down faces at the Sunday morning service as we greeted one after the other and they recounted what the Lord had done since last we met.

In Oslo we stayed at Seminar Heimen, which is the Seminary of the Lutheran Free Church, and which receives summer guests. Arne Knudsen, who used to live in Brooklyn where he was such a great help to my husband when he served the 59th Street Church, is now a businessman in Oslo. He and his wife are very active in Christian circles and to meet them was the beginning of many new contacts. We marvelled how God's people meet each other and how they feel right at home even though they have never met before.

During our six weeks in Norway, we visited relatives and friends far and near. Many changes had taken place as with tears they told us of those who had suddenly been taken home in the prime of their youth, yet in each case they had come to know the Lord. What an indication of how God deals with families who have God-fearing and praying relatives. Hardly a day passed but that someone would relate how they were saved at such and such a service. It was like walking through a garden picking beautiful flowers. The sower went forth to sow and twenty years later there was a harvest, even as the Lord predicted (Isa. 55:11).

On our last day in Norway we had been invited to a dinner by a man from Kristiansand whom we had never met before but who was always on the alert to meet and help people. When he heard we were going to Denmark, he said, "That's just where my wife and I are going tomorrow—to a Bible conference at Nyborgstrand. That's just the place for you." The Lord used him to arrange for us to meet a Christian couple from Finland who were also going to the conference. We joined them in Copenhagen where we travelled by train, with many others all going to Nyborgstrand—people from Norway,

Denmark, Sweden, and Finland. Two brothers, John and Paul Madson from Copenhagen, have been led to invite believers from all Europe to gather annually for a week of fellowship. Many of them come from dead churches and are so hungry for fellowship. We had never heard so many languages spoken nor such warmth and joy in the Lord. Although Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones from Westminster Chapel, London, was the main speaker, actually there was no main person, no collections, no special singing, no division of young and old. Yet there were scores of young people, many older people, even a GI family who brought a German family and who lived in tents and ate GI rations in order to be there. Interpreters relayed the messages. As the 800 people sang together, ate together, and prayed as they studied the Word, one couldn't help feeling that our whole trip was worth this unique experience.

As we conversed, we met a Christian girl from Switzerland who gave us the address of like-minded folks in Zurich. Since we went there directly from Denmark, it was indeed a joy to meet them. In this beautiful home we stayed at no cost, only what we felt led to give. These friends in turn gave us a contact in Amsterdam; so no matter where we were, it seemed the presence of the Lord was with us. All along we had encountered the best weather; only in Switzerland did haze hide the beautiful Alps from view.

Travelling on transcontinental trains in Europe is comfortable and it affords a nearness to the inhabitants of the various countries. Crossing the Alsace-Lorraine we still heard arguments as to which country it belonged. In Holland the attractions are much the same as they have always been—canals, windmills, and flowers. In Amsterdam we attended a Dutch church but left it feeling cold, partly because we could not understand the language. To compensate, we looked up the address which had been given us and much to our surprise, a hearty welcome was ex-

tended even though they had never heard of us before. On the wall of this home hung a motto with the exact promise which had meant so much to us all during our travels. The sisters who lived here were all school teachers, so we had many things in common. Before we left they sang for us, and we recorded, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" and several of their favorite hymns in Dutch.

The last day before we boarded the jet for direct flight to Portland, Oregon, who should show up but one of the three sisters. She had come to pray that we might have a safe journey home. Where among the unsaved can one find friends like these? Once up in the air there are many commitments that take place. One of these was a deep sense of unworthiness and lack of faith.

Reunited as a family at our home in Eugene, how could we but have a praise service in that we acknowledged "to Him belonged the glory"; to us the shame that we trust Him so little.

(Editor's Note: Mrs. Stalsbrotten, who will co-author the WMF Bible studies for 1967 with her husband, worked in the U.S. Intelligence Department under General Eisenhower in Europe during the Second World War.)

NORTH CENTRAL MINNESOTA DISTRICT WMF RALLY HELD AT SHEVLIN

The North Central Minnesota District of the Women's Missionary Federation met at the Landstad Lutheran Church, Shevlin, Minn., on Nov. 1, 1966. Mrs. Birdeen Holt, Fosston, district president, presided and Miss Ona Broden was the pianist for the day.

A welcome was extended by Mrs. A. O. Tommeraasen, president of the Landstad Ladies Aid. Devotions were given by Mrs. Art Nordin and "I'm a Pilgrim" was the title of the solo sung by Pastor Ingvald Norum.

The theme song, "Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart," was sung before Pastor Gene Sundby presented the Bible study on Isaiah

55:1 and John 7:37, 38. He stressed the importance of being living witnesses for the Lord and Savior. We were favored by several musical numbers from the Shevlin, Winger and Perley parishes and also the WMF chorus.

At the business meeting, minutes of the previous meetings were read by Mrs. Oscar Raaen in the absence of the regular secretary and were approved as read. Officers elected were Mrs. Lewis, vice-president; Mrs. Reuben Moland, treasurer; and Mrs. Ingman Bolstad, secretary. An invitation was extended from the Mt. Carmel Lutheran Church of McIntosh for the WMF spring meeting.

The afternoon was opened by singing the hymn, "Hark, the Voice of Jesus Calling," and also our theme song. A prayer session was led by Mrs. Marvin Undseth and devotions were led by Mrs. Haldor Hegg. Mrs. E. B. Holte was the speaker for the afternoon.

The offering was given to the General Fund and the Bethany Bible Camp.

Sixty-two persons were registered. Of these, four were pastors.

It was a crisp and cool, but beautiful day and we enjoyed good fellowship for which we give thanks to our heavenly Father. We are grateful to the Shevlin Ladies Aid for being our gracious hostesses and for the lovely noon meal and coffee breaks. We closed by praying the Lord's Prayer and the benediction was pronounced by host pastor Marvin Undseth.

Mrs. Oscar Raaen
Temporary Secretary

MISSION PROGRAM PRESENTED BY ZION LADIES AID IN TIOPA

The Ladies Aid of Zion Lutheran Church, Tioga, N. Dak., conducted a family mission program on Sunday, Nov. 20. Mrs. Eilert Haakenson, president, was the leader.

The audience sang "Hark, the Voice of Jesus Calling." For devotions Mrs. Roy Syverson read Psalm 100 and offered a worship prayer.

[Continued on page 11]



EDITORIALS

CHRISTMAS IN RETROSPECT

Christmas 1966 is past. Without doubt, many pleasant memories linger for us all if the season was not marred by any personal tragedies. Fine gifts were received and joy experienced in giving presents to friends and loved ones. Perhaps it was possible to be "back home" for Christmas or to have members of the family come to visit us. The detection of a greater spirit of friendship and brotherhood during the season was encouraging once again.

But the American Christmas scene is not without its nagging doubts, too. It is a Christian festival, but is it being observed as it ought to be? If there are violations committed, are they all due to the uncommitted (or unconverted)? Should a second look be taken at our whole approach to this blessed season?

Take the matter of gift-giving, for example. We are told that it is an 8½-billion-dollar matter each year now, exclusive of the paper and ribbon in which the gifts are wrapped and the postage with which some of them are sent. In order to handle sales and delivery of such a volume of merchandise, merchants are finding it increasingly difficult to contain the Christmas rush in the some four weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The shopping season is spilling more and more this side of Thanksgiving. And who are we to condemn the stores for taking a step toward self-preservation (albeit with profit) in the face of a business flood that is continuing to spiral? Or is it our thought that the harried and harrassed clerks and delivery boys are just going to have to put in more time at their jobs while we fence the growing Christmas push into four or five weeks?

The other alternative is to take another look at our gift-giving. Gifts are ostensibly (apparently) given in remembrance of the great gift of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the thought is a beautiful one, but is a great buying spree which leaves shopper, clerk and postal employee fatigued when Christmas does come—is this honoring to either the Father or the Son? Gifts given to charity are those most in the spirit of Jesus who came to minister and to give His life a ransom for many. But in the face of Christmas debts that may have to be spread over several months if they are going to be paid, charity may get little more than a nod.

To give up the idea of gift-giving to friends and loved ones would be to border on heresy in the eyes of many, and we would not suggest it. But possibly some of the volume of gift-giving could be transferred to the birthdays of individuals. That is, larger presents could be given then in place of those usually given at Christmas or in addition to token gifts given at the holy season.

The custom of sending greeting cards ought not to be discontinued, but there should be no ridicule toward those who give the practice up in the interests of time and economy. If friends should go through the year without any written word of greeting, that would be too bad, but if they choose some other occasion than Christmas to remember one another there should be no objection.

Much more could be said on the subject of our Christmas observance, but this will suffice. What we are concerned about is whether we are presently observing the birthday of Jesus in the proper manner. It may be well to ask whether a non-Christian visitor to America at Christmas time would be able to clearly tell what the purpose of all the activity is. Many times, we are afraid, he would be baffled by it all.

Christmas is so many wonderful things. It is steeped in memories for each of us. But how can the pace be slowed a bit, how can Christ be kept central in our observance, or be made central? What are we willing to change without changing the heart of Christmas? These are the questions that parade across our minds. If any have found the way to a more meaningful Christmas for their families, we would be glad to share such with readers of *The Lutheran Ambassador*.

THIS IS A NEW YEAR

The new year of 1967 is here. The twentieth century is two-thirds over. Time marches on.

But we are not writing now to fix our place in history's evaluation of this century. That is for others who follow us to do. We wish merely to look ahead into the year before us and to suggest what may be in store for the fellowship known as the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. No one of us knowing what our times may be, what we envision now may have little resemblance to what history records a year from now, but we must always look forward with the knowledge we do now have.

The big single event we anticipate in the year is the ordination of the first graduating class of Free Lutheran Seminary. The ordination of most of the men will take place at the Annual Conference at a site yet to be made known. Their commissioning will signal the beginning of a flow of new ministerial strength into the church each year, as the Lord provides. God has supplied some pastor transfers from other Lutheran communions since the merger, but it should be evident to all that to these must be added men who are trained by us.

Therefore, ordination day, June 18, 1967, will be a red-letter day in the life of our church. We trust that many of you will have the opportunity to be present and that the occasion may be marked by a special service of thanksgiving and praise to the Lord who provides the workers for the harvest fields. Young men, conservatively trained and with warm hearts for the Gospel and for people, will step into the breaches where they are so sorely needed.

Mission work will be strengthened in 1967. Possibly new workers will be sent to Brazil, although there is nothing definite on this yet. A Bible school is to be started there this year, and out of this will come evangelists who can assist in the spiritual reclamation of their own people. This has long been Missionary John Abel's vision and it is shared by the Mission Board. Nevertheless, there will always be a need for those missionaries who go out to other countries and assist in the proclamation of the Gospel. We trust that the Lord will supply the workers here, too, as the needs arise.

Pastor L. C. Dynneson wrote in his Christmas letter of growing opportunities in Arizona. It sounds as though several types of outreach can be tried there if it is the mind of the church to attempt them.

This year should see construction begun and completed on a dormitory-classroom building for our Bible school in Minneapolis. Thirteen students were enrolled in the first quarter. If even thirteen more students were added to that number next September, we would have real problems in accommodating them. Possibly there will be more than that. So something will have to be done. The situation is being studied by the Board of Trustees of the Schools.

A Luther League convention is being planned for next summer. Summer employment and Bible camps compete with plans for the convention, but we hope that a sizeable turnout can be realized. Among the other statistics which we do not have about our church is the number of our youth. But there must be a considerable amount of them. Only a few of those now in senior high school and above attend the Bible camps. Every leaguer ought to go to a convention at least once in his lifetime (conventions will be held only every two years) and this may be the year for your Luther Leaguer to go. Sure, it will cost something, but this investment may be more meaningful than some others that are made.

The work of the church goes on. It touches many areas. Time does not suffice to speak of the Women's Missionary Federation, parish education, stewardship, pensions, Family Bible Camp, the district activities, winter Bible conference, etc. And the heart of it all is the local congregation and the work done there.

What is the task in which we are engaged? It is making Jesus Christ known. It is summed up in that

saying that the Luther League used to talk about—helping people to "know, live and share Christ and His forgiveness." That states it pretty well. Whether we send out new pastors, build a dormitory in Minneapolis or a classroom in Campo Mourao, charter a train coach for Luther Leaguers going to Kalispell, print a Sunday school booklet or conduct a stewardship workshop, it is all for that ultimate purpose. With that thought before us we ought to be able to enter the open doors which the Lord graciously continues to place before us.

LENGTH OF TERM

Our readers will remember that one of the points in the *Rules for Work* presented to the last Annual Conference which provoked lively discussion was the number of consecutive terms (a term is three years) which may be served by the presidency of the Association. The committee which proposed changes in the *Rules for Work* to the conference did not suggest any limitation of terms. But it was obvious that there was considerable sentiment in favor of limitation at Thief River Falls.

No agreement being reached last June, the matter is carried over to the next conference for resolution and the final vote will not come until 1968.

Today's *Ambassador* contains the first "Letter to the Editor" on this subject. And it is, we hope, only the first of many on the topic. Please accept this invitation to comment on this situation which is of special interest to the church.

In the interest of as full freedom of expression as possible, we shall not print the writers' names unless that is specifically asked. But the cloak of anonymity must not be the occasion to deal in personalities past, present or future. However, the letters must be signed when sent to the editor if they are to be published at all.

The question of whether the terms of the presidency should be limited has two sides to it and should bring forth spirited discussion. Our pages are open to you.

NOTICE

The current fiscal year in the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations ends on January 31, 1967.

Contributions for the present fiscal year must be postmarked not later than January 31 in order to be credited to that year.

Your cooperation is appreciated.

Thank You.

The Man From the Cave



Pastor R. S. Persson, Astoria, Ore.

THE people that walked in darkness have seen a great light and upon them hath the light shined...and there came forth a man out of the tombs."

It was Plato who thought of men living in the caves of their own delusions, chained with their backs to the entrance so that they see only the sunlight of reality as a shadow upon the walls.

Then by some great act of will and strength one of the slaves breaks loose from his chains into the true universe of light. Beholding the wonders of such illumination he is at once eager to liberate his brothers and so stumbles back into the darkness of the cave; but his brothers prefer to stone him to death rather than accept discovery or the message of the existing light.

In a very real sense we, too, were of the caves and chained until the great Light shined upon us. We have known what it is to be ignorant, disobedient, and deceived—slaves of various desires. We were hateful and we hated one another. We saw the shadows upon the wall

until the day that Christ set us free.

And we have known of those who broke loose from the chains and beheld His wondrous light, and then plunged back into the caves to tell the glories of grace. There was Wycliffe, the Morning Star shining forth in grievous darkness. The Light shined upon him and he saw that the elements of the communion do not change. And he went back into the caves to tell them. But those in the caves did not like this and they tried to make it darker by threatening anyone with death if they possessed his writings. But the Light still shined.

Hus came out of the cave and he plunged back into the stumbling darkness, but the only light those in the caves could endure was the flame of his body at the stake.

And there was Savonarola. He made the mistake to suggest that the church would be punished, and that it would be renewed again. But such suggestions are not nice to those who cannot see any imperfections in synodical decrees, even though those decrees might

hinder the Light, and so there was another flame to light up the caves—a singing fagot that burned ever so brightly as the flames lit up the blackness of that night.

So also an insignificant man like Luther. His cave was a monastery. He was chained there, even in a monastery, with the heavy weight of sin. There was no light from his flagellations.

Some did see the reflections upon the wall and suggested that there was forgiveness with God. But it was really through the Word that the Light shined. And again, those in the caves could not endure.

And times have not changed. Really. There are still those in the caves. They say that they want ecumenism—we really should all be one. But they do not realize that such cannot take place in the caves.

We can prove this. There was a cave at Trent. I have never been there, but I am told that there it was decided that if anyone said that he was justified by faith alone without good works, that he was to be regarded as anathema. Which in today's refined language means that if those in the caves had the power they would still light up their caves with such fanatics. They still say this—and they say that they will never change their position.

A person can never change his position if he is still chained. You see, according to many church leaders we are supposed to go back into the caves and be with them, even though they admit that they will never change—not even if the Word of God says that we are saved by grace, that it is a gift of God and not of works, lest any man should boast.

Some leaders just don't seem to realize that when people do not want Jesus as a Savior they do not want the Light to shine in the darkness. We know something about this, having known what it is to be ignorant, disobedient and deceived—slaves of various desires, we were hateful and hated one another. And we have passed from darkness into light. Because upon us the Light has shined.



Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir:

I am writing concerning paragraph 7 of the *Revised Rules for Work*. I would like to put down first the reasons which I have heard against the limitation of the number of terms spent in the offices of the AFLC.

Reasons against the limitations:

1. The first reason mentioned is that a good man would be lost to office after many years of faithful service and that both his service and leadership as well as his image in the eyes of others would be lost.

2. Also mentioned has been the fact that many other churches and groups have no restrictions or limitations on the number of terms to be held by one man. Especially mentioned to support this are the other Lutheran churches of today and the old Lutheran Free Church.

3. The third reason given is that this would show a lack of confidence in the ability of the conference or of the AFLC as a whole.

Now I would like to answer these reasons.

Reasons for the limitations on terms to be held by the officers of the AFLC:

1. We are local congregations associating, a congregation-church, as Professor Georg Sverdrup would call it. We have learned a painful lesson concerning taking our freedom and rights for granted. Because of the experience we have passed through, many of our local congregations have a clause in their constitution that they recognize no body or majority of congregations over them. We are under no extra-congregational power. This was not

lack of faith in the AFLC but rather a safeguard which we feel is necessary after our past experiences. Our emphasis is on the local congregation and upon their individual power and rights. To have a termination is therefore not a lack of confidence but rather a necessary safeguard.

2. The old LFC had no restrictions on the number of terms their officers could hold. Therefore it was easy for one group to gain power and exert that power over the Conference.

I believe that all who came out of the old LFC into the AFLC did so because they believed in the *Rules for Work* and the *Guiding Principles*. Yet in spite of these *Guiding Principles* look what happened there. We are, at least in part, a living testimony that there were not enough guidelines in the old LFC.

3. One of the reasons for unlimited terms is that we need a man who will create an image for us in the eyes of others, that in a sense he will be the epitome of the AFLC. Is that what we want? I do not believe so. We do want a God-fearing man whom we can love, respect and look up to as well as to follow, and we do want a man who will create a good image in the eyes of others; but, we are a congregation-church. It seems as though this idea of a man in leadership is a completely different attitude. It is synodical rather than congregational. We do not necessarily want such a man or such a position. Our emphasis is on the congregational level and our president is the moderator for that group.

4. The best argument of all against the limitations is that of losing the service of a good man. Also involved in this is the fact that it takes considerable time to become acquainted with the position. This is a sound reason and one not lightly passed over. But there is a price to pay for every safeguard. To look, however, only on the idealistic side where a godly man will be in office and will lead well for 15, 20 or 30 years and that his successors will follow would be to ignore the human nature of every man and the holds of greed and pride that can eventually get hold on any man who is not completely and continually dependant upon God. Because we have a good man in office today is no guarantee that all to follow shall be the same.

Another factor to be considered in this is that a man who holds an office for a certain number of years shapes himself to the office, but a man who holds an office for a great number of years shapes the office to himself.

Then, too, it might possibly be good for a man to come away from the office of president for three years and again be in the parish that he might again become familiar with a different point of view, and that if re-elected later he could come back with renewed strength, dedication, and possibly new ideas. Certainly his not being president would not diminish his stature among us.

We are now setting up the *Rules for Work* for posterity (we hope), by which we will operate until our blessed Lord returns. Now is the time for expression on both sides of the issue so that all points might be duly considered before the final decision is made. May God lead and guide us in this as in all that we attempt to do as individuals, congregations and as an Association, that we might move forward in patience, love and understanding, and that all that is done might be to the glory of God and the furtherance of the AFLC in serving Him.

Name withheld
Minnesota

Women for Christ

[Continued from page 8]

The ladies' choir sang "Something for Jesus."

Mr. Richard Gunderson, a student at Free Lutheran Seminary in Minneapolis, spoke of the need in missions both at home and in foreign fields and how we should give our youth the real encouragement they need when they express a desire to help in God's work.

A ladies' trio consisting of Mrs. Lester Lalim, Mrs. Cliff Iverson and Mrs. Art Haakenson, accompanied on the piano by Mrs. Kenneth Nylander, sang "Little Is Much When God Is in It." Mrs. E. Haakenson gave a few remarks, followed by the offering. The audience sang "O Zion, Haste, Thy Mission High Fulfilling," followed by the Lord's Prayer prayed in unison.

After the meeting all adjourned to the dining room for a hotdish luncheon.

Zion Lutheran has donated to all the WMF projects and many attended this special program.

Mrs. Arnold Blikre

Secretary, Zion Ladies Aid

It is with great joy and thanksgiving that I can now report to the women of our Women's Missionary Federation that we have met and exceeded the proposed budget (\$12,000.00) for this year.

The Executive Board is grateful for the enthusiasm shown by your giving to the various projects. As we begin a new year, with an increased budget, and with the expanding program of our church, we must continue to grow in our activities in order that we may manifest our love for Him who first loved us. Pray God to give us the vision to see the opportunities that are ours if only we will give this program of our church work our support in prayers and gifts.

Mrs. R. M. Konsterlie, WMF
Treasurer

Route 1, Willmar, Minn. 56201

(Ed. Note: The fiscal year ends on January 31. All gifts received during January are credited to the old year.)

A Word to Congregations Considering Affiliation with the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is a growing fellowship. Congregations often ask what action they must take to become a part of the Association. The Coordinating Committee, therefore, prepared the following resolution as a suggestion to congregations considering affiliation with the Association.

This resolution draws attention to the fact that:

1. The Association is thoroughly Lutheran in doctrine.

2. The Association is a fellowship among congregations and individuals of like mind and spirit.

3. The Association has institutions, namely, a seminary and Bi-

ble school, and a mission outreach both home and foreign, to which we commit ourselves and from which we will receive blessings.

4. The Association has a clergy roster from which pastors of the congregation's own choice can be called.

5. Joining the Association in no way takes away any freedom or autonomy but assures it.

Resolutions to affiliate with the Association must in no way conflict with the constitution of the congregation and it must be adopted at a legally called business meeting. The secretary of the Association is to be notified of such action as soon as possible.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION FOR CONGREGATIONS DESIRING TO AFFILIATE WITH THE ASSOCIATION OF FREE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS

RESOLVED:

Inasmuch as we are a Lutheran congregation and unreservedly subscribe to the Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian creeds, Luther's Small Catechism, and the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, and...

Desiring to establish a closer fellowship with congregations of like mind and spirit, and...

Desiring to support and benefit from theologically conservative and spiritually alive institutions of higher education, and...

Desiring to have a part in a mission outreach both in America and on foreign fields, and...

Desiring a source from which we may call a pastor of our choice...

We hereby adopt the Fundamental Principles of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations as a part of our doctrine and request affiliation with the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, recognizing that this affiliation in no way takes away any of our freedom or autonomy, but rather assures it.

Adopted on this the _____ day of _____
in the year nineteen hundred _____, at a
legally called business meeting of the congregation.

Signed _____

Chairman

Secretary

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES
of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

1. According to the Word of God, the congregation is the right form of the Kingdom of God on earth.

2. The congregation consists of believers who, by using the means of grace and the spiritual gifts as directed by the Word of God, seek salvation and eternal blessedness for themselves and for their fellowmen.

3. According to the New Testament, the congregation needs an external organization with membership roll, election of officers, stated times and places for its gatherings, and other similar provisions.

4. Members of the organized congregation are not in every instance believers, and such members often derive false hope from their external connection with the congregation. It is therefore the sacred obligation of the congregation to purify itself by the quickening preaching of the Word of God, by earnest admonition and exhortation, and by expelling the openly sinful and perverse.

5. The congregation directs its own affairs, subject to the authority of the Word and the Spirit of God, and acknowledges no other ecclesiastical authority or government above itself.

6. A free congregation esteems and cherishes all the spiritual gifts which the Lord gives for its edification, and seeks to stimulate and encourage their use.

7. A free congregation gladly accepts the mutual assistance which the congregations can give one another in the work for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

8. Such assistance consists partly in the mutual sharings of spiritual gifts among congregations through conferences, exchange visits, lay activities, etc., whereby congregations are mutually edified, and partly in the voluntary and Spirit-prompted cooperation of congregations for the accomplishing of such tasks as exceed the ability of the individual congregation.

9. Among such tasks may be mentioned specifically the training of pastors, distribution of Bibles and other Christian literature, home missions, foreign missions, Jewish missions, deaconess homes, children's homes, and other works of mercy.

10. Free congregations have no right to demand that other congregations shall submit to their opinion, will, judgment, or decision; therefore, domination by a majority of congregations over a minority is to be rejected.

11. Agencies found desirable for conducting the joint activities of congregations, such as conferences, committees, officers, etc., cannot in a Free Lutheran Congregation impose any obligations or restrictions, exert any compulsions, or lay any burden upon the individual congregation, but have the right only to make recommendations to, and requests of, congregations and individuals.

12. Every free congregation, as well as every individual believer, is constrained by the Spirit of God and by the privileges of Christian love to do good and to work for the salvation of souls and the quickening of spiritual life, as far as its abilities and power permit. Such free spiritual activity is limited neither by parish nor by synodical bounds.

WINTER BIBLE CONFERENCE
SET FOR DALTON

The fifth Annual Winter Bible Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations will be held in the Dalton, Minn., parish, Harry C. Molstre, pastor, Feb. 9-12, 1967. Some housing will be available in the parish. Hotel and motel accommodations can be secured in Fergus Falls, Minn.

Program details and housing instructions will be announced later.

BE CAREFUL FOR NOTHING

(The following poem was written in 1890 by the grandmother of Mrs. Simon Sherbrooke, Pelican Rapids, Minnesota, who submitted it to *The Lutheran Ambassador*.)

I care not how dark the valley,
Nor how thick the thorns may be;
If I hold the hand of my Father,
And know that He leadeth me.

I care not how sharp the lightning,
Nor how loud the thunder's roar;
My Father holds the clouds in His hands,
And the storm will soon pass o'er.

I care not how high the mountain,
Nor how steep the road may be;
If I know that my Father is at the top,
And lovingly calling me.

I care not how wide the ocean,
Nor how high the billows roll;
Though my Lord lies "asleep on a pillow,"
I know that He cares for my soul.

I care not how barren the desert,
If my Master bids me stay;
I know that my food and raiment,
Will come in His own good way.

Then why should I have trouble,
Since I cast my care upon God?
It destroys the sting of the chastening,
To know that love sends the rod.

Addie May Riggs

CHURCH-WORLD NEWS

GLEANINGS FROM AN EDITOR'S READING

May I say to you who doubt: Let Jesus come into your life, and He will perform the great miracle also in you. That is the way we were cured of our doubts.

You are standing a little too aloof. You are looking down upon Jesus. When you kneel before Him, as the rest of us have done, you, too, will see Him as your Savior.—O. Hallesby in *God's Word for Today* (Augsburg Publishing House).

If a converted person is not contagious by virtue of his very existence, then there is reason to doubt the genuineness of his conversion.—Theodor Bovet in *The Road to Salvation*, (Doubleday & Co., Inc.).

We can no longer be comfortable in the face of the tremendous evil in the world. Christians are going to have to make a choice: *stand up for what you profess or get out*. There is no real choice. If you can't make the teaching of Jesus relevant, you are already out.—C. B. Burt in *Look*, Dec. 27, 1966.

An able Protestant Church historian and ecumenist who has written for our readers exemplifies some of the dangers and ambiguities of dialogue in a series of articles he has composed on the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. Although there is much in what he says with which we can agree, it would be a disservice to Catholic-Protestant understanding to remain silent about some of his assertions. One of them is that the movement led by Luther and Calvin was necessary because right doctrine had ceased to be taught, or was obscured in the 16th century and continues to be obscured to this day. This a Catholic can never accept.—Paul H. Hallett in *The Register* (Roman Catholic), Nov. 27, 1966.

But let us thank God that He is silent. It means that we can still get the Gospel out, for the means of Grace are still effective. Salvation is available, forgiveness is available, the Holy Spirit is available. It is still true that *as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God*. God has not canceled His free and unmerited offer—yet.—Editor in *Decision*, December, 1966.

13 LUTHERANS IN 90TH CONGRESS; 3 SENATORS, 10 REPRESENTATIVES

Washington (NLC)—Three seats in the Senate and ten others in the House will be occupied by Lutherans when the 90th Congress convenes in mid-January.

The church body affiliation in both the Senate and the House encompasses each of the three major bodies in this country: the Lutheran Church in America, the American Lutheran Church, and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

All three Senators and one of the Representatives are Democrats. The nine other Congressmen are Republicans.

Newly elected to the Senate was Ernest F. Hollings, a former governor of South Carolina who is a member of the LCA Executive Council. Neither of the two other Senators were faced with reelection in November.

Still serving unexpired terms are Vance Hartke of Indiana, a member of the LC-MS, and Warren G. Magnuson of Washington, a member of the ALC.

Joining seven incumbents who were returned to their seats in the House were three newly elected Republicans: Edwin D. Eshleman of Pennsylvania, LCA; Thomas S. Kleppe of North Dakota, ALC; and M. Gene Snyder of Kentucky, LC-MS.

The only Democrat among the Lutheran incumbents who were re-

elected was George M. Rhodes of Pennsylvania, a member of the LCA. The six others, all Republicans, are:

Ed Reinecke and Don H. Clausen of California, both ALC; Odin Langen of Minnesota, LCA; Albert H. Quie and Ancher Nelsen of Minnesota, both ALC, and Joel T. Broyhill of Virginia, LCA.

There were 18 Lutherans in the 89th Congress, two in the Senate and 16 in the House.

ENROLLMENT IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS NEARS 100,000

Washington (NLC)—Student enrollments in Lutheran seminaries, colleges, and high schools in the United States and Canada approached the 100,000 mark during the current academic year, according to statistics released here.

Dr. Gould Wickey, executive director of the National Lutheran Educational Conference, placed the total enrollment figure for 1966-67 at 99,768, an increase of 4,274 over the 95,494 reported one year ago.

At the same time, he called special attention to a sharp reversal in a four-year decline in seminary enrollments.

Statistics from 21 theological schools indicated a total of 4,145 students, an increase of 209. By contrast, he noted, totals for the last five years, beginning in 1961-62, were 4,248; 4,083; 4,050; 3,964 and 3,936.

Total enrollment in all educational institutions reflected a 4.5 per cent increase while the increase in seminarians amounted to 5.3 per cent.

In the United States, the LCA had 1,395 students in its nine schools; the LC-MS had 1,455 in its two seminaries, and the ALC had 1,068 in three schools. In Canada, the LCA and ALC operate a seminary jointly at Saskatoon with 30 students.

Other church bodies with one seminary each are Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod with 145 students; the Evangelical Lutheran Synod with 8 students, and the Church of the Lutheran Confession with 6 students.

In addition, the Church of the Lutheran Brethren has a seminary with 7 students, a seminary indirectly related to the Apostolic Lutheran Church in America has 14 students, and the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations' seminary has 17 students.

SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN CHURCH VOTES TO ORDAIN WOMEN

Schleswig, (West) Germany (LWF)—The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Schleswig-Holstein, one of the member bodies of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD), has voted to admit women to the ministry.

OVER 50,000 BIBLE PORTIONS PRINTED IN NEW GUINEA

Madang, New Guinea (LWF)—More than 50,000 copies of portions of Holy Scriptures have been printed here by the Lutheran Press in active support of Bible society efforts to keep up with the spread of literacy and the Christian community in New Guinea.

A LOOK WITHIN

Looking heavenward and kneeling
just right

My folded hands must have been a
beautiful sight;

But my heart was also folded (hard
and thin).

It would not let love for my "broth-
er" in.

—Mrs. T. Berge
Anoka, Minn.

5/66 W-1
STANLEY HOLMAAS
HEMPHILL MINN 56738

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