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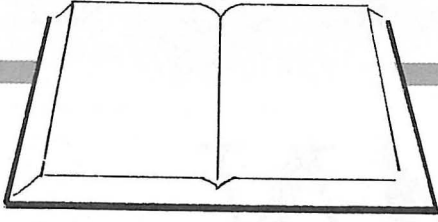
No. 2

# *LUTHERAN*

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*Winter Wonderland*



## *According to the Word*

### **FRUITFUL OR FRUITLESS TREES**

**Luke 13:6-9**

In our last meditation we suggested that each one of us take a new year's inventory to help us to see how we rate, spiritually speaking. In this meditation we will continue somewhat along this same line. In our text Jesus issues a solemn warning. This illustration that Jesus uses in this parable of a fruitless fig tree was first of all a symbol of Israel, but it is also a symbol of every fruitless life. You and I are God's trees in His vineyard.

God mercifully preserves and spares the fruitless trees, but the day of mercy will some day end. Yes, even God's patience finally comes to an end and the tree is cut down. Do you suppose that there may be some fruitless trees reading these lines who are in danger of being being cut down this new year unless there is a change and they begin to bear the fruit of repentance and the fruits of the Spirit?

Israel (God's chosen people), to whom Jesus was primarily speaking, were the most privileged people, but with the privilege went the responsibility to tell others, to bear fruit. But they failed. Today

we in America are one of the most privileged peoples in the world. How are we doing? Are we bearing fruit for God? As a nation, we must admit that we are bearing fruit, but sad to say, it is the fruit of sin and wickedness and not the fruit of the Spirit. We are thankful though that there are people in God's vineyard who are bearing fruit for Him. Not all the trees are unfruitful.

What about you, How much fruit does Jesus find in your life? You have heard the good news of the Gospel that Christ died for your sins. Are you telling others of this wonderful Savior? In John 15:16, we read: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide." Have you obeyed this command of Christ? If not, why not?

In this parable in our text, Jesus tells us a little of what takes place behind the scenes with the coming of the new year. Yes, in heaven there is a conversation about unfruitful trees. There are many such trees, I fear, in God's vineyard. They have been standing there since baptism, or since a conversion experience, when they became children of God. In baptism you and I were grafted into Christ. What has happened since our bap-

tism or our conversion experience? For a while all went well. These trees grew and began to bear fruit. They lived childhood's innocent life with God. But then some of these trees stopped growing and they stopped producing fruit.

The child had grown old enough to break away and leave home like the prodigal son, and began living for the things of this life. Others are like the elder son who stayed home but also lost out with God and did not bear fruit for Him. Others have backslidden from the Lord and have not remained true to the commitment made at the time of their conversion. All such fruitless trees are in danger of being cut down.

A crisis has occurred in our text. There was a question of whether or not the tree should be cut down. No one wants unfruitful trees in their yards or orchards. This tree spoken of in our text had been standing in the way for three years. We note that Jesus is interceding on behalf of this fruitless tree that it might be given one more chance, one more year in which to bear fruit. There may be such a person reading these lines whom God is giving one more chance this coming year; one more chance to surrender his or her life to God and to bear fruit for Him.

Marvin S. Undseth

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# Heaven

Pastor A. L. Hokonson  
Faith, S. Dak.

## Part I

John 14:1-3; II Cor. 5:1

### HEAVEN IS REAL

Heaven is the home of the Triune God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is also the home of the angels and saints in Christ. When the Apostle Paul prays that the God of Peace should sanctify us wholly, I Thess. 5:23, he is praying for our preparation for heaven; that we should be a temple filled with God. It is not enough to possess God; we must be possessed of Him. Christ longs to see this in us, that Christ lives in our hearts. Before Ignatius was cast to the wild beasts, he was asked by the Emperor, "Is it true, Ignatius, that you carry about your God within you?" "It is even so," replied Ignatius, "for it is written, 'I will dwell in thee and walk in thee.'" For that answer, they cast him to the wild beasts.

So heaven is real to the Christian. The Christian believes, as Joel records in 3:17, "I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain." Or as Isaiah says in 57:15, "I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit." Though the Christian lives through storms and tempests, he knows that the clouds are the dust of His feet (Nah. 1:3). A cloud is a beautiful bit of creation to us, but to the Lord, it can be swept away as dust. How wonderful then to contemplate heaven, the creation of God, and His habitat! Isaiah 18 tells how God beholds from heaven. In heaven, the angels cry one to another in service to Him (Isa. 6:2). Holy beings live to stir one another to higher themes of service (Isa. 6:3). It is like one bird awakening a woodland to song. How the thought of Heaven sets us

aglow to others! "Heaven is my home" is not a trite phrase. Isaiah tells us that just in proportion to the increase of His government in our lives, so will be our peace (Isa. 6:7). And so this thought of heaven is a legitimate part of the Christian's life. The Bible reveals so much of the hope of heaven, and yet in its revelation conceals so much to stir the hope in the Christian heart to deeper longings for its fulfillment. Such is the WORD OF GOD.

### ABOVE THE TAIN OF THIS WORLD

And so the Lord calls us to mountains of vision where we can look on the eternal landscapes and stand above the taint of this world. In Isaiah 56:7, He says, "Even them will I bring to my holy mountain" and in Isaiah 33:17, "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty, they shall behold the land that is very far off." As we read these words, we do think of heaven and its implications for the pilgrim here below. Think how tested is the calibre and quality of the souls who seek to attain to this presence of God. It is a test here of being joined to the Lord in an indissoluble covenant of Grace; to minister to Him in daily service as His priests; to love His Name, and to abide in His inner rest (Heb. 4:9). We read in II Peter 1:4 that we are made partakers of the divine nature. If you put a piece of iron in the fire, it very soon loses its dark color and becomes red and hot like the fire, but it does not lose its iron nature. So the soul becomes bright with God's brightness, beautiful with God's beauty, pure with God's purity, and warm with the glow of His perfect love, and yet remains a human soul. We shall be like Him and yet remain ourselves (I John

3:2). And to think that Jesus says, "all things that the Father hath are mine, therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you" (John 16:15).

### THE FACT OF HEAVEN

John 14:1-3 reveals the fact of Heaven. Think of the many Christians who have gone home to be with the Lord on the truth of this passage of Scripture. And on that alone for some. The Bible facts are here. God has two houses, the Church on earth and the Church in heaven. One is that of GRACE; the other of GLORY. Jesus calls the latter His Father's House. He implies His right to it and also the right of His people. For He said, "I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God" (John 20:17). It is a heavenly home, a glorious and extensive house, "an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Cor. 5:1). What a gracious dwelling! It has great variety, to exhibit perfect justice to suit the vast range of the capacities of the saints, and to establish the verities of revelation. For he says, "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon," (I Cor. 15:41). Or as we read in Matt. 25:23, in relation to the talents given, "I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of the Lord." These mansions are mansions of sinless intellectual, as well as spiritual, light, perfect noon day, mansions of spotless purity, of undisturbed peace, of superlative blessedness, and yet, a densely populated city; for they shall "come from the east and the west" (Matt. 8:11 and Luke 13:29); a "multitude that no man can number" (Rev. 7:9). And all this is prepared for believers in Christ. It is the fulfillment of II Cor. 6:18, "And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

### WHAT IT IS LIKE

And so we ask, "What is Heaven like?"

First there is the Father. James calls Him "the Father of Lights" (James 1:16-17). He is the source of light. He spoke and brought into existence the sun, moon and stars (Gen. 1:14-19). These are mere tokens of His Eternal Light. And then also God gave men the promise of mental light (Isa. 2:20-21). Then there is Jesus Christ, His Son, who is, and said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). This glory of Christ as reigning King of heaven would be too much for mortal eyes to endure. I Timothy 6:15-16: "The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see." As mortals we cannot see that light. Our feeble faculties would be dazzled before such a blaze of glory. In Ezekiel 1:28, we read of the prophet having a faint glimpse of it "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the Lord." In Acts 7:55, we see Stephen being stoned and lifting up his eyes, and it seemed as if God rolled back the curtain of time and

allowed him to look into the Eternal City and see Christ standing at the right hand of God. And then there are the angels of light. Innumerable hosts of spiritual intelligencers, angels, seraphim, cherubim, thrones and principalities! (Deut. 33:2; Jude 14; Job 38:7; Dan. 7:10). The angel who rolled away the stone from the sepulchre is thus described, "His countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow" (Matt. 28:3). Angels are an order of beings superior to the nature of man (Ps. 8:5); they excel in strength (Ps. 103:20); they brought Israel out of Egypt (Num. 20:16 and Isa. 37:36). Angels are instructors (Gen. 16:7, II Kings 1:16, Luke 1:20). Angels are deliverers (Gen. 22:12, Dan. 6:22, Acts 5:19-20). And also comforters (Dan. 9:10, Acts 27:24, and Luke 14:22).

#### WHERE IT IS

But we also ask, "Where is Heaven?" Rev. 4:1 invites us, "Come up hither." And so Heaven is in an upward direction. But which way is up? Isaiah 14:12-14 speaks of ascending above the clouds into Heaven above the stars of God; he speaks of "the mount of the congregation in the sides of

the north," that is, above the astronomical north and beyond. Scientists tell us today that there is a tunnel in the northern skies through the stars, an untracked region beyond the knowledge of man. Scientists admit their awareness of this fact. This fact is also in accordance with the statement in Job 26:7, "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place and hangeth the earth upon nothing." Ezek. 1:4 says, "And I looked, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud and a fire unfolding itself," etc. Is this the heaven of heavens where the Lord resides? What about this tunnel in the northern skies which makes the scientists wonder? How true is Paul's exclamation "Now we see through a glass darkly," etc.? I have also wondered about the "northern lights" or as they are called, the "Aurora Borealis," referring to the auroral display as seen in the high northern and southern latitudes. This high nocturnal radiance of light in suffusion of brilliance dazzles the imaginative thought that this is just a mere reflection of the Glory of the Lord on His Throne in the skies of the North. Could it be?  
(To be continued)

#### ATTENTION, TREASURERS AND OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS

Only days remains of the current fiscal year in the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. A glance at the Treasurer's Report on page 14 shows how great the needs are for our work.

It is too late now for congregations to take action on further contributions before the end of this month, but this is a friendly reminder to church and organization treasurers to be sure that all funds earmarked for this fiscal year are sent in by the 31st.

Personal and individual gifts of any amount will be most welcome in order that our church may close her books at the best standing possible.

The address of the Treasurer is 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55427.

Thank you.

#### PERSONALITIES

Rev. Gerald F. Mundfrom has accepted a call to serve Bethel Lutheran Church, Grafton, N. Dak., Aadalen Lutheran Church, Fairdale, N. Dak., and Aspelund Lutheran Church, Walhalla, N. Dak. The Mundfroms will live in Grafton and have already taken up the work in the parish. Pastor Mundfrom is the first resident pastor in Grafton since the merger. He has previously served Pukwana and St. Olaf Lutheran churches in South Dakota.

Bethel has been served by Rev. David Molstre, Grand Forks, and Mr. Roy Mohagen, Grafton, has been serving Aadalen and Aspelund.

# Church Life In Norway

Pastor M. E. Helland  
McVille, N. Dak.

## Part I

### EARLY HISTORY

Church life in Norway has always been a struggling life—a struggle to reach the goal where God would like to have it and lead it, so that the people could find their way back to God through faith in Jesus Christ and His atoning blood, which He shed on Calvary for the sins of mankind. It took a great fight and struggle before the Norwegian people were willing to accept Christianity and say good-bye to their heathen religion. Both King Olav Trygvasson and King Olav Haraldson found that out. But finally Christianity was introduced, although many held onto their old religion for a long time afterward. Yes, that was a great struggle.

Then also, the Lutheran faith was introduced into Norway by the King of Denmark, who ruled the country at that time. Fredrik I became king of Norway in 1524, elected by the Norwegian Riksråd with Archbishop Olav Engelbrekt in the lead. King Kristian III, son of Fredrik I, was an enthusiastic Lutheran. He had been at the great convention in the city of Worms (Germany) in 1521.

In 1526 the Danish Church was loosed from Rome and the Catholic Church, at the convention at Odense, and the Norwegian Church was also loosed from Rome at the same time. But also in connection with the introduction of Lutheranism into Norway there was a great struggle. Not all the people in Norway were willing to let go of the Catholic religion, although many were glad to say good-bye to it forever. The whole transition took a long time, however. Many years passed before Lutheranism was be-

lieved and practiced in Norway on a general scale and people understood that they could only find salvation and eternal life by believing in Jesus Christ and Him crucified and resurrected, and live according to God's Word, the Holy Bible.

### FREEDOM FROM DENMARK

Then there was also a great struggle in Norway when the union with Denmark came to an end. Should they have their own king and be entirely independent, or should they be united with Sweden and have the same king? Yes, the latter was what they decided. So on the 17th of May, 1814, delegates gathered at Eidsvoll and drew up a constitution for Norway, a very fine up-to-date constitution, very much like that of the United States of America. This, of course, was a great victory for Norway.

### HANS NIELSEN HAUGE

But how about the church life in Norway after 1814? Even before that time Hans Nielsen Hauge, a lay preacher blessed by God and

called by God, travelled all over Norway and preached the true and everlasting Gospel unto salvation for many people all over the land. But such lay preaching was not tolerated by the government and the clergy, and there even was a law against it, the so-called "Konventikel Plakat" (Conventicle Act). It was this law that plagued Hauge, so that he was put in jail several times. But he still kept on travelling and preaching. Only the bishop in Bergen, Johan Nordal Brun, defended him. Nevertheless, Hauge was finally put in the Akershus Fortress in Kristiania (Oslo), where he stayed for ten years. When he was released he had lost his health.

So that tells us a little about the church life in Norway at that time. Some writers have said that before Hans Nielsen Hauge's time there were very few, if any, born-again Christians in Norway. But because of Hauge's evangelistic preaching small revivals broke out all over the land. And there are groups of followers of Hans Nielsen Hauge even in our time.

The struggle between the so-called "læsere" (readers) and the clergy kept on until much later. Practically all the pastors in Norway at that time were rationalists and cared more for secular things and education, and so on, than they did for the preaching of the Gospel unto the salvation of souls. The church was under the State and the church department did not do much for the common people in a spiritual way. So the religious and Christian life in Norway was in a deplorable state even after the constitution was drawn up and published throughout the land.

### THE LAY PEOPLE DEMAND RIGHTS

But gradually the lay people who



The grove of Hans Nielsen Hauge  
in Gamle Aker churchyard in Oslo.

had been saved during the home mission work by Hauge demanded more and more freedom, not only in a political way, but also in a religious and spiritual way. So the struggle started again, the struggle for the lay people so that they could get the right to preach the Gospel not only in homes and schoolhouses, but also in the churches and at the larger religious conventions. The Christian lay people also desired the freedom to organize home mission societies and foreign mission societies and to make unions of these societies into federations. Oh what a struggle that was! Both the clergy and the government worked against the Christian lay people of the Haugean type and their demand for freedom to hold Christian meetings, to preach the Gospel and take part in all Christian activity. Yes, in those days there was a great and heroic struggle going on in Norway.

## VICTORY AT LAST

In time the Christian lay people won out. Today able lay preachers and travelling evangelists are allowed to preach also in the churches and at large Christian conventions. Great awakenings and revivals have taken place all over Norway. Home mission federations have been organized both in the eastern and western parts of the country. And the numerous local home mission societies throughout the land have joined these federations. Hundreds of home mission evangelists (emisærer) have been sent out to preach the Gospel and God has blessed their work in a wonderful way. Many people have been saved from time to time. Yes, there has been a great struggle for the kingdom of God and for the salvation of souls in Norway. And the struggle has been blessed by God in a mighty way.

(To be continued)

## SEMINARY INTERNSHIP

The Board of Trustees of Free Lutheran Seminary has discussed the matter of summer internship for the junior and middler students. It is the intention and desire that these men serve in the congregations, under pastoral leadership, for two summers as part of their educational requirement.

It is a matter of concern to the Board and Faculty that to date this project has never been fully realized. One great reason for this is that many of the AFLC parishes are not financially able to assume the responsibility and opportunity. The help that the seminarians could give is needed, but many parish budgets will not allow even the modest salaries and other expenses involved.

Then, too, up to now, some seminarians have been used in vacant parishes during the summer. That need will gradually decrease as more pastors are added to the Association clergy roster. The use of the seminarians in vacant parishes deprives the students of practical

training under pastoral leadership and counsel. We feel that our aim must be to eventually provide that sort of opportunity for all the students.

Places for approximately nine men are needed in the summer of 1969. This is a request to parishes to consider whether they might be able to use a student intern this year. Interested parishes should contact the Dean, Dr. Iver Olson, as soon as possible for further particulars.

It is the Board's hope that in future years other agencies might assist parishes financially which are willing to work in cooperation with the summer internship program and cannot carry the whole financial obligation. For the present, if your parish can aid the Seminary and the students by employing one of these nine students to assist your pastor for the summer, please write or call Dr. Olson.

Thank you.

Respectfully,  
Rev. Raynard Huglen  
Secretary, Board of Trustees

## SUMMER BIBLE CAMPS, 1969

Here is a list of Bible Camps which will be operated by Association congregations in 1969. A more complete list will be published later when more information has been gathered.

### Pickerel Lake, South Dakota

June 23-29. Camp address: Grenville. Dean—Rev. A. L. Hokonson, Faith. Bible teacher—Rev. Fritjof Monseth. Evening speaker—to be announced. Cost—\$9.50. Age—12 years or through grade 6, and up.

### Camp Gilead, Washington

July 28-Aug. 3. Camp address: Carnation, Wash. Dean—Rev. Robert Rieth, 11611 N. E. 140 St., Kirkland, Wash. Faculty—District pastors and possibly Missionary John Abel. Age—Family camp. Children below 6th grade must have an adult responsible for them.

### Sheyenne Valley, North Dakota

June 29-July 5. Camp address: Cooperstown. Dean—Rev. David Molstre, 1210 Chestnut St., Grand Forks. Faculty—Rev. Richard Snipstead and Rev. Sterling Johnson.

### Family Bible Camp

July 7-13. Camp address: Lake Geneva, Alexandria, Minn. Dean—Rev. Leslie Galland, Stacy, Minn. Evening speaker—Rev. K. L. Anderson. Age—no limits.

## THE DAY I WENT TO JESUS

I went to Bible Camp one day.  
I heard the preacher start to say:  
"It's not too early, It's not too late  
To accept the chance to enter heaven's gate."  
I had tried it once, and then again;  
But I had always fallen back in sin.  
I asked the Lord to please forgive  
And then—I really started to live.  
The Lord forgave, and now I'm saved.

Lynette Swanson  
Spicer, Minnesota  
Family Bible Camp, 1968

# MEET

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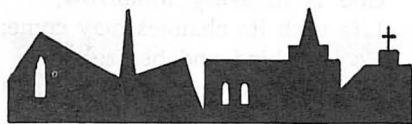
# Churches

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# FELLOWSHIP



## TODAY: THE THIEF RIVER FALLS (MINN.) PARISH

### Our Savior's Lutheran Church

Our Savior's Lutheran Church is one of the historic spots in the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations for it was there that the AFLC came into being in October, 1962. There and at the nearby Knox Elementary School. Needless to say, Our Savior's was one of the original congregations in the fellowship. It had been organized as a Lutheran Free Church congregation on Thief River's east side in 1951.

On May 4, 1959, Satersdal Lutheran, a country church, voted to join Our Savior's and a union was accomplished. Satersdal had been organized in 1888 under the Con-

ference. A revival had swept through the community in which the church was located, northeast of Thief River Falls, in the early days.

Our Savior's moved from a mission chapel in which it had worshipped for several years to the former Missouri Synod church at 4th and St. Paul Avenue South. This was in 1956. The church was remodelled and enlarged in 1963. Recently the basement has been redecorated and other pews have been placed in the sanctuary. A new organ was purchased in 1967.

Students from Our Savior's have been at Association Lutheran Bible School from its beginning. Roger and Gaylen Ose, sons of Our Savior's (Satersdal) are ALC pastors. Connelly Dyrud, of the same heritage, is a senior at Free Lutheran Seminary and will go to the AFLC's Brazil mission next summer with his wife Carolyn and daughter.

The pastors of Our Savior's have been Jonas Helland, 1951-58; L. H. Luthard, 1958-61; M. E. Helland; Marius Haakenstad, 1962-66; and Melvin Walla, lay pastor, 1966-.

### Reiner Lutheran Church

Located near Goodridge in eastern Pennington County or 25 miles east of Thief River Falls, the county seat, Reiner Lutheran was organized in 1935. The history of the congregation is traced back to



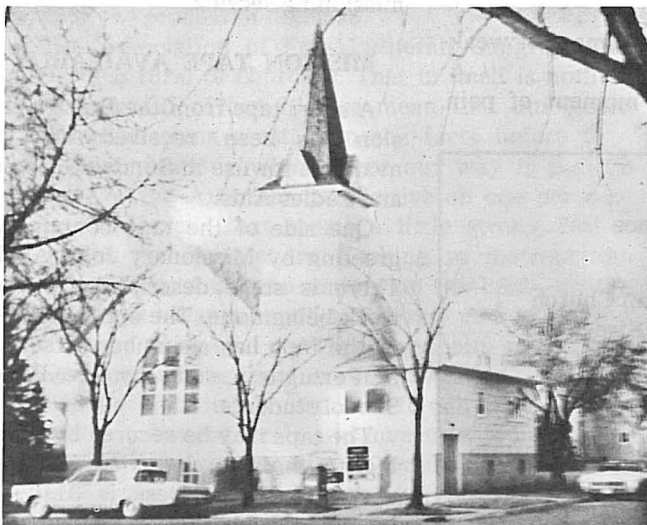
Pastor and Mrs. Melvin Walla of the Thief River Falls parish are shown here with one of their children, Judy, a college student. Before coming to his present position, Mr. Walla had done both parish work and rest home administration.

1904, however. The present church was built in 1935.

Reiner and the other churches of the parish belong to the Northern Minnesota District of the AFLC. Prior to the merger it was known as the Thief River Falls District.

One of the early pastors in the Reiner area was Rev. L. O. Opsata. He gave service from 1912-22. Another pastor in the days before the 1935 organization was J. O. Hoyum, 1923-32. Other pastors have been Carl Ostby, 1933-38; M. G. C. Vaagenes, 1939-44; Silas Erickson, 1944-47; Evangelist Eddie Berg, 1948-49; Jonas Helland, 1950-58; L. H. Luthard, 1958-61; M. E. Helland; Marius Haakenstad, 1962-66; and Melvin Walla, 1966-.


[Continued on page 13]



Our Savior's Lutheran Church



Reiner Lutheran Church



# WOMEN for Christ

## GOD IS IN EVERY TOMORROW

Mrs. Lillie Wallio  
Finlayson, Minnesota

"Casting all your cares upon him; for he careth for you" (I Pet. 5:7).

The story is told that when Henry Moorhouse was bringing a gift to his wife, he met his little paralytic daughter downstairs. Asking where her mother was, she answered, "Mother is upstairs." "I have a package for her," announced the father. The little girl insisted on taking the package to her mother. "But, my dear, how can you carry the package? You cannot carry yourself!" Smilingly the little girl answered, "Oh, no, daddy; but you give me the package, and I will carry the package, and you will carry me." (quoted from *Strength*, May 1968)

What a wonderful Father we have who will carry our burdens if we take them to Him in prayer.

The Psalmist says in the 55th psalm, verse 22a, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain thee." Our burdens can become blessings in disguise.

A prevalent burden each of us carries in a greater or smaller degree is worry. "TODAY is the TOMORROW that we worried about YESTERDAY." How often we find that yesterday's worries did not materialize, and were unnecessary. It would be much more conducive to our physical, mental and spiritual well-being to remember that "God is in every Tomorrow," as Laura A. BarterSnow so beautifully expresses it in the following poem, which has become a part of my daily devotion:

God is in every tomorrow,  
Therefore I live for today;  
Certain of finding at sunrise  
Guidance and strength for the  
day.

Power for each moment of weakness,

Hope for each moment of pain,

Comfort for every sorrow,  
Sunshine and joy after rain.

God is in every tomorrow,  
Planning for you and for me,  
E'en in the dark will I follow,  
Trust where my eyes cannot see.  
Stilled by His promise of blessing,  
Soothed by the touch of His hand,  
Confident in His protection,  
Knowing my life-path is planned.

God is in every tomorrow,  
Life with its changes may come;  
He is behind and before me,  
While in the distance shines  
HOME!

HOME—where no thought of  
tomorrow  
Ever can shadow my brow,  
HOME—in the presence of Jesus,  
Through all eternity—NOW!

## NEW MISSIONARIES TO BE COMMISSIONED

Mr. and Mrs. George Knapp will be commissioned as missionaries to Brazil at the Sunday afternoon session of the Winter Bible Conference in Grand Forks, N. Dak., Feb. 16, at 2 o'clock.

Mr. Knapp has had previous mission experience in Brazil. During the past semester he has been studying at Free Lutheran Theological Seminary.

The Knapp family will leave for the field a few days after the commissioning service.

## MISSION TAPE AVAILABLE

A short tape from the Brazil mission has been received and is available for use in Sunday Schools and Ladies Aids.

One side of the tape contains a greeting by Missionary John Abel. There is some description of the work being done. The opposite side of the tape has a number of songs in Portuguese sung by the Bible School students.

The tape may be secured by writing to the church office in Minneapolis. The address is 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55427.

## ATTENTION

### WMF Workshop at Winter Bible Conference

#### When:

Friday, February 14, 1969  
Workshop from 4 to 7 p.m.  
Supper hour at 5:30 p.m.  
Price: \$1.00

#### Where:

Trinity Lutheran Church  
3426 Chestnut Street  
Grand Forks, North Dakota

A program, project calendars and new materials will be presented.

Let us pray for this meeting, and we encourage each local WMF to be represented.





### FIGURES DON'T LIE

All of us have known for a long time that rural population in midwestern United States, and Canada, is shrinking fast.

But the truth of this was brought home a great deal more vividly recently when it was reported that a certain county in Montana in which we have lived has almost 2,000 less persons 21 and under today than forty years ago. There are less than half as many children under six as there were then. The county is a very rural one with no cities.

It is little wonder then that not only schools and churches have closed but even towns have died out or are in the process of doing so.

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is the most rural of churches. That in itself is nothing to be ashamed of but it does mean that our Board of Home Missions must keep the facts before it.

Another statistic which came our way is that 70 per cent of the American people live on one per cent of the land area. That seems a little strong. But it is certain that people are flocking to metropolitan centers. Those of us who remain on the land—on the farms, in the villages, small towns and county seats—do not envy those who go. There are many advantages to living out where there is room to move.

The big cities are in trouble. It will take billions of dollars in federal funds and investments by private industry to rehabilitate them. It would seem to make sense that plans be worked out whereby people could find it possible to stay on the land and also that the rural areas be prepared to assimilate a migration

back from the urban and suburban sections to help alleviate the pressures on and in the cities.

### BIBLE CONFERENCE IN GRAND FORKS

For the seventh time Association Lutherans and other friends will gather for a winter Bible conference, next month in Grand Forks, N. Dak. It will be the second conference to be held in the Flickertail State. Four have taken place in Minnesota and one in Iowa.

The conferences are held for several reasons. First, it is always important to gather about the preaching and teaching of God's Word. Second, the conference fellowship helps to bind the whole church together. Third, opportunity is given to people who cannot attend a summer function such as the annual conference or Family Bible Camp to gather in the winter when their work may permit them to get away.

A problem for many people and for the conference itself is that so few attend from beginning to end. Pastors and Sunday School teachers often feel that they must be back in their own congregations on Sunday. A good number of folks drive over for a session or for a day only. There isn't much sense of continuity through a whole conference, audience-wise. There isn't much to do about this, but we do want to encourage those who come to stay for as much as they can.

The spiritual fare and fellowship are always good. It is beneficial to get together like this. God's Word is opened and shared. Friendships are made and renewed. This year's conference will be the scene of a commissioning service for a missionary family, on Sunday afternoon. Such services are always deeply moving and we know that many people will want to be a part of it.

In meeting at Trinity in Grand Forks we will be assembling in one of our finest and most promising congregations. From past experience we know that the hospitality will be the finest. Good things await everyone who can be present at the seventh annual Winter Bible Conference, February 13-16.

Prayer for the Conference is requested. God can bless only as there is a willingness to be blessed.

### AGE FOR COMMUNION

The congregations of the three major Lutheran bodies in America (American Lutheran Church, Lutheran Church in America and Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod) are receiving a commission report advocating first communion for children at the grade five level and confirmation at age 15 or 16.

If adopted by the church conventions in 1970 and 1971, the change would be the first major one in Lutheran practice concerning holy communion since Martin Luther. It is also seen as minimizing the importance of confirmation. Confirmation is not a sacrament in the Lutheran Church as is holy communion.

While the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is not involved in this study, whatever is de-

cided by the major Lutheran groups is bound to have some effect on our fellowship. It might be good if some thought is given to the subject by our church.

Two initial reactions are these and they are made before reading any other explanatory material on the subject by the commission or any other discussion of the report. One, since the act of confirmation is held in our churches at an arbitrary age, usually at 14 or 15 years, and is meant to affirm an experience which may have actually taken place in a young person's life even several years before (or may not), perhaps it would not be wrong to open the communion table to children at a younger age than we do now. But again the question would be asked, why set an arbitrary age of 10 or 11 years? And if that age level is chosen, why is it selected?

The other reaction which comes quickly to mind is whether such a move (communion from the age of 10 and on) would make the church and her pastors the guarantors of salvation (outside the "church" there is no salvation) in a way not intended by Scripture, when in fact each individual stands or falls on the basis of his acceptance by faith in God's gift in Christ, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). "And real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal" (Romans 2:29).

To put it as plainly as possible, childhood communion could lead to the strengthening of the notion that if a person communes regularly, and has been baptized, he can be assured of his standing before God. No so-called Christian system of doctrine would admit to espousing such a simple plan, but in practice it sometimes turns out just that way. And people are lulled into a false sense of security while they are really lost.

It is what we do with Jesus Christ, not just once but daily, that counts. "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14). Holy communion is indeed a part of maintaining the relationship but it will have no value where it is not the glad response of faith. "And without faith it is impossible to please him (God)" Hebrews 11:6a. No matter how many times over how many years one has been at the Lord's Table.

If lowering the age for communion should serve in any way, intentionally or without forethought, to make the organized church the keeper of the gifts of salvation, thus dulling individual responsibility, a point on which we have always criticized the Roman Church, then we would be against it.

These are first responses to the report given above. Much more thought is necessary. We are sure that over the coming months many valuable insights will be forthcoming as the subjects of holy communion and confirmation are discussed in the major bodies and among us. Perhaps some of our readers would

like to express their ideas in a Letter to the Editor. Feel free to write.

### TIME TO ACT

American death casualties in the Viet Nam involvement have now crossed the 30,000 mark in the seven or eight years of military action. Admittedly, that action has been much heavier in the second half of that period than in the first.

At the same time, approximately 25,000 highway deaths occur *each year* now in the United States, in which one or more drinking drivers are involved. All safety authorities seem to agree that alcohol is involved in *at least* half of the nation's auto fatalities.

If a war, any war, were taking a toll of 25,000 annually, or if any epidemic of illness were striking down that many persons, we can imagine the sorrow which would burden the public heart and conscience. But the road toll, including the drinking-related deaths, is accepted usually with calm resignation and great equanimity. It is as though we would say that there are some things in life which cannot be changed and all that is left is to pray with St. Francis for serenity to accept them and to live (or die) with them.

But is it true that nothing can be done or should be done? We don't think so. Drunken driving infractions can be penalized more severely. Driving is a privilege, not a right. To be lenient toward the drinking offender who may later cause the death of another is to place oneself in the position of determining that one life is more valuable than another. God had better be the judge of that. Making the penalties truly burdensome is one thing that can be done.

A plan which would subject the *alcoholic* offender to remedial treatment on his first offense would be agreeable to us. But for further offenses he would be treated on the same basis as any other drinking transgressor.

Another thing which can be done to curb drunken driving (and impaired driving) is to place further restrictions and limitations (there aren't many now) on the advertising of alcoholic beverages. It doesn't seem reasonable to permit such flamboyant advertising for products which exact such a tremendous toll in human life, to say nothing of physical injuries and emotional disturbances. Is it asking too much that alcoholic beverage ads be removed from radio and television and be severely limited in printed material and on billboards?

Finally, temperance groups such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union and local temperance societies can be supported in their work of impeding some situations to defeat the "wets" in local elections. It is always gratifying to see this.

Now is the time to act to fight the tragic exaction in human life on our highways and in human personality caused by drinking. Do what you can to arouse public opinion on this question.

Can we assume that if we really take a stand for Christ it will not cost us something? Many today take their Christianity so lightly. They won't let it interfere with their work or play or anything else that they hold dear in this life. Can there be any blessing in that kind of Christianity? Jesus says that He is nauseated by the same (Rev. 3: 15, 16).

*Jesus tempted by Satan (Matt. 4: 1-11)*

17. a. Who led Jesus into the wilderness?
  - b. Does God permit us to be so tempted?
  - c. Why?
18. a. How did Satan tempt Jesus the first time?
  - b. Which is more important, the Word of God in our life, or bread for our bodies?
19. a. How did Satan tempt Jesus the second time?
  - b. Can we expect God to do for us what He has not promised to do?
20. a. How did Satan tempt Jesus the third time?
  - b. Who is to have supreme authority in your life if you are a Christian?
21. Who helped Jesus after Satan had left?

Jesus' temptation in the wilderness can be paralleled with Satan tempting Eve in the garden of Eden. Eve yielded—Jesus withstood. Eve had plenty and was tempted in the midst of plenty—Jesus was in the wilderness and had not eaten for forty days. Eve listened to Satan's line of reasoning and yielded to temptation—Jesus quoted God's Word in attack against Satan's lies and half truths and overcame him. (We also have the same Word of God at our disposal to be used against the onslaughts of the devil.) Satan truly enslaved Eve—after three attempts Satan left Jesus.

#### CONCLUSION

After Satan left Jesus, angels came and strengthened Him. What a comfort this should be to the Christian. Let us remember Jesus' promise when He said, "Lo, I am with you always." This also means when tempted.



#### NEW TESTAMENT BIBLE HISTORY QUESTIONS

Lesson Two

February 1969

#### Jesus' Boyhood and Early Ministry

#### INTRODUCTION

Shortly after Jesus was born He was visited by some wise men from the east. Through these wise men King Herod found out about Jesus' birth and became extremely jealous and sought His life. An angel warned Joseph of this in a dream and Joseph took the baby Jesus and Mary and fled to Egypt. King Herod had all the babies in Bethlehem under two years of age slain. He felt sure that in this way the baby Jesus could not escape him.

After King Herod died an angel again spoke to Joseph in a dream. Joseph, Mary and the baby Jesus now moved back to Nazareth in northern Palestine where Jesus grew up as a boy.

*Jesus at the age of twelve (Luke 2: 41–52)*

1. a. Where did Jesus go with His parents when 12 years old?  
b. What happened to Jesus years later (at age 33) when He went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover?
2. What worry came to Jesus' parents in the course of this trip?
3. What was unusual about Jesus at this time?
4. Who was careless in causing Jesus to be separated from His parents, Jesus or His parents? Why?
5. What wisdom did Jesus exercise when His parents left Him?

This incident occurred at the time that the Passover was being celebrated at Jerusalem. The Passover was an annual religious festival commemorating the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt. It was also like our Independence Day in that the Jewish people celebrated the birth of their nation at that time.

About 1500 years earlier the Jewish nation gained their independence from Egypt and first became a nation with their own government. However, they had now been without their independence most of the time since they were captured by the Babylonians (about 600 B.C.). Since that time they were subject to several world powers. At the present time they were subject to the Roman government. The Jewish people were looking for a political leader who would again gain their independence for them.

During the Passover Feast at Jerusalem, Jews from all over Palestine and also neighboring countries, came to Jerusalem. Joseph and Mary, with Jesus (now twelve years old), also made the trip to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

There are several things that impress us about Jesus at this time, which would cause us to realize that He was no ordinary boy. We are impressed by His interest and wisdom in spiritual things. We are also impressed with His devotion to His parents. (He did not wander from His parents, but they carelessly left Jerusalem without Him.) Jesus did the wise thing in remaining at the temple, knowing that sooner or later His parents would come there searching for Him. Jesus did not panic as an ordinary boy would have done after being lost for so long a time from His parents.

*The ministry of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1–11 and John 1:19–29)*

6. Where did John preach?

7. From where did people come to hear John the Baptist?
8. What does John mean by clearing the threshing floor, gathering wheat into the granary, and chaff to be burned? (Matt. 3:12)
9. Who did John say to the Scribes and Pharisees that he was not?
10. Who did John say he was? (John 1:23)

John was indeed a great preacher. He had no fine church or temple as did the religious leaders in Jerusalem. He had only the desert sand.

And yet the people came even from the metropolitan areas to hear him. But it wasn't John the Baptist that drew them; it was the truth that he proclaimed. The religious leaders were not preaching the truth.

*Jesus baptized by John (Matt. 3: 13–17)*

11. What reason did Jesus give for being baptized?
12. For whom was Jesus to fulfill all righteousness?
13. In what way was the third Person of the Trinity present at Jesus' baptism?
14. In what way was the first Person of the Trinity present at the baptism?

The baptism of Jesus was an introduction of Jesus to the world at the beginning of His ministry by God the Father. A voice from heaven declared Jesus to be the Son of God. This happened when John the Baptist was still at the height of his ministry with a large number of people present. With such an introduction from heaven, how could anyone doubt that Jesus was the Messiah that was to come? And yet only a few really believed in Him with their whole heart.

*The death of John the Baptist (Matt. 14: 1–12)*

15. What did John the Baptist and Jesus have in common in the way they met death?
16. What happened to the body of John the Baptist?

It costs to be a Christian. It cost John the Baptist his life to take a stand for Christ. We may think it wonderful to be a great preacher like John the Baptist, but we don't think it would be so nice to be suddenly cut off from a successful ministry and put to death as he was.



Rindal Lutheran Church



Bethlehem Lutheran Church

### Bethlehem Lutheran Church

There can be debate over when Bethlehem was organized. Some sources say 1906 under the leadership of Rev. J. O. Brensdal, the pastor-magician, whose address was the now defunct post office of Brunkeberg. Other authorities list the organization as taking place in 1911 with Rev. A. L. Larson as the first pastor. At any rate, the latter served until 1915 and was followed by George Larson in 1916. Other pastors have been O. J. Raaum, O. J. Haukeness, Martin Reinertson, Reinhart Pedersen, Elmer Olson, Carl Ostby, E. L. Tungseth, Morris Eggen, M. G. C. Vaagenes, Silas Erickson, Evangelist Eddie Berg, Sigurd Berg, Jonas Helland, L. H. Luthard, M. E. Helland, Marius Haakenstad and Melvin Walla.

Bethlehem is situated six miles east and four miles north of Thief River Falls, in Marshall County. Heavy winds one time blew the church building from its foundation.

Mrs. Erling Tungseth (Marjorie Ose) is an ALC pastor's wife in Rochester, Minn. She is from Bethlehem Church.

### Rindal Lutheran Church

There were 104 members in Rindal in the year it was organized, 1886. There were both Norwegians and Swedes in the congregation. Rindal was a member of the Conference from 1886-90, unaffiliated but leaning toward the United Church, 1890-93; and joined the Friends of Augsburg in 1893 and that later became the Lutheran Free Church. Rindal and the other churches of the parish affiliated with the AFLC in 1963.

The hamlet of Rosewood lies two miles south of the church. Rindal is south of Newfolden or six miles northwest of Thief River Falls on highway 59 and two and one half miles west.

With the other churches of the Thief River Falls parish, Rindal has always been open for laymen's work.

Rev. Elias Aas was the first pastor. He stayed until 1889. E. T. Berlie followed, 1890-91; and H. J. Villevik, 1891-93. They were succeeded by August Bredesen, 1893-1916; George Larson, 1917-25 and E. L. Tungseth, 1926-44.

More recent pastors have been the same as for Reiner Church. Melvin Walla is the present pastor.

The present church structure was built in 1900 and has undergone repair and renovation from time to time.

### The Parish

The present parish arrangement has existed since the formation of Our Savior's. Previously the rural churches had been in various alignments as indicated by their pastoral service.



Parsonage—Our Savior's Parish



# NEWS

## of the Churches

### 80 YEARS FOR ZION LUTHERAN OF GREEN; HUGE CROWD SUNDAY, AUGUST 11

Rev. John Strand, president of the Association of Free Lutheran congregations in America, spoke to a large assembly of people at the morning and afternoon services during the observance of the 80th anniversary of the Zion Lutheran Church in Green township.

A public address brought the program to the people in the lower auditorium of the church and to those seated on benches and chairs outside.

In his message, Rev. Strand made special stress of the autonomy and freedom of the local congregation. Taking his stand on the guiding principles of the Lutheran Free Church, he quoted section 5: "The local congregation directs its affairs, subject to the authority of the Word and Spirit of God and acknowledges no other ecclesiastical authority or government above itself." President Strand paid tribute to the men and women who established Zion Lutheran Church and he spoke of the deep conviction to pray, labor and sacrifice and of free and living congregations.

Rev. Robert Reith of Kirkland Wash., a son of the congregation and one of the afternoon speakers, spoke of the power of the gospel and the transforming power of the Word of God in the hearts of people who accept it in our land and abroad.

Ernie Miedema brought greetings from the Grace Free Lutheran Church of Valley City. He based his talk on Psalm 118:23 and 24: "This is the Lord's doings; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." He thanked the Zion congregation for good fellowship in the work of the parish.

Tim Hager spoke on behalf of the youth, giving thanks to God, and Zion Lutheran Church, where the emphasis has been made a new spiritual rebirth.

John Reith of the Zion Board of Deacons thanked God and members of the congregation for a wonderful anniversary day.

One of the most appreciated singing groups of the day was composed of men and women from the Zion choir of 45 years ago.

The Zion Ladies Aid served dinner and supper without charge to a large gathering.

—Valley City Times-Record



Zion Lutheran Free Church

### FAREWELL RECEPTION AT ZION

A farewell party in honor of Pastor and Mrs. F. B. Monseth was held on Sunday, Sept. 1, at Zion Church.

A short program was given. Various members spoke words of appreciation for the ministry of the Monseths. A friendship quilt had been made by the Ladies Aid and was given to the honored couple. Other gifts and cards were also received by them.

Coffee and cookies were served by the Aid and a large crowd attended the occasion.

The Monseths now live at 9467 Pilgrim Lane, Osseo, Minnesota, and Pastor Monseth teaches at the Association's Seminary and Bible School in Minneapolis.

—Mrs. Andrew Modahl

#### TREASURER'S PROGRESS REPORT February 1, 1968, to December 31, 1968

	Proposed Budget	Current Budget	Total Received
General Fund	\$ 35,650.00	\$ 32,679.17	\$ 24,078.03
Seminary & Bible School	36,200.00	33,183.33	18,628.27
Missions	49,000.00	44,916.66	36,670.90
Praise Program	40,000.00	36,666.66	36,998.15
<b>Totals</b>	<u>\$160,850.00</u>	<u>\$147,445.82</u>	<u>\$116,375.35</u>
Total Received for Library Fund			\$ 244.00
One Grand Fellowship			\$15,113.33

# CHURCH-WORLD NEWS

## DR. PER LONNING NAMED TO NEW NORWAY DIOCESE

Oslo (LWF)—Dr. Per Lonning, 40-year-old dean of Bergen Cathedral, has been named as the first bishop of the newly-created Diocese of Borg. He will be the youngest bishop in Norway since the early 1800's.

Appointment of the well-known theologian ran counter to the preference of a majority of the pastors, deans, theological professors and members of congregational councils who took part in balloting in recent months.

Dr. Lonning polled 99 votes compared to 171 received by Rector Bjarne Odd Weider, 55, of the Independent Theological Seminary in Oslo.

At the same time, the voting among deans and professors throughout the country ran in favor of Dr. Lonning—53-32. Rector Weider was strongly favored—139 to 46—among pastors and congregational councils in the Diocese of Borg.

Voting for the candidates is not binding but advisory for the Government cabinet which makes the final selection.

It was noted that the selection of a candidate who did not receive most votes is not unprecedented. Among others, the late Bishop Eivind Berggrav, of Tromsø was named in 1928 under such circumstances.

However, the conservative Oslo newspaper, *Morgenbladet*, pointed out that there has rarely been such a split among Government ministers. Dr. Lonning was named on a 7-5 vote, with the Minister for Church Affairs and the Prime Minister among those in the minority.

A conservative who held a seat in the Stortinget (Parliament) for eight years, Dr. Lonning holds doctorates in both philosophy and theology.

"For the church," *Morgenbladet* said, "it is an unqualified advantage that a man who could choose a career in research, education or politics has chosen the divine ministry."

The diocese Dr. Lonning will serve has its seat at Fredrikstad. The area was carved out of the southeastern section of the present, large Oslo diocese. The new diocese is the tenth in the country.

Dr. Lonning has traveled and lectured widely. He was a delegate to the Uppsala Assembly of the World Council of Churches, the Geneva Church and Society Conference in 1966 and was a youth delegate to the WCC Assembly at Evanston, 1954.

## VALPARAISO U. ELECTS DR. HUEGLI PRESIDENT

Valparaiso, Ind. (LC) — Dr. Albert G. Huegli, 55, who has been acting president of Valparaiso University, was elected president of the university in mid-December.

Prior to his appointment as acting president last July, Dr. Huegli served six years as the University's vice-president for academic affairs. He is a consultant and examiner for the North Central Association and chairman of the Board for Higher Education of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

## WISCONSIN SYNOD SENDS ITS 4TH CHAPLAIN TO VIETNAM

Milwaukee, Wis. (LC) — The Rev. Melvin A. Schwark arrived in Saigon in mid-December to continue a civilian chaplaincy ministry to the 825 servicemen of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod stationed there. He is the fourth pastor of the Synod to serve in that capacity.

The announcement was made here by the Rev. Arnold H. Schroeder of Milwaukee, chairman of the Synod's Lutheran Spiritual Welfare Commission which super-

vises a ministry to the Synod's members in the armed forces and on university and college campuses.

Like his three predecessors, Mr. Schwark will set up headquarters in Saigon, holding services there and "circuit riding" the other military bases and hospitals in Vietnam. He held his first service in Saigon on Christmas Day.

"According to reports from returning civilian chaplains," said Mr. Schroeder, "we are reaching proportionately more of our members in this way than we would with a military chaplain attached to a specific unit."

He also reported excellent cooperation from military authorities. "We have nothing to complain about," he said. "They readily recognize the right of the serviceman to be served by a ministry of his choice if at all possible."

In a decision dating back to pre-World War II days, the 371,000-member Wisconsin Synod has declined to participate in the government chaplaincy program convinced that the Synod's doctrine and practice would be compromised by the anomalous nature of such an association with the government. Its civilian chaplaincy is wholly supported by the Wisconsin Synod.

The Rev. Luther Voss, the Synod's other civilian chaplain, is presently maintaining a roving ministry on domestic military bases in the east and south from headquarters in Norfolk, Va.

## NEW LUTHERAN TABLOID ISSUED. "BIAS IS LEFT OF CENTER"

Valparaiso, Ind. (LC) — A bi-weekly Lutheran tabloid whose "bias is left of center" to counteract "a plethora of right wing papers" circulated among Lutherans and other Christians published its first issue here under date of December 13.

The "Lutheran Free Press" is described in its prospectus as "a newspaper edited by and for Lutheran young adults in the Church to provide "Lutheran perspectives on religious and public issues." According to its masthead, it is dedicated to "digging the radically free style of life."

The periodical's statement of purpose asserts that "there exists a need in the Lutheran churches today for a Lutheran Free Press to report news which is of interest to the larger constituency, news which the churches' institutional press, for a variety of reasons, ignores, suppresses, or underplays."

"Lutheran Free Press, therefore," it adds, "gives voice to many who are otherwise voiceless in the world of controlled mass media, comments on generally known public and religious issues, muckrakes, develops issues of justice and freedom in the church, promotes genuine Christian discipleship, pursues church reform, defends victims of

injustice, speaks truth to power, serves as a voice for the two target groups excluded from the church and social political process (youths and Blacks), and promotes Lutheran unity and ecumenism."

Editor-in-chief of the LFP is John Hill of Valparaiso University. Other staff members are students at Valparaiso, the University of Chicago, the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, and Concordia Teachers College at River Forest, Ill.

Editorial advisors are listed as Galen Gockel of the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago; the Rev. Wayne Saffen, campus pastor at the University of Chicago; Dr. Philip Hefner of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago; and John Kretzmann, a graduate student at the University of Virginia and one of the organizers of a Lutheran Action Committee for young adult Lutherans.

## Directory of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

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