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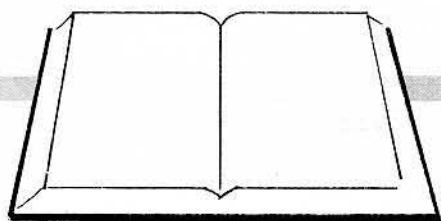
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The Harvest of Autumn

—RNS Photo



According to the Word

THE DEACON WHO STARTED PREACHING

Read Acts 6:1-15

"Growing pains" are experienced by every young church. The church at Jerusalem was no exception. Any expanding work will be faced with added responsibilities, and certain problems as well. The Jerusalem church numbered several thousand by this time. Not a few of these were poor. Some were widows who had no source of income. Others, when they accepted Christ, had seen their income cut off. Some, no longer recognized by their families, had been disinherited. This is true even today when an orthodox Jew becomes a Christian. Thus, confronted with conditions of extreme poverty among many of its members, the Jerusalem church took concerted action. They appointed seven men (deacons) to be responsible for the welfare ministry of the church in order that the apostles might be free to give themselves entirely to the preaching of the Word. Since this ministry of distribution to the poor was also the Lord's business, the qualifications were high (Acts 6:3).

One of the seven men chosen

was Stephen, "a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." Here was a man who went far beyond the call of duty in serving the Lord. Not long after his appointment as deacon, we see him publicly preaching the Gospel, being used mightily of the Lord. While Stephen faithfully discharged his duties as deacon, looking after the needy in Jerusalem, he recognized an even greater urgency than alleviating physical hunger. He saw among the multitudes, people with a heart-hunger for God and for the Gospel. Few there were who were giving out the "bread of life" among the spiritually hungry. Moved with compassion for these multitudes, Stephen could not be "content to serve tables" only. He felt a constraining urge to point men to Jesus, who alone can satisfy the hunger of the heart.

Someone has said, "The Church is looking for better methods. God is looking for better men." With men of Stephen's kind, it is little wonder that the Church prospered in Jerusalem as we find reported in verse 7: "And the word of God increased; and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly." The Church needs more men of Stephen's kind, moved with compassion for the lost—men who would count success, not in

terms of possessions accumulated in this life, but in souls won for Christ; men who will not be content with smooth-running church machinery and with impressive benevolence programs, but whose heart's desire and prayer to God is that people might be saved. We do not believe Stephen neglected the responsible position to which he had been appointed in the Church, but his service to the Lord did not end here. He was ever mindful of another appointment by Him who said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

We are convinced that spiritual progress in the Church today, as then, depends largely upon a witnessing laity. The multitudes will never be reached through a pulpit ministry alone. Let us not fail to encourage the spiritual gifts and witness of God's people, lest our outreach become limited.

Praise God for men in the Church who have a testimony like Stephen. Though his ministry was short-lived and he became the first martyr in the Christian Church, his testimony lives on forever. Of Stephen it can truly be said, "The blood of this martyr became the seed of the Church."

Jay G. Erickson

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“Be Ye Thankful”

Col. 3:15

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

THANKSGIVING has its roots in the Word of God. One has only to look in a concordance to realize how inexhaustible are the exhortations for giving thanks to God. However, the pages of history also reveal how extensive is the thought of thanksgiving among peoples and nations. Before the Christian era, the Romans held a great thanksgiving feast called Cerelia on October 4, in honor of their goddess of the harvest, Ceres. Ancient Greece also observed it in a feast called Thesmophoria in honor of Demeter, the Greek goddess of agriculture and harvest.

The great thanksgiving feast of Israel was the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:33-43), observed at the command of God. This was of a week's duration. It was observed for two reasons: completion of the harvest and a memorial of the days when Israel dwelt in booths. The chief sentiment was joy and gratitude to God, to be shown by kindness to the Levite, the fatherless, widows and strangers. Israelites were to dwell in booths to remind them of the days when they had no home, fields or

crops, yet God fed them. “Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). It was a day of hallowed memories. What a lesson for each Christian today!

One of the most remarkable of all recorded celebrations of this feast was the dedication of King Solomon's Temple (I Kings 8:2-65). What an inspiration to read! (See also Neh. 8:13-18.)

From the time of the Saxons, the English had an annual festival of several days' duration known as “Harvest Home.” From 1605 to 1630 a day of thanksgiving was observed in England following the discovery of the “Gunpowder Plot” to blow up Parliament. The Dutch observed October 3rd as an annual day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the Spanish on Oct. 3, 1675. The first observance of thanksgiving on this continent is believed to be the service aboard the “Ayde,” the flagship of the expedition under Frobisher, an English explorer of the regions north of Labrador. This was on May 27, 1578.

The first Thanksgiving in the United States was in the spring of 1608 in the Coopham Colony in Maine. However, Gov. Bradford in

the Pilgrim Colony issued the first proclamation for Thanksgiving for a week's duration in gratitude to God for a plenteous harvest, Dec. 13, 1621. This was a home and family affair. Many other proclamations for Thanksgiving were issued from time to time, such as Washington's and others. But the first national Thanksgiving Day was the proclamation issued by Abraham Lincoln in 1862, calling on the nation to set aside a special day for thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is a national holiday for the purpose of giving thanks unto the Lord. To us as Christians, Thanksgiving Day is especially appropriate because:

1. *Thanksgiving is not one day, but a life.*

Thanksgiving is thanksgiving unto God. Every day is a period of thanksgiving unto the Lord for all His benefits. Our blessings as a nation, as individuals, as congregations and as an Association of Free Lutheran Congregations are truly manifested in so many ways, both materially and spiritually. And so Thanksgiving Day is a call to a deeper consecration to the task that is before us. It reminds us to do as we sing hymn-wise, “Count your blessings, name them one by one.” That would be an endless task. And a life in service to Him

is the only answer. One does not really possess God's blessings until we *thank and give thanks*.

II. *Thanksgiving is not one word, but a confession.*

It is a confession of our complete dependence upon Him. We confess our utter unworthiness for all His gifts and bountiful mercies. As a privileged nation, we should cry unto Him for forgiveness and mercy. Thanksgiving Day is a confession that in our national and private life, we have not followed Him as we should. It is a confession of what we read in the 103rd Psalm, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

It reminds us of our sin and the wonderful gift of salvation in Christ Jesus. It reminds us of the great task of missions that is before us, both at home and abroad. It is a confession of how we need to love Him who first loved us (Rom. 5:8). Consecration follows where God's love is sensed. It reminds us how duty changes its aspect when thanks are expressed. Thanksgiving is a confession of our unfaithfulness, yet, sensing God's forgiveness, sorrow loses its gloom when accepted thankfully as discipline. Life is glorified as God's gift when praise becomes its keynote.

III. *Thanksgiving is not one step, but a WALK.*

We show our thanksgiving by walking with God. The Christian's relation to the world is exemplified by thanksgiving unto God. Such a walk is in the world, but not of the world. And so we thank Him that He knows more about our business than we do. The Christian walk is a Bible-walk. It is a very lonely walk, but with the Bible (WORD), what a power for good "to all men, especially to them of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10).

And so Thanksgiving is thanksgiving unto God in your home, church, community, for family, friends, faith, freedom, fellowship in the Holy Spirit, peace, love, life and salvation in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

A Sinner... Saved by Grace

Since early childhood I had heard
God's Holy Word proclaimed;
On deaf ears it never fell
And I in sin remained.

The world with all its fun and charm
Thrust forth its beckoning hand;
And Satan subtly told me:
"Seek enjoyment where'er you can."

So years in selfish pleasure
Very quickly went by;
And little did I realize
I was 'neath His watchful eye.

More years went by and marriage brought
Three children to my care;
A still small voice within me said,
"These have I given thee to rear.

"My Holy Word they too must hear
In tender years—all three;
So that in their older years
Without excuse they'll be."

So in obedience to that voice
The Scriptures I did teach;
The truth of God's most Holy Word
Only my mind did reach.

The Christ who died for me to save
Was to my heart unknown;
The cross on which my sins He bore
Was to be more clearly shown.

The simple truth—the blood-bought way—
Took so much time to learn;
The gift that He so freely gave
'Twas not for me to earn.

Unto this time I had reasoned that
His Name I did revere;
I turned about and then found out
His appointed time was here.

The veil! He drew from my dim eyes,
As He close to me did stand;
So close I could not fail to see
The nailprints in His hand.

The Cross, the Lamb, the blood, the wounds,
I viewed as ne'er before;
His words: "I am the way, the truth"—
Yes, this was heaven's door.

That wondrous light, it shown so bright,
My sin could not conceal;
And apart from my own reason
My Savior did reveal.

Beneath that cross this trembling soul
Feared yet to take its stand;
"Why do you doubt me so?" He said,
And again put forth His hand.

O wondrous cross, O nailed hand,
I clasped my hand in His;
O solid rock, O anchor sure,
O most eternal bliss!

O grace unbounded, love divine,
Seemed much too great for me;
Mere earthly man devised no such plan,
'Twas a heaven-wrought mystery.

"Most gracious God, I do here pray
That grace to me be given;
To sing Thy praises o'er and o'er
And continue in Thy heaven."
—Eunice B. Sutton
Des Moines, Iowa

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

1966 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 1966 Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations will be held in Thief River Falls, Minn., June 8-12, upon the invitation of Our Savior's Lutheran Church, the Rev. Marius Haakenstad, pastor.

Reflections at Age 90

**Pastor Knut Gjesfjeld,
Thief River Falls, Minn.**

On Nov. 18 our oldest living pastor, Knut Gjesfjeld, Thief River Falls, Minn., will celebrate his 90th birthday. He has had a long life and fortunately has been granted both strength of mind and body unto this day. As evidence of this we cite the attendance at our last two Family Bible Camps of both Pastor and Mrs. Gjesfjeld.

Mr. Gjesfjeld was born in Hjelmeland, Ryfylke, Kristiansand, Norway. He came to the United States in 1901. A graduate of Augsburg Seminary in 1908, he was ordained into the ministry of the Lutheran Free Church that same year. Retired for a good many years now, Pastor Gjesfjeld served parishes at Fergus Falls and Roseau, Minn.; Elbow, Sask.; and others.

Members of the Association, of which he is a member, readers of *THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR* and other friends join in wishing this keen-minded nonagenarian a very happy birthday and God's richest blessings in all his days.

Belated greetings may be sent to him at his home at 702 7th St. SE., Thief River Falls, Minn.

We have asked him to write some observations of life as he has seen it and this he did somewhat prior to his 90th birthday. We are glad to present it below.

WE are in a peculiar situation in this world, in that everything has to die! But every-



Rev. Knut Gjesfjeld, 90 years old

thing likes to live. Nothing wants to die! The more highly developed life is the more consciousness there is of the reality of death, and the more we fight against it. The ant and the man both turn to fight against death.

Man is more highly developed than any other creature and fears death the most. Any creature fears danger when it is visible, but man fears death all his life, whether the danger is visible or imaginary. The old saying is true: "We don't want to be old, nor do we want to die!" But in spite of what we want or do not want, that dark, unwelcome guest is coming nearer every day.

When we are young and well

and see this gloomy, uninvited bug-aboo afar off, we think it will be a long time before he is at our door! The boy or girl who thinks or says such is among the silly and frivolous, but if you talk like that at 90 years, you are a fool. Some say, "When I die it will be just like a horse or a gopher!" They think they are smart when they say things like that. In reality they are strangers to the light of God's revelation, or they are led into darkness by their Enemy!

When one is ninety and still unwilling to think of death or prepare for eternity, that is to be perverted! The Scripture asks the question, "Who has bewitched you?" To me it is sad and disgusting to listen to old folk talking together about the past, exhausting themselves, bragging of their strength and how much they could do in their younger years. Think of it! Walking on the edge of their own grave and still using what little energy they have left in exalting themselves, living according to the flesh, spiritually dead, blind concerning their own soul and eternity.

Yes, I am ninety years old; sitting here also meditating on the past. I ask myself what kind of a minister have I been? How have I made use of the many opportunities given me by God—not only in the pulpit but in my studying, in conversations, my behavior in the home, and so on? Surely I have had many opportunities—more

than some, since I am a minister. I am not sure just what was expected of me when asked to write from the standpoint of ninety years. I have gone through many trials and adversities—toil and hardships. Many stories and incidents of pioneer life might be interesting. But it may be of more value to others to get some spiritual experience.

Even in my preaching I have off and on uttered doubts of my spiritual experience. Then someone would express doubt about my salvation. A few times I have let Christains into my inner difficulties by saying, "I sometimes fear that maybe my whole Christianity is only brain work." That may be temptations of the Enemy. But temptation is not unbelief.

Here I would like to give a warning to all Christian believers. Remember that temptation is not the same for all. It would be an advantage to all Christians if they had some knowledge of the four temperaments. Many Christians are not even aware of the difference between an introvert and extrovert Christians. Ignorance may be the cause of harsh judgment in many cases.

While I am yet with you, may I remind you that God's blessing upon the individual, upon the local church, even upon individual nations, depends on whether we live in peace with each other, and live in peace with God.

The Enemy has many ways, many means, to disturb or destroy, to hinder the work of the Holy Spirit. We in the United States have had an abundance of blessings both material and spiritual. God is a longsuffering God, but how long will He tolerate our vanity, our selfishness, our pride, our ungratefulness, our carelessness, our neglect of His teachings and commands? I feel like pleading with you in the words of Paul (I Cor. 1:10), "I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...that there be no dissensions among you."

Believers are leaving us one by one and entering the heavenly

home. Here in this world the fight continues. Peace is preferable but the real peace of God is maintained only through fighting. Do not engage in unnecessary fighting. Beware of that. But fight all evil—evil in you and around you. We are aware of the fact that some of the churches in our Association have some spiritual gifts, others have very few, some seemingly have none. This reminds us of an incident which an evangelist told us as he was preparing to hold a meeting. He asked who could play the piano. Then he asked, "Is there someone who can lead in prayer?" Silence. Then a little girl piped up and said, "We had a man who did that but he died last year!" We smile, but it is no joke! Are we encouraging the use of spiritual gifts or are we killing them?

Let me quote Paragraph 12 of the Lutheran Free Church Principles: "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 synodical bounds." In other words, "Love knows no bounds."

It is necessary to speak about this often to all church leaders and especially the ministers. The old men, stabilized, rooted, and grounded in the Lutheran Free Church Christian Principles, are leaving us day by day. What is becoming of the generation of today. Our present leaders are responsible for the future.

We must show our colors; we must take our stand by holding high the principles and doctrines of the New Testament; even if it should cost us something, even if we have to suffer for it, even if we have to die for it. I agree with the author of Hebrews when he writes, "We look for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

We are not ready to live unless we are ready to die!

FOR ALL THESE BLESSINGS

A poor, uneducated Chinese woman went to the river to wash rice for her mistress. She lost her footing and fell into the river. All the rice was lost. As soon as she got out of the water, she said: "Thank God, I have not drowned."

This month, we will join friends and relatives in celebration of the oldest of national festivals in our country—Thanksgiving, now a legal holiday wherever our flag flies. This year marks the 344th anniversary of the first Thanksgiving of the Pilgrims at Plymouth. But while our precise kind of Thanksgiving is over three and a quarter centuries old, its history is as ancient as the spirit of gratitude in the heart of humanity. As far as written records go, and beyond, man has expressed thanks at a season of the inbringing of the harvest.

When the Pilgrims came to America they brought a church of free believers. They laid the foundation for a free church, the free state, free school and free social life in our country. However, we have become so used to all these blessings that we are fast becoming a nation of ingrates and unbelievers.

How often we fail to recognize God's loving care and forget to express our gratitude. No nation on earth is so abundantly blessed as ours, and we need to express more earnestly our gratitude to Him. And once in a while it would not hurt if we, as did a little boy, closed our prayers with these words: "And now, dear Lord, please take care of Yourself, for if anything happens to You, we're sunk."

BLESSINGS in abundance
STRENGTH for every way,
COURAGE for each trial,
GLADNESS for each day,
FAITH in heaven's guidance,
HOPE that's firm and true—
May the Lord, the Savior,
Give these gifts to you.
—Dagny B. Berg, Seattle, Wash.

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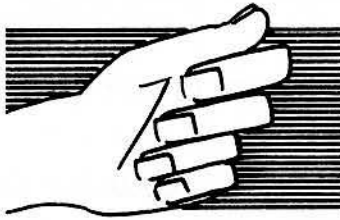
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STEWARDSHIP

ALL THAT I HAVE
IS THINE ALONE

THE NINE-TENTHS

Last time we discussed stewardship as the practice of giving one-tenth of one's income to the Lord's work. This is an old practice, and a good one, too; it is from the Old Testament, but it has much to commend its use in New Testament times as well. We are all for it.

Now we should like to bring a mild warning against certain misunderstandings which may arise when one practices tithing. It is so easy to think that when we have given one-tenth of our income to the Lord we have discharged all of our stewardship obligations as far as money is concerned. This just is not so.

From one point of view, and we believe it is a good one, stewardship begins after we have given away the first tenth. Really, this portion belongs to the Lord in the first place, and we pay it as we pay any other obligation which is placed upon us. It is a just due. After all, this is only a part of the amount we have saved simply by being Christians—to say nothing of the additional blessings God showers upon His children. Did it ever occur to you that the worldly people have to spend so much for foolish pastimes and enjoyments which Christians can so very well get along without? And yet God's people are the ones who get the true joy and satisfaction out of life—and these pleasures cost nothing in cold cash. An exception is the joy they derive from giving to the Lord's work. By all standards Christians are the very ones who ought to get rich. Many have become so, from Abraham in the

Old Testament to rich Christians in our own day. God's people from Abraham to the present give back to God a portion of earth's good with which they have been blessed.

But what do we do with the rest of our money and possessions?

It is not our purpose here to urge people to go beyond the tithe—though some do, and find additional blessings in it. We believe that if Christians could learn the lesson of tithing, there would be funds enough for the work—assuming that stewardship is practiced as much in the spending of the gifts as in the giving. But what do you do with the nine-tenths you have left? Here is a very real area of stewardship.

The temptation is to think that with this we can do as we please. We have given the Lord His share; now it is up to us to spend the rest on ourselves as we please. We have a vague feeling to the effect that all money is tainted to a degree; the Bible speaks of it as "filthy lucre." It also has warnings against the worship of Mammon. So we ought perhaps to get rid of it as fast as possible to avoid contamination. Perhaps it would be a good thing if we did not earn too much. There are Christian people who think that it is a point of virtue to work for low wages, to have little income, and to keep themselves unspotted as much as possible from the world of business.

This is completely wrong. Money honestly earned is a gift from God, and we ought to regard it as such. God gives only good gifts. Let us use our money as gifts we have received from God. We ought to accept these gifts gladly, and see if

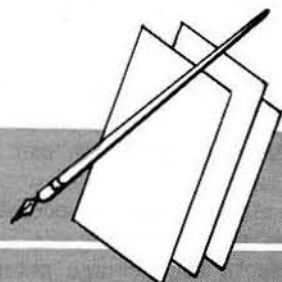
He might not possibly want to give us larger gifts. No gift from God for which we can and do thank Him can be an idol, and no love of such a gift is Mammon worship. We love the Giver first and then the gift He has given.

A Christian ought to make his money multiply itself. He should use it, trade with it, invest it, buy and sell with it, lend it out for worthwhile projects, increase it and convert it into greater assets. We have a lesson to learn here from the Parable of the Talents; in the use of their funds and their assets, the Christians should be like to ones who received three and five talents rather than he who had only one. This is stewardship.

It is true that there is much in the business and market world today which is unsavory—even downright evil. No Christian should permit his wealth to grow by investing his funds in questionable deals and unethical ventures. But there is still much that is honest and good in the world of business transactions. For these the Christian with some sums to invest should be on the alert; God does not mind being bothered for advice, and it is only proper that His children should counsel with Him. But by all means do something other than to bury your talent in the ground or throw it away foolishly and worthlessly. This is stewardship.

From time to time we have met people whom God has given a keen sense of judgment in business matters. These people seemed to be successful always; whatever they did turned out well. Money seemed to grow between their fingers. Yet these same persons were kind and generous, and walked humbly with their God. The tithe they had to give was large, and many a special project in the Kingdom of God has prospered simply because there were men like these behind it. It is said that when the king of the Dano-Norwegian kingdoms thought the project of sending a missionary to Greenland was too costly for his government, a Dan-

[Continued on page 12]



EDITORIALS

LET US GIVE THANKS

"Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord, O my soul!
I will praise the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God
while I have being." Psalm 146: 1, 2

One of our leading soft drinks is known as "the pause that refreshes." Shortly we shall observe a day which ought to be that for us. That is Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 25. (Canadian readers noted the same on Oct. 11.)

Thanksgiving is a pause, an interlude. A pause after the harvest, a pause between autumn and winter, a pause before Christmas. And most of all, a pause for giving thanks to the Lord.

This moment of reflection upon His mercies will refresh. Precious and reviving as the breeze which blows away the smog above a city will be the truly thankful spirit, driving selfishness, pessimism and a complaining spirit out and allowing the clean and cool air of joy, love and contentment to flood in.

Only the one who knows God through Jesus Christ will be able to thank Him properly (and he will not confine it only to Thanksgiving Day). For how can anyone thank God when he will not accept His greatest gift?

We wish for our readers this Thanksgiving-time, a pause that refreshes, in the knowledge of peace with God through His Son.

AUGSBURG CUTS OLD TIES

Just as death, though not unexpected for the incurable cancer patient, strikes loved ones with a jolt, so the coming of social dancing, legalized and sanctioned, and again, not unexpected, to Augsburg College hits those of us who were a part of the Augsburg family right here.

Yes, the decision was expected. Even the language of the announcement we read (see *L. A.*, Oct. 19, 1965) was predictable. The board of regents said it "did not consider the activity to be contrary to the college's aims and objectives." Also, "the advantages of social dancing far outweighed the disadvantages." To put it another way, the board either did not want to continue the restriction against dancing or felt it useless to do so.

So once again, in an age which is crying out for non-conformity and the courage of convictions, a Lu-

theran college gives up the fight and joins the faceless mass. Church colleges used to be spoken of as providing education with a plus. Today, what with a confusing theology present and old moral standards gone, defenders of these institutions are hard pressed to tell what the plus is.

The coming of social dancing is a denial of Augsburg's tradition and heritage. It is a sad day when these are set aside. Augsburg was founded as a place to perpetuate personal, experienced Christianity and piety. This latest move strikes hard at these aims.

This is written in full knowledge of the report of Eric Sevareid, CBS newscaster, upon his return from a sentimental journey to Decorah, Iowa, last spring. He gave the commencement address at the Lutheran college located there and which his father had attended as a young man. In his syndicated column, later reprinted in the official paper of the church which supports that institution, he reported that dancing had finally been introduced there after 10, these many years. A professor's wife had confided to him, he said, that she thought that frontier Methodists and Baptists had caused the Norwegians to prohibit it in the first place.

The thing that hurts is that this assumption by the professor's wife *has not been challenged*, to our knowledge, by anyone in that church body. It must have been, but it isn't public knowledge. And so the charge stands that Norwegian Lutherans around Decorah, Iowa, got their piety from Methodists and Baptists. Be that as it may, not all Norwegians in America did. In fact, they got reasons to struggle against the worldly spirit from the Bible itself.

They are dancing at Augsburg now. Horror of horrors, they will probably be using the same area of Si Melby Hall for the chapel services and the dances. But, come to think of it, that won't be any problem in this day of enlightenment.

Si Melby Hall. We never saw the man after whom the auditorium-gymnasium is named. But we have heard him spoken of in terms applied to few other men, and we have heard enough to believe that he represented the old-time pietism which did not include social dancing as acceptable Christian recreation. He deserved better than this.

In our own student days at Augsburg there was once a "combo" from a sister Lutheran college in Minnesota, no doubt unofficial, which appeared at a variety program on our campus. Their music and the accompanying off-color jokes were not in the spirit of Augsburg and neither will this new facet of life at Augsburg be.

Recent articles about dancing and dance music in such publications as *Look* (June 15, 1965) and *Time* (May 21, 1965) do not suggest that dancing is something which should be embraced by local churches or church schools. They reveal instead an alien spirit. Some of the newer dances used to be found only in the worst of night spots or on the midway of a state

fair. Today they are accepted in "respectable" quarters. To quote the *Time* article, "The highly sensual implication of big-beat dancing have some psychiatrists worried. Says one, 'It's sick sex turned into a spectator sport.'"

Advantages will outweigh the disadvantages? We don't think so. The spirit of worldliness will permeate the atmosphere more and more. It will stifle and smother and choke as did the thorns and thistles in the parable. It is a backward and tragic step. It is a camel which will soon occupy the whole tent.

We cast our vote on this decision at Augsburg. It is a dissenting vote.

HAPPINESS IS A BOOK

We don't know if it's original with them, but the people of the *Christian Life* magazine are using the expression "Happiness is a Book" in their current issue. And we'll go along with that.

Another apt phrase is this one: "Why read a book? Why eat?"

What a treasure God has given us in books (another reason to be thankful)! What worlds are opened up to us in adventure, travel, history, thought, in expositions on Christian faith and experience! Some of us will never travel far, but through books we may be transported to the four corners of the earth and sail the seven seas. With Lindbergh we may fly the Atlantic, winter with Richard E. Byrd at the South Pole, live in a sightless, soundless world with Helen Keller, follow five brave missionaries to their deaths at the hands of the Auca Indians, and go from a log cabin in Kentucky to the White House with Lincoln.

Favored is the child who learns from infancy that one book is above all others, the Bible, and early is taught to read it. Fortunate is the child who grows up in a home where there are books and a set of encyclopedias to pore through hour after hour.

One of the books we read this year was *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Aside from an excerpt or two read in elementary school days, we did not know the book. Has any other American novel produced such unforgettable characters: humble, devout Tom, whose death was like that of the early martyrs; the wretched, despicable Simon Legree; beautiful, saintly, too-good-for-this-world, little Eva; the impossible, scamp-eyed Topsy (the girl who just grewed), later a Christian; the completely self-centered Marie?

We were surprised, too, at the great Christian message conveyed by the book, in addition to the attack made upon the dreadful slavery system. It was well worth reading.

When did you last read a book? One of life's sorrows is that we get so little read of what there is to read. But we should do what we can.

THINGS HARD TO UNDERSTAND

True confession is always a humbling experience because we never like to admit failures, inadequacies and sins. The death of theologian Paul Tillich last month gives us occasion to make the confession that

humbles: we did not read Tillich because we could not understand him. He was called one of the chiefest American theologians of this era and all we can reply is "Oh?"

And the death of Tillich also gives us the occasion to question the contribution of the theologians who are so complex and obscure to the average person. They can take what seems fairly obvious in the Scriptures and make it very formidable. By their difficult words they propose a Gospel for the Ph.D. and which leaves the "unlearned" without hope in the world.

We would not go so far as to say that the wise will not be in heaven, but there may be some value in paraphrasing the words of Jesus to His disciples upon the departure of the rich young ruler, "How hard it will be for those who have wisdom to enter the kingdom of God!" Actually every act of salvation, whether it be to the wise, the rich or the average man is a miracle, possible with God but not with man. Thank God, the way of salvation is clear and open to all, not just to those whose language is so profound that only the select few can understand it. For it is the promise of Scripture that whoever is stopped by his sins, acknowledges them to the Lord and believes in the atonement of those sins by Jesus shall be saved.

Which of the learned and obscure (to us) scholars has stated the mystery of God any better than David, who said, "When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast established; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him?"

And who can better the simplicity of, or fail to understand, the words "but when he came to himself" in the parable of the Prodigal Son, or the heart-touching scene described in the same story, "But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him"?

Yes, there is some consolation for those of us who must be humbled in the confession that we cannot understand Tillich and other great scholars. But neither should we glory in our lack of wisdom. May our glorying be in the Lord Jesus Christ, His cross and resurrection.

The prophet Jeremiah recorded the wish of the Lord thus: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practice kindness, justice, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, says the Lord."

We are not despising studying and learning or an educated ministry. No, rather, we uphold them. But we do assert that we need not be cowed by those whom we cannot understand in theological matters. They may not be any further along than anyone else.

IS my certainty of salvation brought about by my cross-scarred heart or by the deeds of my flesh? (Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow

me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:24, 25).

Before Christ branded the cross upon my heart I was accountable to the law to fulfill it. "For the law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39). That keeping the law which I could not do, "...how to perform that which is good I find not" (Rom. 7:18), God accomplished through His beloved Son, my Savior. He "gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

How can I be converted? How can it happen to me?

God's part: First of all, the Holy Spirit convicts me of my sin through the Word of God. Secondly, He works repentance in me for my sin. Thirdly, he makes me see my need.

The Holy Spirit convicts me of my sin through the Word of God.

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). "For when the Comforter is come...he shall testify of me" (John 15:26). "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come" (John 16:13).

He works repentance in me for my sin.

The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart (Ps. 51:17). "For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death" (II Cor. 7:10).

He makes me see my need.

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive

us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:8, 9). "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:23, 24).

Man's part: Because of our "Adam" nature we make for ourselves three choices. First of all, we might try to work out our own salvation. Secondly, we might accept the free gift of God's grace. Our third choice might be to accept damnation by rejecting the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

I shall try to work out my own salvation by being very good and observing vast lists of requirements.

But Jesus says: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it:... what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:35, 37). "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8, 9). "A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28). Jesus did it all.

I shall accept the free gift of God's grace. (It's not for sale. It cannot be earned.)

For Jesus says: "...the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1-4). "He that heareth my word, and believes on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18).

I shall accept damnation by rejecting the comfort of the Holy

What Brand Do You Bear?

**Wilma Kern Snow,
Eugene, Oregon**

Spirit when He would, through His love, plant the cross within me. (It hurts but, oh! it heals.)

But the Word says: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God . . . if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. 8: 6-10). "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3-6). "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).

What does it mean to be "born again"? Ephesians 4:22-24 says "that ye put off . . . the old man, which is corrupt. . . and that ye put on the new man." In John 1:13 we see that we were "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Paul reminds us in II Corinthians 5:17 that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new." The "I" becomes the cross. This is the seal I bear.

Praise God! The brand has changed. What I couldn't do, Jesus did. The choice is made; I've accepted the gift. In Christ is the victory!

Man sees my old nature at war with the new but God sees me as His own because Jesus claimed me. The blood of the Redeemer shed on the cross protects me from God's wrath. He sees me as spotless and without blemish because Jesus took my place. He sees Jesus instead of me. God cannot see me for the shadow of the cross falls between us, blotting out all my

transgressions. God cannot see me because Jesus is in the way.

Now I've surrendered all. Jesus has accepted me as I am, not as I think a "proper Christian" should be—not as I would like to be, but simply as I am.

I am a most pitiable creature, except in God's eyes, for all of my defenses are down. I am stripped of all my filthy rags of self-righteousness. I am naked and undone. But God sees the celestial radiance of the cross burning in me as its blood becomes clothing for my soul. Humbled beyond endurance, broken with despair, tear-streaked with contrition, battered and bruised by the searing fire of helplessness (helplessness is His power), I surrender all. He can use nothing less. "Either you are for me or against me"—there is no middle ground.

Either I bear the brand or I do not. I bear it! I bear it humbly because I have had it bestowed as a gift upon me. I wear it proudly because I am "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood." I wear it rejoicing because I can cast my cares upon Him, knowing He cares for me. I wear it as a sinner, ransomed by His precious blood. I wear it as a saint because as He is, so shall I be.

Jesus says, "If a man loves me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

Oh Lord! Thou hast saved me for a purpose, else it would have been in vain. Oh, that I might bear fruit! But you have made provision even for this. "Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. . . . Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:4-8).

Separate me unto Yourself for Your own use. Let me not withhold from You. Put me to death daily in the flesh that I might live victoriously in the Spirit.

Oh, God! Brand the cross on me!

Stewardship

[Continued from page 8]

ish blacksmith assumed the financial responsibility single-handedly; and so Hans Egede became Norway's first missionary.

We have always felt humbled in the presence of such people. It is as though God has looked over the world of people and He has found so few whom He could trust with money. Therefore He has had to let most people remain poor rather than that they should be rich and suffer spiritual loss. But here and there He has seen a person who has a strong enough spiritual backbone so as to be able to bear riches. These He has blessed with funds. After all, the silver and the gold belong to Him, and He can distribute as He pleases; He pleases first of all to give to His children, but He restrains himself if He sees that they would suffer from possessions.

Shouldn't there be many more whom God could trust with money? And shouldn't they be you and me? We better start proving ourselves in the stewardship of the nine-tenths we have left after we have given to the Lord. If He finds us worthy here, He will surely increase our allowance.

In the meantime do not forget the first tenth either. For the giving of this gift is also stewardship.

Iver Olson

PERSONALITIES

New address of Rev. Karl G. Berg, formerly of Pukwana, S. Dak., is 794 Summer St. NE., Salem, Ore.

Rev. George Schuster, Grand Forks, N. Dak., has resigned from the parish at Grand Forks and Grafton. His immediate plans are not known.

Mr. Robert Lee, editor of the youth page in the *Ambassador*, is now residing at 1325 LaSalle, Apt. 306, Minneapolis, Minn. 55403. All communications relative to youth work which are to be printed should be sent to him at that address.



—RNS Photo

"He Took Bread and Gave Thanks" -- Luke 22:19

WHAT OUR FATHER DOES IS WELL

What our Father does is well:
Blessed truth! His children tell!
Though He send, for plenty, want,
Though the harvest store be scant,
Yet we rest upon His love,
Seeking better things above.

What our Father does is well:
Shall the willful heart rebel,
If a blessing He withhold
In the field, or in the fold?
Is He not himself to be
All our store eternally?

What our Father does is well:
Though He sadden hill and dell,
Upward yet our praises rise
For the strength His Word supplies,
He has called us sons of God;
Can we murmur at His rod?

What our Father does is well:
May the thought within us dwell;
Though nor milk nor honey flow
In our barren Canaan now,
God can save us in our need,
God can bless us, God can feed.

Therefore unto Him we raise
Hymns of glory, songs of praise;
To the Father and the Son
And the Spirit, Three in One,
Honor, might, and glory be,
Now and through eternity.

B. Schmolck
(The Lutheran Hymnary)

SING TO THE LORD OF HARVEST

Sing to the Lord of harvest,
Sing songs of love and praise;
With joyful hearts and voices
Your Hallelujahs raise:
By Him the rolling seasons
In fruitful order move.
Sing to the Lord of harvest
A song of happy love.

By Him the clouds drop fatness,
The deserts bloom and spring;
The hills leap up in gladness,
The valleys laugh and sing.
He filleth with His fullness
All things with large increase,
He crowns the year with goodness,
With plenty and with peace.

Bring to His sacred altar
The gifts His goodness gave,
The golden sheaves of harvest,
The souls He died to save:
Your hearts lay down before Him,
When at His feet we fall.
And with your lives adore Him,
Who gave His life for all.

To God the gracious Father
Who made us "very good":
To Christ, who, when we wandered,
Restored us with His blood:
And to the Holy Spirit,
Who doth upon us pour
His blessed dew and sunshine,
Be praise forever more.

J. S. B. Monsell
(The Lutheran Hymnary)

"Bless the Lord, O my soul;
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name!
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits."
Psalm 103: 1, 2

A Pastor as His Own Evangelist

A young pastor in the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America tried to get an evangelist to conduct a series of meetings in his church. All the evangelists had, however, dates ahead for several months. So he dropped the matter for the time being. But when he learned that some pastors were conducting their own evangelistic meetings with considerable success, he thought he might at least try it. He began by studying the Bible with the standpoint of the lost in mind, to see what the Bible had to offer—the whole Bible became one great invitation to the lost sinner to come to the fountain of living water and drink freely.

The young pastor then began to select his texts, prayerfully and carefully. After that he began to study in preparation for the sermons. Each morning he conducted a private devotion that lasted an hour, then he studied the Bible, using only the Bible for enlightenment, as he wanted to put as much of the Bible into his sermons as possible. Next he looked around for stories and illustrations. After having prepared as many sermons as he thought necessary in advance of the meetings, he began to visit the people and spoke to them about the one thing needful. He emphasized three things: family devotion, church attendance, and the church papers. He also urged them to work and pray for the salvation of the unsaved and that each one should try to bring one soul to Christ.

Then he preached several sermons stressing this in advance, as he knew that the people as well as himself would need to be prepared in order to be of any use to God. The people were impressed, and in his calls he noticed that everybody was serious, could be easily approached and readily confessed their shortcomings, with a promise to try to do better in the future. For a whole month the pastor practically lived in his automobile.

The attendance at the meetings was more than encouraging. The crowds grew and grew until the church became packed so that every available spot where a chair could be placed was occupied. People sat on the steps leading to the gallery. The church had never seen such crowds before, not even for the confirmation, Christmas and anniversary celebrations. A three-piece orchestra was secured to lead the singing. There were also solos, duets and not to forget a children's chorus of 30 voices. All did their part in a serious and dignified manner. The people came from all over. Large families came together. People who never came to church before came and people of other affiliations who heretofore could find nothing but fault with the Lutherans came. There was no sawdust trail and there was no calling for sinners to come forward to be taken by the hand. There will be follow-up work that those who have come under the power of the Word may be led and helped.

It is heartening to learn that many Lutheran pastors see the need of putting forth special efforts to save the sinners and quicken the saints. In all the Lutheran church bodies there are pastors who have held back. On the one hand they have felt that the regular services did not lend themselves to as direct and effective evangelistic work as the situation called for. On the other hand they wanted to avoid the methods formerly employed by some of the Reformed churches, and which have been so much criticized by the Lutherans.

It seems to us that this young pastor went at it in the right way.

Some will say that he should have held after-meetings, that he and consecrated lay people should have spoken to individuals, and prayed for them and prayed with them then and there.

We believe that a pastor who calls on all his people before such meetings and talks to them about the salvation of their soul and who urges the believers to bring souls to Christ, can be trusted to conduct the meetings and handle the follow-up work so as to "get results."

It is not so much a question of methods. Methods will take care of themselves if we are really concerned about the unsaved in our congregations and outside. The Holy Spirit that makes us concerned about the unsaved will help us lead souls to Christ. The experiences of other soul-winners may prove helpful.

The great thing needed in the Lutheran Church in America is more spiritual life. God be thanked for the preaching and the teaching of His Word in its purity in our Church, but God forgive us for our worldliness, our indifference, our smug self-satisfaction. God bless the pastors who feel the urge and who have the courage to go to the members of their churches and talk to them face to face, earnestly, lovingly about their relation to God, and to place on the hearts of the believers the burden of the unsaved.

N. N. Ronning from *The Friend*

CHURCH-WORLD NEWS

LUTHERAN CONTRIBUTIONS RANGE FROM \$74 TO \$104 PER MEMBER

New York (NLC) — Church contributions by confirmed members of six Lutheran bodies ranged from \$74 to \$104 for all purposes in 1964.

Lutherans ranked between 19th and 30th in over-all giving among 47 Protestant denominations in the United States and Canada, according to the Commission on Stewardship and Benevolence of the National Council of Churches.

For the first time, the commission's annual summary revealed, contributions exceeded three billion dollars, the grand total of \$3,101,639,604 being the highest figure ever reported in the 45 years these statistics have been compiled.

Average per member contributions set a new record of \$71.80 for congregational expenses and benevolences, compared to the old mark of \$69.89 in 1961. Giving averaged \$69.87 in 1963, \$68.76 in 1962 and \$66.76 in 1960.

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod regained its position as the top-ranking Lutheran body, with an average contribution for all causes of \$103.90. The Synod remained in 18th place among the Protestant communions for the sixth consecutive year and again led the denominations with a million or more members.

The Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, first among Lutherans in 1963 with an average gift of \$110.29, was runner-up to the Missouri Synod as it dropped from 16th to 20th place last year with a total contribution of \$96.06 per member. The SELC, formerly known as the Slovak Church, was again first, however, in giving among Lutherans for congregational expenses with an average of \$84.34.

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod

led in benevolences with per capita contributions of \$31.04, displacing the Missouri Synod, and the Lutheran Church in America was first again in world missions with \$2.57.

The Missouri Synod was second in congregational expenses with \$80.36, in benevolences with \$23.54, and in world missions with \$2.33.

The Free Methodist Church did not file a report for 1964, but again led all the denominations in contributions for all purposes with \$358.17, the figure taken from data it supplied for the previous year. The Wesleyan Methodist Church was again second with \$282 and the Evangelical Free Church of America was third with \$247.30.

The per-member giving for all purposes of \$71.80 in the 47 church bodies participating in the NCC's survey included \$58.44 for congregational expenses, \$13.36 for all benevolences, and \$2.41, included in the previous figure, for world missions.

MISSOURI SYNOD MEETING FOR COMMON LUTHERAN HYMNAL

ST. LOUIS, Nov. 5 — Six Lutheran Church bodies have been invited to take exploratory steps toward seeking "common liturgical forms and a common hymnal," it was announced here by The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod which agreed to convene the first meeting.

Invitations have been sent to The American Lutheran Church (ALC), the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), and the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (SELC). No date has been set for the meeting, it was noted.

The ALC, LCA, and SELC have accepted the invitation. The WELS

is studying the matter, and no reply has yet been received from the ELS.

The Missouri Synod was authorized by its Detroit convention last June to "pursue a cooperative venture" with other Lutheran groups in the production of a common hymnal.

"CONTACT FROM HOME" HELD "REAL HUNGER" IN SERVICE

Washington, D.C. (NLC) — A Lutheran leader who made a 10,000-mile inspection tour of U.S. military installations places high priority on "contact from home" for servicemen.

Dr. Gordon S. Huffman, president of the American Lutheran Church's Eastern District, asserted here he was not sure "that our churches today are really doing all they could or should to keep in touch with the boys."

Speaking to a joint dinner meeting of the National Lutheran Council's Division of Service to Military Personnel and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's Armed Forces Commission, Dr. Huffman reported that if anything impressed him on his trip as a guest of the Secretary of Defense it was the "youthfulness of these men who perform highly complex operations and yet surely need, just as the teenagers in my home have needed it, the spiritual emphasis."

Dr. Huffman was among 75 persons who traveled over six days viewing U.S. military might as part of an annual Joint Civilian Orientation Conference earlier this year. He was one of two clergymen in this year's group, which included a cross section of American leaders in various walks of life.

Commenting on visits he had with servicemen at various points from Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, to

an aircraft carrier in the Pacific, Dr. Huffman said he felt "there was a real hunger on the part of these fellows for any contact from home."

When the name of a serviceman's home state was mentioned, Dr. Huffman related, "you saw the young fellow's eyes perk up."

The ALC district president said two significant impressions during his trip were a nation "on the alert" and the "high caliber of the military men we met."

"I was impressed with the fact that you have to have highly intelligent men able to make split-second decisions, men physically strong, in good spirits, and spiritually strong."

Citing an example, he said the men in the underground missile silos are "exceptionally capable men who have no nonsense about them."

He said he got the impression at every stop that the spiritual part of men's lives was considered vitally important by military leaders.

While on the U.S.S. Hancock, an aircraft carrier with a crew of over 3,000 men, Dr. Huffman said that the visiting group was sitting in the officers mess when "everything suddenly stopped." Then the chaplain's voice came over the public address system: "It is our custom every night to close the day with thanks to God."

Dr. Huffman noted that "everybody stood dead still" while the ship's chaplain had a closing prayer for the evening.

Also, while on the Hancock, Dr. Huffman was presented a certificate proclaiming him an "Honorary Tail-Hooker" following an aircraft carrier takeoff.

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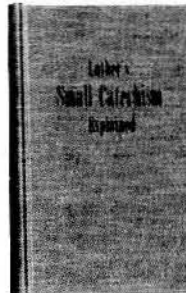
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ROSLYN, S. DAK.

Mr. Nels Pedersen, evangelist for the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement, spoke at special services in Tabor Lutheran Church, rural Webster, Oct. 31–Nov. 4.

HATTON, N. DAK.

Evangelistic meetings were held in the Hatton parish, Nov. 7–11, with Pastor E. Edward Tornow, Fargo, N. Dak., as speaker.