

November 9, 1971

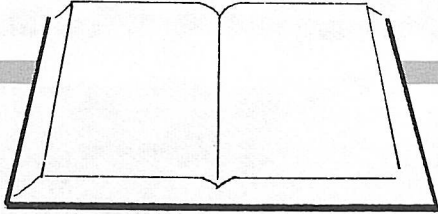
The Lutheran Ambassador

HARVEST TIME

"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which he has given you (Deut. 16:17 RSV).

RNS PHOTO





According to the Word

THANKSGIVING

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people" (Psalm 116:12-14).

Thankful people stop to pause, think and remember to thank their heavenly Father for all His benefits. On this Thanksgiving Day, too, we need to take inventory of all the blessings God bestows upon us in such abundant measure. Of His love and kindness and mercy we can say, "I am blessed indeed! The world is mine!" We have nothing to complain about.

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits?" In these four little words, "for all His benefits," lies the vast, beautiful, and remarkable panorama of the gifts God sends to us. They are summarized most beautifully for us in the words of Luther's explanation of the First Article of the Apostles' Creed. For all His benefits! The vast array of physical and spiritual blessings that God has heaped upon us looms before us. Before eating the huge Thanksgiving meal, pause for a mo-

ment, remember, and dedicate yourself anew to God because of all His benefits. The psalmist gives us some answers regarding all His benefits. "I will take the cup of salvation." So often in the Old Testament, particularly in the Psalms, we have references to the taking of a cup, such as Psalm 23: "My cup runneth over." This phrase refers to taking and receiving from God the wonderful salvation that Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, has worked out for all mankind. One of the first indications of gratitude to God is accepting from Him His grace and the blessing of the gifts of His love that He bestows on us, and the cup of salvation which He has available for us if we will accept and believe it, and then serving Him with the help of His eternal grace.

"I will call upon the name of the Lord!" Let us worship Him with our songs and praises. Give our God the honor and glory because of His love for us. Thanksgiving is a relationship we have with God; it is a trust that leans on God; it is a love and appreciation for all that God has done for us. This is not only for one day, but a continuous, everyday characteristic of all who know God, love Him, and are grateful for all his benefits.

"I will pay my vows in the presence of all His people." In times of great stress and danger we have a tendency to make all kinds of promises to God. Unfortunately, we become weak and forget to carry out our promises, and so many of our vows have never been paid. On this day, and every day of our life, when we view all the blessings and kindnesses that our loving Father has given us, we can say with the psalmist, "I will pay my vows unto the Lord now! I'll keep my promises to God! I'll dedicate myself anew to His service; I'll rededicate my powers of mind, body and spirit, and all the bounty and blessing that He heaps on me in my life." "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). We must let our light shine before men and put the candlestick of our life on the lampstand of service to God who has held before our eyes the wonders of his blessings in Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Respond to these blessings and benefits of God as did the psalmist. Can we say, "God is mine! I will be His! I am a sheep of His pasture?"

Reuben Wee

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CHRISTIANS, BE THANKFUL

by Rev. Dennis Gray,
Grafton, North Dakota

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: rooted and built up in Him, established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding in thanksgiving" (Col. 2:6, 7).

Thanksgiving and a thankful heart are very much part of our walk with Jesus Christ. We are to "abound in thanksgiving." When we think of what God has done for us when He sent Jesus to this earth, we cannot help but overflow with thanksgiving to God. Praise His Holy Name for His unspeakable gift to us!

How tragic it is to see some who claim to know Jesus falter at giving thanks to Him. Somehow Satan has taken away the real joy of being a Christian and has robbed these souls of a thankful heart. They may be saved; but one would never know it by looking at their sad faces! Satan must be stopped from this thievery.

To abound in thanksgiving means to overflow because of what God has done for him through His Son, Jesus Christ. A person who is joyful and happy will overflow. God has been good to him. God has saved his soul from sin and its dire consequences of eternal death and damnation. Happy is the person who has seen his sin and who depends on the righteousness that Christ gives to him. Christian, are you not thankful for this gift of God? Has Satan taken away the joy of your salvation? Praise God that He takes the sinner out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay. Thanks to Him that we are placed on a rock, the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise Jesus that this unchanging Christ can be ours and is ours as we walk with Him day by day! Let us abound in thanksgiving!

When we came to Christ and re-

ceived Him, we were rooted in Him. We were planted in the nourishing soil that would give us growth and confirm our relationship to Him. This growth is called the building up of our faith, our walk with Christ. Our text implies a continual growth from re-birth in Christ to the point where we do abound in thanksgiving.

Paul in Colossians 2:6, 7, is not suggesting this continual growth is possible on our own, we need the help of Christ. Here it is a thankful heart which utters a prayer of thanksgiving daily. He knows that he must depend on God to provide for his salvation and his growth in Christ. We should be thankful that nothing depends on us. It is very important that everyone see that we can do absolutely nothing to be saved and that all depends on Christ. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags..." (Isaiah 64:6).

Our wills must be subjective to His Divine Will. In all matters we search for what a friend of mine rightly called the "good and perfect" will of God. When we have found this will and yield to God's desires, then we will abound in thanksgiving. Those who do not search out God's will are following the dictates of their own hearts. Real thanksgiving comes from hearts which search for and find God's good and perfect will and then do as God commands.

A thankful heart will remain faithful to the basic teachings of God's inspired Word. Epaphras had brought the good news to the Colossians and Paul was concerned that they who were rooted in Him would continue in their faith and abound with thanksgiving. Praise and thank God for those who have remained faithful to Jesus and who are overcomers in this world of sin.

Does not God give much to the

persons who remain faithful to Him? When we grow in the Lord we become vigorous and strong spiritually, able to abound in thanksgiving. We truly overflow because our hearts are filled with the precious things of God.

One reason we see so many sad-faced Christians is because they have ceased to grow. Thanksgiving comes from a growing heart. It is wonderful to see people grow in Christ.

It is also wonderful to see new Christians and talk with them about the Lord Jesus Christ. This same enthusiasm, with added maturity, ought to be the property of every born-again person. How wonderful it is to see older people, real saints of Christ, who, in spite of all the trials sent their way, have a vital, thankful heart. A heart still as enthused as the day they first came to Jesus!

These people overflow for Christ because they are growing in their relationship to Him. They have the necessary enthusiasm and maturity needed to abound in thanksgiving. Our text also implies a continual growth and continual thanksgiving for what Christ has given to us!

First, we are rooted in Christ when we received Him as our personal Savior and Lord. Next, we grow in Him as we remain faithful to the basics taught us in God's Word and we then must abound in thanksgiving because of the joy that Christ gives to us.

Yes, we must be thankful for the blessings our walk with Jesus gives us. There are the answered prayers when a special burden has been lifted from our shoulders, the souls who came to Christ, the victories over temptation, the comfort God gives to us when we face or have faced trials of one kind or another, the comfort God gives when there is an illness or death, and the precious

times of prayer and study we have spent with our brothers and sisters in the Lord, as well as the times we have spent alone with God in our private prayer closets.

We also should be thankful for the various kinds of misfortune or difficulties which have come our way. God never promised a totally sunny life when we walk with Christ. Often experiences which seem cruel and unjust will help Christians in their walk with the Lord. It can increase faith and give power to overcome.

Also, we should be thankful for the work of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. Truly, God is blessing our joint activities. We have leaders who are making a stand for Christ, His unchanging Word and the fundamentals of our Association. God will bless our work as we are faithful to His Word and proclaim it in its truth and purity.

The Lord has given us a burgeoning Bible School. It is good to see this wonderful growth and to praise God for youth interested enough to spend time studying His precious truths! We have an obligation as Christians to see that this education is not hampered.

Thank God for our Seminary and the men who are studying in preparation for lifetime service as pastors. We have wonderful, dedicated instructors who are challenging these men for the Lord. Truly they need our prayers as they teach and study and have fellowship together.

Our foreign mission work offers us another area of service through the Association. We have dedicated missionaries who are laboring hard to proclaim Jesus Christ in Brazil and Arizona. Thank God for them. May we, with thankful hearts, seek to give of our time, talents and money to further this work.

Around us are the cries of many congregations tired of liberal influences and desirous to have pastors who preach the inspired Word of God as it should be taught. We need to remember our home mission program and give so as to supply the needs of these congregations. A thankful heart gives of the bounties of life and even sacrifices so God's work can go forth.

While there are always obstacles

to overcome in the walk with Jesus Christ, a thankful heart will seek God's good and perfect way in all concerns, whether of a personal nature or of the kind which concerns our entire Association.

Make your own personal list. Are

you excited and thankful for what God has done, and is doing, and will be doing? Do you not look forward to the future with greater expectation than ever before? Oh, how we should be thankful as God's people. Praise God from Whom all blessings flow!

The First Thanksgiving

Dorothy Gladys Spicer
from WORLD DIGEST

Contrary to popular opinion, the white man's first day of Thanksgiving in North America was set aside, not by the Pilgrims in 1621, but by the members of the Frobisher Expedition in 1578. When the good ship **Ayde** safely reached the shores of Newfoundland it was decided to render thanks to God for His deliverance from the perils of sea and storm.

According to a record of the period, "on Monday morning, May twenty-seventh, 1578, aboard the **Ayde**, we received all, the communion by the minister of Gravesend; and toward night we departed toward Tilbury Hope. Here we highly prayed God, and altogether, upon our knees, gave Him due humble and hearty thanks, and Maister Wollfall, made unto us a goodlye sermon, exhorting all especially to be thankful to God for His strange and marvelous deliverance in those strange places."

Just as the members of the Frobisher expedition gave thanks for a safe landing in the north, so the Pilgrims, coming to port in Plymouth Bay some forty-three years later, met together on the following day "...for prayer and thanksgiving."

The little company landed on December 21st, 1620. Since there were no shelters on land, the ship provided housing for the first few months. Toward the end of March enough progress had been made in building so the entire group landed, taking with them their few personal possessions and their meager stores of provisions. The next month the **Mayflower** returned to England.

All through the spring the colonists struggled with tilling the ground and planting grain. With the help of Massasoit and his braves, who welcomed the white men and taught them how

to time their crops and to fish and hunt, the Pilgrims were able to reap a plentiful autumn harvest.

Their joy knew no bounds, for on the harvest depended, in great measure, their ability to face the coming winter. Despite the fact that but fifty-five persons had survived from the "hundred souls or more" who landed from the **Mayflower**, the courageous colonists were filled with gratitude to God for His many blessings.

In October, 1621, the little group finally decided to celebrate by a three days' feast, the occasion of their first harvest.

"They began now to gather in the small harvest they had," wrote Governor Bradford, "and to fitt up their houses and dwellings against winter, being all well recovered in health and strength, and had all things in good plenty; for as some were thus employed in affairs abroad, others were excersised in fishing, aboute, codd, and bass, and other fish, of which they tooke good store, of which every family had their portion.

"All the sommer ther was no wante. And now begane to come in store of foule, as winter approached. And besides water foule, ther was great of wild Turkeys, of which they tooke many, besides venison, etc. Besides they had about a peck of meale a weeke to a person, or now since harvest, Indian corne to that proportion. Which made many afterwards write so largely of their plenty hear to their friends in England, which were not fained, but true reports."

Evidently the "great store of wild Turkeys" made a great impression on the Pilgrims, for Thomas Morton wrote gaily of how they were hunted:

"Turkeys there are, which divers time in great flocks have sallied by our doores; and then a gunne (being commonly in redinesse) salutes them

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Recollections of a Trip to New York City

by Raynard Huglen, Editor
The Lutheran Ambassador

Part III

Tom Skinner Associates

My visit to the office of Tom Skinner Associates on Montague Street in Brooklyn was disappointing in that I did not get to meet this famous young Negro evangelist personally. He was not only out of town but out of the country on that particular day. All I could do was speak with one of the five office workers, of whom three are blacks and two are whites.

Tom Skinner, a former gang lord in Harlem, doesn't operate any permanently-based missions in New York or elsewhere, as other groups are doing. But he speaks at Christian crusades or rallies in the city wherever he is invited. The organization which bears his name also has a radio broadcast, one-half hour long, which is aired on 14 stations over the country. Tom Skinner is usually the speaker.

There is some outreach through the printed page. I was given two attractive booklets, one called "Tom Skinner Speaks At Wheaton," a series of four messages, and the other, "The Liberator Has Come," an address to the Ninth Inter-Varsity Missionary Convention in Urbana, Ill., 1970. Tom has also published several books. The third main thrust being made for Christ is through campus work among black students, particularly in their own colleges.

I inquired whether his office had received any protests in the wake of the Attica (N.Y.) prison revolt, which involved so many Negro and Puerto Rican prisoners, but was told that there had been none.

Visits to Two Stadia

Being a baseball fan from way back, it was interesting to be able to attend games in both Shea Stadium and Yankee Stadium while in New York.

Shea Stadium is located in Queens, in Flushing Meadows, a short distance from the World's Fair site of 1965. I had heard of the noise factor there due to the proximity of LaGuardia Airport. It soon became evident what was meant. Passenger planes took off, almost directly overhead, with great regularity, sometimes at intervals of only one or two minutes. The roar was deafening. It can be no exaggeration to say that in the time I was there for the first game of a double-header, 50 planes must have come over, all low enough so that their insignia could be easily identified as long as the daylight remained.

As for the game itself, in the beautiful ball park, the Mets played like they did in the years before they won the pennant and the Cubs like they were winning the National League flag.

On Saturday afternoon, as a Yankee fan since childhood, I made something akin to a pilgrimage in visiting Yankee Stadium, the "house that Ruth built," in the Bronx. Still a beautiful park after 44 years, there is no sport facility in the United States that carries such a tradition of grandeur.

The game itself was nothing out of the ordinary although the Yankees, who are not the Yankees of old, trounced the Cleveland Indians 9-0. But it should be my fortune to hear it announced that after the game the speculators would be allowed to go onto the playing field for one hour. So it was my privilege to walk

where Babe Ruth, Joe DiMaggio, Mickey Mantle and Charlie Keller had patrolled the spacious outfield; to move across the infield where Lou Gehrig, Joe Gordon, Tony Lazzeri, Frankie Crosetti, Phil Rizzuto and Red Rolfe, right to left, had played so flawlessly; to face the diamond from the catcher's box where the likes of Bill Dickey, Yogi Berra and Elston Howard had toiled; to circle the mound, on which we weren't allowed, and imagine a Red Ruffing, Spud Chandler or Whitey Ford working there; and to peer into the first base dugout, which we couldn't enter, and to picture a Casey Stengel or a Joe McCarthy masterminding a game.

In centerfield I got to walk past the monument containing the three plaques honoring Yankee greats, Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig and Miller Huggins, fabled manager of the '20's. All of this was done, of course, in the company of several thousands of others, men my age and older who remembered the "glory days" and young boys with their baseballs who played catch and slid the base paths, imagining themselves big league ball players, just as millions of boys have done on a thousand diamonds after ball games were over.

A Walk on Fox Street

Teen Challenge, referred to last time, conducts an outreach to children on Fox Street in the Bronx. It is called CURE CORPS. Anxious to see whatever branches of the Teen Challenge work possible, I had asked for the address of the Fox Street program, but for some reason had not received it. From all reports, the Fox Street areas was known as

one of the most difficult sections of the city and I wanted to catch some glimpse of it.

So on Saturday morning I took a bus headed uptown on Third Avenue. You can see more from a bus, but it is also much slower than the subway. Because of my lack of knowledge I had to make several transfers before I eventually got on one which would take me along Southern Boulevard, running parallel to Fox Street for some blocks.

Southern Boulevard was one of those business streets, of which there are many in New York, where one does not feel comfortable. The stranger feels as a stranger. I walked the one block up to Fox Street, looked to either side and decided I did not dare walk the street. I went back to Southern Boulevard and went a block further uptown. About this time I inquired in a cafe about Teen Challenge, but they had not heard of it. Again I walked the block up to Fox Street and decided it was not worth the venture. Continuing on Southern Boulevard for a second block, I then went to Fox Street for the third time and finally determined to walk at least one block on it. I ended up going four.

At no time did I feel comfortable or safe, but I wanted to make my own little "march against fear." Fox Street is a residential street, lined by apartment buildings, only there they would be called tenements. There weren't many people around,

which did not give one any special feeling of comfort. It is a street without pride. Garbage and refuse lay between buildings and in vacant lots. Dog waste was scattered on the sidewalks in a profusion I had not seen before. Some buildings had wrecked apartments next to occupied ones. On one block there were three burned out convertibles in a row along the sidewalk. I've thought many times how I should describe Fox Street. Words like bleak, desolate, hopeless perhaps do it best. Or maybe one man had something similar to Fox Street in mind when he wrote of "these mean streets." And he had lived on them.

The next day I read in a newspaper that within two hours of the time that I walked on Fox Street a man on Beck Street, a block away, had killed a young daughter of the woman with whom he had been living and then himself.

I later learned, too, that the Fox Street area is one of the highest drug-use sections of New York City. But I was also to see one evidence of fruit from that Teen Challenge work on Fox Street, which I did not find that day.

Bronx Lutheran Church

Also on the agenda for the morning was a visit to Bronx Lutheran Church. This is also a former Lutheran Free Church congregation and was organized in 1928. The late Fritjof Monseth served it for several years in the

1930's.

A bus took me to Morris Park and East Fremont and after a start in the wrong direction I found that I should go uptown rather than downtown. The walk turned out to be much longer than anticipated, but, again, there is no better way to get the feel of a city than by walking.

This area proved to be much different than the other parts of the Bronx or of New York that I saw. Whereas the Bronx has hundreds of large apartments, some housing a thousand or more people, here was a neighborhood where there were even single family dwellings. No longer was there the feeling of the large city. Morris Park Avenue had the appearance of a small city business street. Buildings were one or two stories tall. Names of businesses indicated a large Italian population.

At last the church was reached, across the avenue. It is a small church with basement, having a capacity similar to many of our older churches. It was my good fortune to come to the church, shortly before noon, in time to find a woman outside who happened to be the custodian. This lady, a Mrs. Dunheim, just returned from shopping, kindly showed me the church as well as the adjoining three-story building, the ground floor of which is used by the congregation. It was in that building that the Monseths lived for a while one summer when Pastor Monseth attended summer school in New York some years

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Bronx Lutheran Church on Morris Park Avenue



Fans in Yankee Stadium after the game

NEWS of the Churches



Captain Hokonson, center, was awarded the medal by Col. Bates, right. Looking on are Mrs. (Susan) Hokonson and their son Scott.

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH GRAFTON

Rev. Dennis Gray was installed as the pastor of Bethel Lutheran Church, Grafton, N. Dak., on Sept. 19, with Rev. John P. Strand, president of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, officiating. He spoke about the fact that there are many struggles in our world today, but the biggest struggle is between God and Satan. Satan tries to neutralize the Christian through the world, he said. Pastor Strand emphasized the importance of the Christian congregation in this struggle against Satan. We must look, however, to Jesus for our direction and our righteousness. Pastor Gray responded with a challenge to preach Christ and Him crucified. He stressed the urgency of this matter since Christ's coming seems closer and closer.

PASTOR'S SON HONORED BY MILITARY SERVICE

Cpt. Stephen C. Hokonson, son of Pastor and Mrs. A. L. Hokonson, Osseo, Minn., has been cited for outstanding performance of duty by the U.S. Army at Indiantown Gap Military Reservation.

The Captian, who has been assigned to Viet Nam and is now serving there, was awarded the Army Commendation Medal by Col. Paul A. Bates, Commander of the U.S. Army Garrison.

Captain Hokonson is a military police and has been on active duty since July, 1969, and was previously in the ROTC at Washington State University.

GOD'S CARE

Not a brooklet floweth
Onward to the sea,
Not a sunbeam gloweth
On its bosom free,
Not a seed unfoldeth
To the glorious air,
But our Father holdeth
It within His care.

Not a floweret fadeth,
Not a star grows dim,
Not a cloud o'ershadeth,

But 'tis marked by Him.
Dream not that thy gladness
God doth fail to see;
Think not in thy sadness
He forgetteth thee.

Not a tie is broken,
Not a hope laid low,
Not a farewell spoken,
But our God doth know.
Every hair is numbered,
Every tear is weighed
In the changeless balance
Wisest Love has made.

Power eternal resteth
In His changeless hand;
Love immortal hasteth
Swift at His command,
Faith can firmly trust Him
In the darkest hour,
For the keys she holdeth
To His love and power.

(from *Poems with Power to
Strengthen the Soul*)

THANKSGIVING

Now gracious plenty rules the board
And in the purse is gold;
By multitudes, in glad accord,
Thy giving is extolled.
Ah, suffer me to thank Thee, Lord,
For what Thou dost withhold!

I thank Thee that howe'er we climb
There yet is something higher;
That though through all our reach
of time
We to the stars aspire,
Still, still, beyond us burns sublime
The pure sidereal fire!

I thank Thee for the unexplained,
The hope that lies before.
The victory that is not gained—
O Father, more and more
I thank Thee for the unattained—
The good we hunger for!

I thank Thee for the voice that sings
To inner depths of being;
For all the upward spread of wings,
From earthly bondage freeing;
For mystery—the dream of things
Beyond our power of seeing.

—Florence E. Coats
from **The Lutheran Messenger**

PERSONALITIES

Rev. Leslie Galland, pastor of Green Lake Lutheran at Spicer, Minn., is serving Zion Lutheran Church in Willmar on an interim basis until next July. The congregation was formerly served by **Rev. Hubert DeBoer**, now of Thief River Falls, Minn.

Let one more attest:
I have seen God's hand through a
life time,
And all was for the best.
—Robt. Browning

He knows. He loves. He cares.
Nothing His truth can dim:
He gives His very best to those
Who leave the choice to Him.
—Selected

I took his hand

THREE THANKFUL SOULS

It was after bedtime. I sat with closed eyes thinking about the people I had seen that day before Thanksgiving.

* * *

First there was the mother from Montana, so far away from home, just beginning to feel well enough after a serious operation to talk a little. During our conversation she told very simply of how before the operation she had surrendered herself entirely into God's hands. Now she was deeply thankful that things had turned out so well, that she would live and would be able to return to her work with the family and the church out there on the prairie. She was grateful, too, for the fine treatment she was receiving at the hospital. Her soul was, indeed, "giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 5:20).

* * *

Then there was that widow of six months, Mrs. L., who fell on the kitchen floor and broke her hip some weeks ago. She seemed to be standing right at the portals of the new Jerusalem, for she had been freed of all her burdens of sin and sorrow and was praising God so warmly in the Spirit and with such tears of joy that her daughter felt she had to calm her somewhat. "Please, don't get excited, mother."

But she continued to praise God who in His great mercy in Christ Jesus had given her the strength and

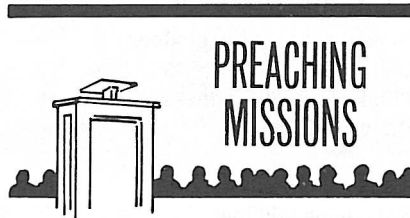
courage to fight the good fight of faith until the goal now appeared so near—and so bright.

* * *

At Miss A's bedside, after reading an impressive article in one of her newspapers about going to church, we drifted onto the subject of Thanksgiving Day.

"Yes," she said, "I usually say I have 365 Thanksgiving Days every year, but tomorrow I shall sum up in my mind all the good I have received of God, especially what I have received through Jesus who has saved me and cleansed me in His blood. Oh, how good the Lord has been to me through all these years! Here I have all that I need, a clean white bed, kind nurses and everything—it makes me so happy and thankful! Soon, too, my Savior will come and take me home to Himself; that will be the best Thanksgiving Day of all for me."

—Wm. Hagen



Granite Falls, Minnesota

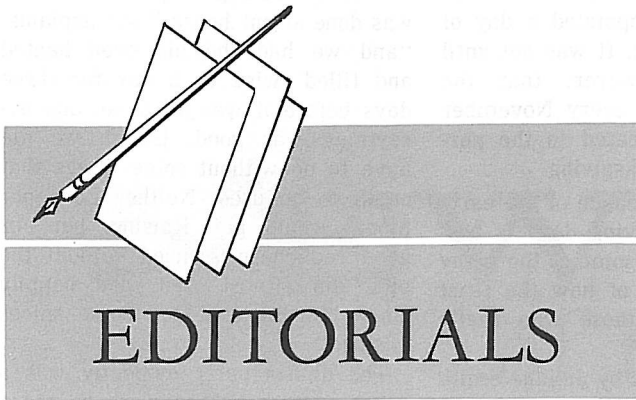
November 21-23

Faith Lutheran Church

Reuben Wee, pastor

Speaker: Ev. Arthur Johnson,

Willmar, Minn.



LOCAL OPERATION

"A free congregation selects and calls its own pastor, conducts its own program of worship, fellowship and service, and owns and maintains its own property."

Declaration of Faith, III:7

The final statement of Section Three emphasizes the responsibility of the local congregation for whatever decisions are made within it. It not only has the responsibility, but should not permit anyone else to usurp it.

Included in the choices which a free congregation has is the calling of a pastor. It need seek no advice, but in practice often does. That practice is to inquire of the church president as to any recommendations he may have. The latter may know that a certain pastor would welcome a change, or, from his observation he may simply feel that a certain pastor would work out well in a vacancy that has developed.

The congregation doesn't need to consult the church president, but in practice usually does. And once it has received his suggestions it may use them or discard them.

By the same token, even though III:7 does not specifically mention it, the congregation has a provision in its constitution by which it may dismiss a pastor.

The congregation decides on its own ongoing program. The pastor does not make the decisions beyond those that the congregation delegates to him. He is not to dominate the congregation and neither is the congregation to dominate him. There must be a mutual working together. Whenever this feeling of trust in each other breaks down an intolerable situation develops that can only damage the effectiveness of the congregation's life and witness.

A free Lutheran congregation, of course, must conduct its program under some definite, already-existing guidelines. It must be guided first of all by the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit. Following upon this, all must be done in accordance with the Lutheran Confessions and, in our case, with the Fundamental Principles. If this is not done, there should be those within the congregation who will call for an examination of what is being done.

Finally, the free congregation is responsible for its own property. The Association does not have any control over it. Naturally, if a congregation has borrowed money or is receiving assistance from the Board of Home Missions

it will have moral and legal obligations toward that Board, but not to the AFLC as such.

The local congregation is completely independent and makes all the decisions indicated above.

THE TRIAL SERMON

As long as we have been speaking of the calling of a pastor, this is a good time to bring up the matter of the trial sermon. This is the system in which a pastor is invited to come to speak at a service in a congregation and afterward the people vote on whether or not to extend a call to him.

A variation of this practice, much in vogue some years ago but now fortunately largely discarded, found a congregation bringing in two or more pastoral candidates on different Sundays and then choosing among them.

In some other Lutheran bodies the custom of any trial sermon has been almost entirely dispensed with. In its place a congregation seeking a pastor will often send a committee to listen to a pastor in his present parish, and to bring back their report for action. Or a committee may simply visit with a prospective pastor and sound him out.

The trouble with the trial sermon is that a pastor may not be at his best in the "trial" situation. How effectively can a man be judged by one sermon in a strange setting? At least in his own congregation, we may see him more as himself. We heard of one pastor who apparently used his favorite sermon—on the Valley of the Dry Bones, from Ezekiel—on occasions such as this. He probably felt that he was thereby putting his best foot forward.

It is a deflating experience for a pastor to offer himself in the trial sermon situation and then be rejected, particularly if he hasn't been fairly judged.

In a small church body such as ours where "everyone knows everyone else," it is strange that we have to rely so heavily on the trial sermon to secure pastors. Are there not other ways in which vacant parishes and pastors can get together? Certainly the congregations are free, but is that freedom only served in the trial sermon?

This writer went to his first parish without ever having seen it or having been seen and yet we experienced what we believe to have been five mutually happy years there. Perhaps if a study were made comparing such instances with those where the trial sermon preceded a call, the results would be interesting.

We invite the comments of our readers.

THANKSGIVING

How really thankful are we? There is so much about us for which to thank God. And yet our prayers of thanksgiving are few and scantily worded. Some people never bother to thank the Lord at all.

If it is only at Thanksgiving-time that one thinks of praising God, then that is really no thanksgiving at all. True thanksgiving must be manifested every day that one lives.

But it is good to have a Thanksgiving Day. Would to God that people, even just Association people, would flock to their churches that day to say a special word of thanks to the Lord. Or are we asking too much?

(Continued from page 4)

with such a courtesie, as makes them take a turne in the cooke room. They dance by the doore so well! Of these there hath been killed, that have weighed forty-eight pound apiece!"

Other Thanksgiving Days followed in other colonies. Massachusetts Bay Colony celebrated its first day of fasting and thanksgiving in 1630, upon the safe arrival of ships. In 1639 Connecticut observed its first Thanksgiving. It was not until 1680, however, that Thanksgiving for the autumn harvests assumed the dignity of an annual festival in Massachusetts Bay Colony.

The Dutch settlers of New Netherlands appointed a day for thanksgiving as early as 1644, and held the festival more or less irregularly thereafter.

During the Revolution the Continental Congress recommended that one or more than one day of thanksgiving should be set apart each year, except in 1777. In 1789 Washington decreed

November 26th as a national day of Thanksgiving. At the close of the War of 1812, Madison appointed a day of special thanksgiving. It was not until Lincoln's day, however, that the fourth Thursday of every November was regularly dedicated to the purpose of national thanksgiving.

The actual significance of the early American Thanksgiving days is best understood through some of the many delightful accounts of how the feast was observed by those who really enjoyed it.

In a letter written by Juliana Smith to her Cousin Betsey in the year 1779, we have a striking picture of Thanksgiving in New England during the Revolution. Juliana tells how it was her Uncle Simeon's turn to have the celebration at his house, "...but, of course," she adds, "we all helped them as they help us when it is our turn, and there is always enough for us all to do."

Since all the supplies possible were sent to the Army, Juliana finds pie

making a bit difficult.

"All the baking of pies and cakes was done at our house," she explains, "and we had the big oven heated and filled twice each day for three days before it was all done, and everything was good, though we did have to do without some things that ought to be used. Neither Love nor Money could buy Raisins, but our good red cherries dried without the pits, did almost well, and happily Uncle Simeon still had some spices in store."

The dinner party evidently was a great success. There were so many guests that two tables had to be set. Uncle and Aunt Simeon presiding over one and Juliana's father and mother at the other. Juliana's description of the menu is interesting:

"Of course we could have no Roast Beef. None of us have tasted Beef these three years back as it all must go to the Army...But Mayquitty-maw's Hunters were able to get us

(Continued on page 14)

WORSHIP AT PLYMOUTH



The Pilgrims hold a worship service during the early days in Plymouth, Mass.

RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE PHOTO

13. What three statements does the Psalmist make in verses 12 and 13 in acknowledging his sin and helplessness?

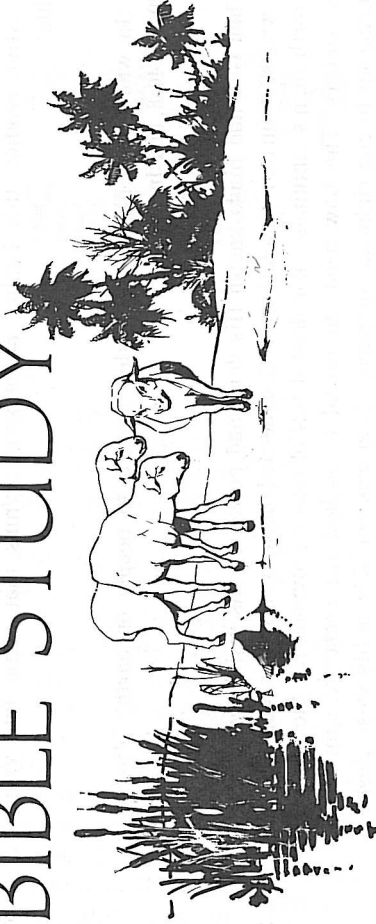
Errors may mean deviation from the truth; hidden faults—sins known only to God; presumptuous sins—relates to things which we presume to be right, but which are not so in God's sight.

14. How can we be certain that our words and meditations are acceptable to God? (Ps. 139:23-24; Mal. 2:6 and 3:16)

I am the clay upon the whirling wheel,
Beneath the fingers of the Potter, God.
And I, who might have been a bit of mud,
Am given shape and meaning by the feel
Of master hands that mold this destiny.
These are the fingers that have shaped and whirled
The constellations down the cosmic world,
Titanic, ancient work of mystery.
I should not shrink from hands so sure and strong,
Not even when I know the sudden knife
Of pain from unexpected wrench; my life
In such good hands could not be fashioned wrong.
I must remember in my agony
These same brave hands once built a Calvary.

—Lon Woodrum

WWMF BIBLE STUDY



Psalm 19

December, 1971

IN THE BEGINNING GOD

On Christmas Eve of 1968, as the crew of Apollo 8 viewed the earth from the orbit of the moon, they were so moved by the magnitude of God's creation that they quoted from Genesis 1:1-10, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The astronauts, as no one else, have a greater concept of

the vastness of the universe and the marvelous handiwork of God. Great as man's conquest of the moon appears to be, there was an even greater miracle that first Christmas when God's Son took on a body of flesh and came to this earth to live and to sacrifice His life on a cross for our redemption.

God's wonderful creation! Have you ever viewed the lofty snow-capped mountains and been awed by their majestic beauty? Have you ever held a tiny baby in your arms and been touched by the miracle of life from God? No wonder countless songs and volumes of literature have come from the inspiration of God's creation. Who could duplicate a beautiful rose, moist with dew, giving forth the fragrance of a rare perfume?

Nothing is more relaxing than to stand by the seashore and view the ships gliding along in the deep blue waters and to hear the breakers splash against the rock-bound coast. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." If the eyes of our hearts are open, then the rich and beautiful life of nature, saturated with sentiment and filled with eternity, will bring us face to face with the Creator. In this way He would like to encircle us with His divine presence and touch our souls and bodies with His majestic goodness.

Let us first memorize Psalm 19:14. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight. O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."

1. After reading this Psalm, name some hymns that come into your thoughts?

2. In what ways has God revealed himself to people on earth? (Rom. 1:18-20, Ps. 40:8, and Jn. 1:18)

When God had made known His deity and power by His visible creation, there was still further revelation of God needed because creation could not show forth man's sinfulness, nor does it tell of God's provision for the salvation of sinners. The Law needs to reveal to us how far short we come in measuring up to His righteous demands. Man was not able in his weak flesh to keep the Law; therefore, God sent His Son to die on the cross for our sins. By personally accepting Christ and permitting Him to create spiritual life within us, we can be reconciled to a holy God.

3. Why was not the revelation of God in creation sufficient for men to know Him? (Rom. 3:19 and Rom. 7:9)

Living Letters has a good translation of Rom. 7:9 and Rom. 8:3. "That is why I felt fine so long as I did not understand what the Law really demanded. But when I found out, then I realized that I had broken the law and was

a sinner, doomed to die."

"We aren't saved from sin's grasp by knowing the commandments of God, because we can't and don't keep them, but God put into effect a different plan to save us. He sent His own son, in a human body like ours except that ours are sinful—and destroyed sin's control over us by giving Himself as a sacrifice for our sins."

4. What does Gen. 1:31 tell us concerning God's finished work of creation?

5. Of what does the picture of the dawn, in which the sun comes forth radiant as a bridegroom and strong as an athlete, remind us? (verses 4 and 5 and Rom. 6:5)

6. The "sun" mentioned in verse 4 refers to whom? (Mal. 4:2)

7. What does the word "circuit" in verse 6 mean to you? (Is. 40:22)

It is interesting to note that in the days of Columbus the majority of people thought the earth was flat, yet all the time the Bible referred to the **circle** of the earth. Another proof of the divine inspiration of the Bible!

8. How do we account for God's universe running in such order and harmony? (Heb. 1:3)


9. How has God given His Law to us? (Rom. 2:15 and Ex. 20:1-17)

10. What is the purpose of the Law in God's plan of salvation? (Rom. 3:20, Gal. 3:24 and Ps. 119:105)

11. What does the Psalmist mean by "making wise the simple" in verse 7? (I Cor. 1:26 and 27)

12. How do you value the Word of God as compared to food for the body? (Matt. 4:4 and Job 23:12)

David desired the Word of God more than earthly treasure or sumptuous food. The Word of God is important because it warns us when we tend to go astray and also gives us the promises of God to sustain us on the way "home."



WOMEN for Christ

“WHOSO OFFERETH PRAISE
GLORIFIETH ME” PSALM 50:23

by Mrs. A. L. Hokonson
Osseo, Minnesota

All sorts of interesting, soul building Christian literature these days finds its way into our homes, churches and institutions of Christian learning—some simply as sample copies. One such issue which came into our home recently had an article called “exciting Discovery.” It was so challenging it was read and re-read, shared and discussed with friends, pondered and prayed-over. Putting it into practice is the real test of all Christian growth, isn't it? I trust that doing so will prove a great joy and blessing to you, as it has to me.

The writer of the article mentioned told of a testimony by a colonel who was chaplain for 10,000 officer and non-commissioned officer candidates. He shared a simple but marvelous testimony of how God taught him to obey the injunction found in I Thess. 5:18. “In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” Now those words, “In everything give thanks,” are really quite a challenge, aren't they? The chaplain sought to help a young soldier headed for Viet Nam whose wife threatened to commit suicide if her husband went overseas. The story of their victory by really obeying the command in that verse, and all the wonderful blessings that followed, was truly exciting and faith-building.

For me, too, that very week, as I attended the funeral of a dear friend of many years of Christian friendship,

I found it easier to thank God for her death and fruitful life for our Savior and Guide, and for her years with her precious family, friends and church fellowships, rather than dwelling on her having left this earth. Troubles, difficulties, trials, all seemed different when seen through the eyes of that one verse of God's Word. “In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” Perhaps you, too, are facing or living with some very trying circumstances which seemingly have not been altered by prayer alone. It could be that obeying this simple, but profound advice of the Apostle Paul could bring great blessing to your soul and life day by day and hour by hour. Yes, even moment by moment, in temptation's hour. May God grant it for Jesus' sake.

All of us no doubt rejoice and give thanks for all our Association boards, committees, missionaries, pastors, officers and leaders of our churches and congregations. But do we express it? We all benefit in our congregations by the labors and efforts of our dedicated Parish Education Board and its director. How often have we expressed it, or prayed for them—with thanksgiving? What a host of faithful Sunday School teachers, choir members, office workers, organists, pianists, typists, secretaries, treasurers, WMF members and committee members we do have who serve faithfully and diligently year after year. Truly the Lord has answered the prayers of His people as Lord of the Harvest in supplying our needs for laborers. It should be easy for us at this

Thanksgiving time to truly worship Him by offering our praises with thanksgiving, shouldn't it?

As women in our homes and neighborhoods, how could the verse, “In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” become more meaningful to us? Could we discuss and share our thoughts about this with our friends as we meet in our homes, our WMF meetings or rallies, SS teachers' meetings, in our telephone conversations, or over the coffee cup in each other's homes? With a **special** emphasis upon the “with thanksgiving.” Wouldn't it put refreshing reality and blessing into our family devotional times with children or guests if we did this more often? Whenever we women meet, or telephone one another week by week, isn't it refreshing to share Christ and His wonder-working power in our day, in our circumstances, in our church and family relationships? We go back to our daily routine tasks refreshed and renewed in spirit, don't we? How about our correspondence, too? “In everything give thanks.” It would make a good motto for 1972, Lord tarrying, wouldn't it?

God bless each one of you as you put it into practice. With thanksgiving.

“Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me” (Psalm 50:23).

Mrs. Arvid Hokonson
Minneapolis, Minn.

FARGO CHURCH HOSTED EASTERN NORTH DAKOTA WMF RALLY

The fall rally of the Eastern North Dakota District Women's Missionary Federation of the AFLC was held in St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Fargo, N. Dak., Melvin Walla, lay pastor, on Saturday, Oct. 9, 1971.

The theme of the rally was “A Living Branch Abides in Christ,” using the text from John 15:1-8. “Under His Wings” was used as the rally hymn. In the forenoon Mrs. Melvin Walla, national WMF president, led us in Bible study and a mission message in the afternoon was given by Mr. Yeddo Gottel of Brazil. Music

was provided by Mrs. Roland Young of Grand Forks and by the ladies from Abercrombie. Mrs. Orville Vigness, Grand Forks, district president, presided over the meeting.

The offering was given to the Praise Program and Church Extension. There were 106 persons registered.

—Mrs. Donald Jacobson,
Secretary

(Continued from page 6)

after leaving that pastorate.

Mrs. Dunheim said that many of the congregation's members live in Yonkers. She also said that the church now shares a pastor with the United Church of Van Nest, down Morris Park a short distance.

Bronx Lutheran Church was the mother church to Church of the Abiding Presence, of which I told you in the first article.

I regret not being able to follow my intention of telling about the Saturday night at Teen Challenge this time. But that will have to wait until the next issue.

(To be continued)

(Continued from page 10)

a fine red Deer, so that we had a good haunch of Venisson on each Table."

Besides "Vennison" there were chines of pork, roast turkey, goose and two "big Pigeon Pasties." In addition to other good vegetables, there was a new luxury "called Selery and you eat it without cooking." The Mince Pies were good, and so were the "Pumpkin Pies, Apple Tarts and big Indian Puddings" which "lacked for nothing save Appetite by the time we had got around to them."

At the close of her account, Juliana adds a touch of humor. She refers to Brother Jack, who could not reach home until late Wednesday night, due to heavy storms. Nevertheless, he "...rode with all due diligence considering the snow...He brought us as a present an orange for each of the Grandmothers...but Alas! they were frozen in his saddle bags. We soaked the frost out in cold water, but I guess they wasn't as good as they should have been!"

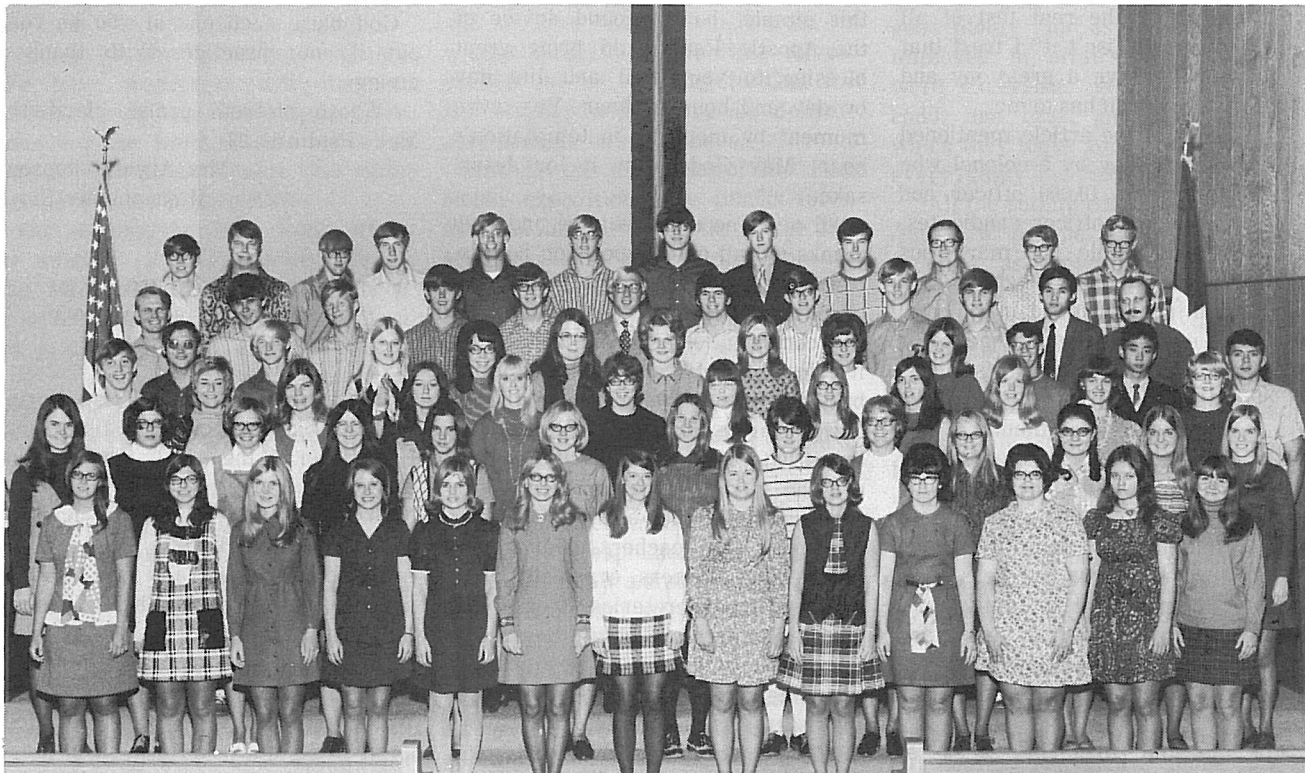
—The Lutheran Messenger

ANNIVERSARY OFFERING VOTED

The joint meeting of all boards, committees and officers of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations held in Minneapolis, Minn., on Sept. 28, voted that there be a special 10th Anniversary Offering in the AFLC next spring. Specifically, it shall be for the purpose of eliminating all debt in the church owed to outside agencies and gathering in the total of the Praise Program goal for 1972. The total sum hoped for in the offering will be at least \$57,900.

The desire was expressed that these offerings from local congregations and individuals be taken prior to the Annual Conference of 1972 in Minneapolis, Minn., in order that the church can gather at that time debt-free in regard to the obligations mentioned. Pentecost Sunday was suggested as a good Sunday for these offerings to be taken in the local churches.

The offerings must be above and beyond all other contributions to General Fund, Schools and Missions, if the purpose of a special offering is to be meaningful.



The Junior (first year) Class at Association Free Lutheran Bible School, 1971-72.

CHURCH-WORLD NEWS

MADAGASCAR MISSIONARIES PRAISED BY AMBASSADOR

Oslo—(LWF)—There is no question about missionaries still having a place in Madagascar.

This was the statement of Dr. Alfred Rajaonarivelo, the first Ambassador of the Republic of Madagascar to Norway, as he met the press after being received in audience by King Olav V.

The ambassador, who for more than 20 years worked as treasurer of the Malagasy Lutheran Church, used the audience as an occasion to express gratitude for the long service of Norwegian missionaries in Madagascar.

At his press conference he instructed reporters to "write in capital letters" that Christian mission in his country does not represent any form of imperialism.

LCMS' OLDEST BLACK CLERGYMAN DIES AT AGE 95

High Point, N.C.—The Rev. Frederick H. Foard, the oldest black clergyman in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, died here at the age of 95 on Oct. 13. Funeral services were held at St. Luke Lutheran Church here on Oct. 18.

A 1909 graduate of the old Immanuel Lutheran College at Greensboro, N.C., Pastor Foard served congregations in North Carolina for some 25 years before he was called to serve St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Meherin, Va. where he retired in 1960.

At the age of 92 he still taught the Bible class at St. Luke Lutheran Church here.

Survivors include a son, the Rev. Howard A. Foard, pastor of St. Peter Lutheran Church, Chicago.

NORWAY GOVERNMENT NAMES CHURCH-STATE COMMISSION

Oslo—(LWF)—An official commission has been named by the Norwegian Government to study church and state questions and to suggest alternative relationship models.

Members of the commission, which was created after considerable post-

ponement, represent a variety of positions, observers noted. Some critics have pointed out the lack of young people on the body, however.

Among churchmen named to the commission are Prof. Einar Molland of the University of Oslo, known for his support of the established system, and Bishop Per Juvkam of Bjorgvin, who recently has strongly urged change.

A seat also was granted to a Free Church representative, Baptist theologian and educator, Principal Jens Oen.

A private committee last year was named by the unofficial General Church Assembly to study church-state relationships. Creation of this group has been interpreted by some as an attempt to preserve the status quo, though unofficial spokesmen for the committee describe it as a source of information and critical analysis of the work of the parliamentary commission.

Coinciding with announcement of the parliamentary commission was publication of the findings of an opinion research survey which showed that as of June 1971, 66 per cent of the population was in favor of the present church-state system. A similar sampling for June 1970 showed 59 per cent in favor of the status quo.

The survey also indicated that more women than men and more older than younger people are in favor of the present system. Also, it was shown that as education and income levels rise, support of the present system diminishes.

Other recent developments include appointment of a special Committee on International Affairs by the Church of Norway Council on Foreign Relations.

The new committee, to function as an advisory body to the Council and the Bishops Conference, is headed by Mr. Jacob Aano, a member of the Norwegian Parliament who was a teacher in Tanzania for several years and has been on the Norwegian delegation to the United Nations and the

European Council.

POLISH BISHOP DISCUSSES PRESENT CHURCH SITUATION

Warsaw, Poland—(LWF)—The situation of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (Lutheran) in Poland was described here by its leader as that of "a lake with a quiet surface but many streams beneath."

Still, said Bishop Andrzej Wantula, the 80,000-member church is far from pessimistic—rather, it is defining its challenges and anticipating advances in relationships to the state and in the ecumenical sphere.

Among the most encouraging developments in the church, the bishop said, is the increasing amount of youth work by many congregations.

Specific questions facing the Lutheran body in Poland, its leader said, involve implications of the recent German-Polish agreement which has resulted in the emigration of many members and the return of various properties by the state.

In connection with the ongoing missionary task of the church, he said it is planned to call a special worker—possibly a non-theologian—to lead the effort among congregations.

BOOK REVIEWS FROM THE BIBLE BOOK NOOK

Damned Through the Church
by John Warwick Montgomery
Price \$2.95 cloth
Reviewed by Mrs. Roy Bredholt

When I saw the name of the author of this book I groaned a bit thinking that this was going to be a theological book that I would have to wade through. But I picked up the book just to glance at it and didn't put it down until I finished it an hour and a half later. It read quickly and smoothly.

When Dr. Montgomery originally presented the subject of this book he had entitled it **Going to Hell Through the Church**. He says that damnation and the church are not necessarily

opposite. Many in the church are damned because they are relying on the wrong things. He discusses Sacramentalism, Rationalism, Orthodoxy, Politicism in the church of ages past and in the church of the present. He also discusses Activism, Subjectivism and Togetherness in the church as substitutes for the one true function of the church—knowing Christ as Savior and proclaiming His love to others.

If I were rich enough I would like to present a copy of this book to every church member in this country. It points so clearly to Jesus and His Word, the Bible.

(This book may be purchased from

the Bible Book Nook, 809 McHugh Avenue South, Grafton, N. Dak. 58237. Please include something for postage and tax when you send in your order.)

NOTICE FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Congregations of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations are requested not to send letters of call to senior seminary students before February 1 of any school year. Senior seminarians are being instructed not to consider any call they receive before that time (Feb. 1).

Your cooperation is earnestly desired.

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