

August 9, 1977

The Lutheran Ambassador

Farming Settlement in Western Norway

Roger C. Huebner, D. D. S.



MEDITATION MOMENTS

GOD'S WORD IS NECESSARY

In I Peter 1:24, 25, we read about the fact that God's Word endures forever and that this Word must be proclaimed.

We in the Association speak much about the importance of the Word of God. We hear the Word often in our churches. What is it that makes the Word of God so necessary for today or, for that matter, any day?

1. The Word of God has, first of all, **cutting power**. In Hebrews 4:12, 13, we read that God's Word has cutting power, it is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing into the hearts of men. We will always need this.

Now this piercing can be both destructive or constructive in that God through His Word penetrates the innermost part of man to open his eyes to his sin, his need. It can also harden him if he rejects this probing and will not recognize his need, his sin.

God's Word must be allowed to cut into our innermost being and show us our continuing need for Jesus and His saving blood shed on the Cross.

I remember times in my life when God's Word especially cut into my innermost being, showing me sin that I must deal with, and as I look back on this they have been difficult yet blessed experiences.

This first act of God's Word is most important for without it none of us would see our need for God's mercy and Christ's blood.

2. The Word of God also has **cleansing power**. In John 15:3, we read, "Now you are clean on account of the word which I have spoken unto you."

It would not be very good if all the Word did was to show us our sin,

make us feel guilty and then leave us there.

Isaiah, in his invitation to the people in 55:1, likened the Word to water. Water cleanses; there is nothing like water for this. Nothing can compare with the blood of Christ. To be clean on the inside, to be able to live with oneself and with our God is a very precious experience.

3. The Word of God has **creating power**. James 1:21 says: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."

It is a miracle to see this verse in action because of the Word and its creating power. This happens when the Word has sufficiently done its cutting work and also when the cleansing of God's Word has been applied.

You begin to hate sin, you begin to want to do God's will, the Bible becomes important, Christian fellowship becomes necessary for your life, church is important. And as these things happen in your life you also find that changes take place in your life as far as values and priorities are concerned.

In II Cor. 5:17, we read: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." **This God's Word does.**

4. The Word of God has **continuing power**. We read in John 8:31, "If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed." We read in John 10:28, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them

out of my hand." This is good to know.

When God begins a good work in us, He is also able to perfect it.

I read a story about a train going west through a severe snowstorm. There was a woman aboard with a little baby in her arms who wanted to leave the train at a certain small station where they usually didn't stop. The brakeman came and announced that the town she desired was not far off. The woman said plaintively, "Don't forget me!" And he replied, "I won't, Madam." There was another man there, however, who declared, "Lady, I know as much as that brakeman; I'll tell you when to get off." A while later he exclaimed, "Here is your station, Madam." At his word, she trustingly stepped out into the storm. The train went on several more miles. Then the brakeman returned and asked, "Where is that woman?" Someone replied, "She got off." The brakeman exclaimed in horror, "Then she's gone to her death! We stopped the train there only because there was something wrong with the engine." Later on they found her out on the prairies covered with a shroud of ice and snow. Her baby, which she had folded to her breast, was also dead. It was a pitiful sight. She had sincerely followed the directions given her, **but they were wrong.**

We are living in a day when wrong directions are being given all the time. These wrong directions will not affect us if we **continue in God's Word.**

David C. Molstre

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THE MAKER OF MEN

“Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you” (John 15:3).

To the sinful woman by Samaria’s well, He speaks of worshipping God in spirit and in truth—and a whole village is stirred by her message.

To Zaccheus the despised publican of Jericho, He speaks of a love that breaks down every barrier—and from that day the exploiter of his people becomes a friend of man.

To the lepers whose life is but a hideous living death, He speaks of health and cleansing—and their flesh is made pure and radiant again like that of little children.

To the rich young ruler, He speaks of the joys of generosity of the great needs of the poor—and the young man goes away sorrowful, for he has seen a vision of what his life ought to be.

To the woman taken in adultery, He speaks of a new life in which she should sin no more—and we dare not believe that she ever went back to the pathways of shame and darkness.

To Peter, the impulsive and fickle, He speaks of building upon an unshaking rock—and gives to him the strength that at last does not flinch even in the face of cruel death.

To the sons of Zebedee, eager for their own honor, He speaks of drinking a cup of suffering and of being baptized with a baptism of blood—and neither death nor exile can alter their passionate devotion to their Lord.

To Martha, troubled with many cares, He speaks of the need of inner calm and prayerful peace—and she learns the wondrous secret of choosing the better part amid earth’s numberless distractions.

To Nicodemus, the learned ruler of his people, He speaks of being born from above and again as a little child—and he who had come at first by night is willing to endure the scorn of his earthly friends for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven.

To the lame and palsied He speaks of walking, to the blind of seeing, to the hungry multitudes in the wilderness of bread from heaven, to the impotent man at Bethesda of being whole after thirty-eight years of helplessness, to the demon-possessed of going home and proclaiming the wonderful works of God—and by His Word each wonder of which He speaks becomes living experience for the hearer.

Even to false and cowardly Pilate He dares to speak of the Kingdom of Truth—that he, too, may have an opportunity to know the peace of God which passeth the understanding of men.

Yea, from His very cross of shame He speaks to a dying thief concerning Paradise and victory—and the doors of Heaven swing open to receive another son returning from the far country.

And after His resurrection, on the Damascus road, to Saul the cruel persecutor, He speaks of world-wide fields of service and the fellowship of His suffering—and the Hater of Christ becomes the Prince of Christian Missionaries.

Still today He speaks to the souls of men, in every land and clime, of every people and nation—and they who hear His Word are transformed into messengers of the Cross and the Kingdom.

Soul of Mine, hast thou heard His voice?

—The Lutheran Messenger

GEORGE PRATT AND CHURCH FOLK

A small boy came through the back door of a West Side Chicago house, rattling marbles in his pocket. It was summer 1901. His mother was over by the stove, her Swedish blond hair screwed into a bun on the back of her head. Two thin hairs straggled over her forehead. Except for them, her hair was tight and flat against her head. Her mouth was a straight line at right angles to the center part in her hair.

"Five minutes past four. And you're just coming from school, George Pratt."

The boy stopped rattling the marbles and tried to slide around the icebox toward the back stairs. "Aw, Mom, I was just playing marbles."

His mother yanked at his arm. "Marbles with them heathen in your school."

"But, Mom," he whined. "I've got to play with somebody now that Willie's dead."

He hadn't thought about his brother for almost a week. But saying his name out loud raised goose pimples on his left arm, the arm his mother still held.

"Mom," George said, not trying to wrench loose, looking up at her. "Where is Willie? Why did God let him die? Did God love him?" The marbles were forgotten in his pocket.

The back door opened again. A reedy man in a dark suit and a dark tie stepped into the room with a scowl. "Did I hear you dare to ask a question about your dead brother?" he asked.

The boy felt his mother's grip slacken. He backed over to the icebox, felt its coolness against his neck. "I want to know where Willie went, Dad. I want to know why God let him—"

His father reached him in three strides of his long legs. George saw him raise his hand. The sting across the boy's mouth tasted like a bit of God's wrath. George tried to spit it out.

"Children as young as you are to be seen and not heard," his father said. "And are you chewing gum, young man?"

"Yes, sir," he said, then promptly swallowed the gum.

"Our son—chewing gum." His father turned the palms of his hands upward toward heaven.

The boy moved his head so he looked first at his mother, then at his father. He kept swallowing, as if the gum could not be downed.

"Not my son!" said his mother.

"But Mom, Dad, the other kids chew gum. Everybody does."

"No son of mine will disobey God by chewing gum as long as I have a good right arm to beat some sense into him," his father said.

"Chewing gum is a sin," his mother added.

Hard slaps bit into George's cheek. He rolled his head from side to side trying to dodge. But his father's hand cut squarely across his face. "You will obey God if I have to beat it into you with my fist. Spit out that wicked chewing gum."

"I swallowed it."

"This is a curse upon a household of God," his father roared. "Mother, bring me the razor strap."

Upstairs that night the boy rested his chin on his bedroom window sill and let the air, with its rainy dampness, cool the stinging in his cheeks. "Yelling and fussing and beating. God—huh," he said to himself.

Years passed. The boy's mother still flattened her hair against her head like a doll's wig, favored mostly greys and tans in her dress. Her mouth was no longer a straight line. Now it turned down at the corners. The father was still tall, reedy, and scowling.

But the boy was almost a man, about to graduate from high school and no longer trembling at his father's scoldings.

"Sure, I want to go," he said as he faced his father and mother in the parlor.

"To that school party with all those sons and daughters of Satan? I should say not." His father picked up a hymnbook from the table, beat on it with his fingertips.

George looked at his mother.

"Mom?"

"No."

"Mom, please."

"You heard your father."

The tapping on the hymnbook stopped. "Well, Lottie, how does it happen you're agreeing with me?"

"She always agrees with you against me," George flung himself down on the sofa.

"I'm just agreeing with God, the Father in Heaven. Not with you, Jim, or with you, George."

"I know it would bust you all up to agree with me once." George laughed shortly.

"And with me." His father laid the hymnbook down, evened its edge with the edge of the table as he talked. "And let me tell you this, Lottie Pratt. When you disagree with your husband on the question of that new lady preacher at the church, when you refuse to see my way on that—you are disagreeing with God Almighty."

"I'd be mortally afraid to talk that way." The father and mother glared across the room at each other with angry dignity. George stood up and started for the door.

"If this comes between us as man and wife, I will not change from what I know to be right."

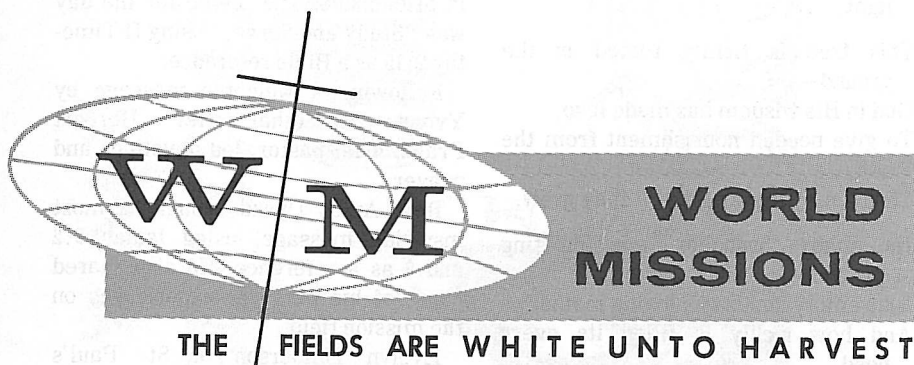
"And I will not change from what I know to be right."

At the front door, George turned. "And I don't care if you both drop dead. All this shouting and screaming about church. About God. God of love—phooey! I've never seen any of it here. And I am going to that party."

After high school, George Pratt was on his own. He found a job in Chicago and made his own friends. The good ones at high school, children of Satan? Then the fellows in the city that "got high," as they say, on Saturday night were no worse. Wrong to go to a party? No worse to drink. God? George heard the word only in the corner bar and grill. Mother and father? He wanted to run, to slam somebody, to hide, when he remembered.

Until the news came that his father was ill. When he got home, his mother met him. "Yes, he's ill," she said, cracking her knuckles rhythmically. "But George, your father and I— Well, when your father comes to his

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VISIT AND VISION IN THE TERRITORY OF RONDONIA

By Missionary John H. Abel
Part II—Conclusion

Our trip to Vila Rondonia took us on a ten-hour bus ride over some terrible roads. We stopped to pick up and let off passengers all along the route and this at times gave us an opportunity to visit with pioneer families. We found that most of them have malaria and many were quite sick and discouraged. Many families were from our state of Parana or the state of Sao Paulo. With the promise of new land and new opportunities, they had been lured into selling their usually small, but well developed, farms and heading for that territory. Many had now invested all their money in clearing land and trying to get started. There was no way to return, except by losing all, so they are hanging on, waiting for future crops, more clearings and better years.

We arrived late at night at Vila Rondonia, having battled some rain and muddy roads on the way. I remember at one point seeing the dirt road disappear under foaming, muddy water, and wondering, will we ever get through this swamp or is this where we are going to spend the night? The road proved to be solid under the water which rose in places to over the axles and we were able to get across and on our way. This

city had several hotels and, I believe, three hospitals. It is built along the sides of a large river.

Early the next morning George and I set out on foot to see a little of the city. We were surprised to see many houses built on stilts and the overflowing river making a good-sized lake, with houses along the edge of much of it. We heard later that there is very little malaria here, but we wondered that everyone didn't have it what with these swamp conditions. The new part of the city is much higher and we were to move over there the next day when we met Pastor and Mrs. Michelle of the Bible Presbyterian Mission, who invited us to stay on the grounds of the New Tribes Mission, where they are at present renting. While with them it was our joy to meet a few Christian Indians from the New Tribes work just an hour or so up the river. They are in a government reservation near that city as the government attempts to get the Indians to move on to special areas reserved for them in the opening up of that territory.

We found that the city, now numbering about 20,000, has several evangelical churches, but it is growing fast and destined to be the future capital, as I have said, so there are many yet to reach with the Gospel. The Presbyterian missionary in that area took us out to visit one of our former families which has now opened a small farm 30 miles out. It took us three

hours to get to their place and in 25 years connected with Brazil, I have never seen roads, or shall we say, Jeep trails, the likes of these. We almost buried the Jeep twice and got it out only with a nylon rope and winch action.

After finally arriving at Joaquin's farm (we had to walk the last mile, as the road was under water in places), we found a very pleasant clearing. They have opened about 60 acres and planted coffee, cocoa, bananas, rice, corn, beans, etc. We found this family in good health and, contrary to many, very happy about their prospects for the future. They still have a couple hundred acres they can open up, and now with their coffee trees starting to produce, they feel that their worst financial struggle is over. They hope for better roads soon and so encouraged us with their vision for the future of the area.

After a few days in Rondonia, we felt we must continue down the road to the last large town of the area, Vilhena. There we knew Vicente Costa Cruz and his family and our young missionary Lucia would be expecting us. Our trip took us 12 hours, again a battle against the elements of mud and water. Our bus was hung up three times and at one place we waited two hours in a long line while helping push trucks through a long stretch of mud holes. We saw several trucks along the way that had just plain tipped over as they rocked and swayed under the heavy loads through the ruts. Again we arrived in our town just at dusk, thankful that we didn't have to spend the night on the road somewhere. We were anxious to find our people, but at that hour of the night it would have been difficult so we took a hotel for the night.

The next morning we found Vicente and Amabilha's house and there we also found Lucia, but to our dismay, Vicente was out on the road with his truck and not expected home for a couple weeks. He makes his living now, while waiting for his coffee trees to grow, by trucking freight from city to city. We arranged for some evening house meetings and Lucia promised to get around to all the friends and neighborhood to announce

them. Our next three days in this town were a blessing. The house meetings filled up the big store-front they have on their home, perhaps 30 to 40 persons; it was hard to tell in the dim light of the kerosene lamps. One young truck driver was prayed with for salvation and in all we sensed that warmth and freedom and interest which is so prevalent in frontier towns.

Then it was time for us to make arrangements to fly out of that town and back into Cuiaba. Vilhena is only about 50 miles from the border, but the roads were suffering from the rains and like many of those towns, during the rainy season they may be cut off for weeks from the outside except by air. We appreciated that town in many ways. It was higher and drier, and cooler at night, than any of the towns of the territory. The local inhabitants like to call it the "Switzerland" of the territory, but I can't see where they get that as they don't have a mountain in sight. Yet, it is true that it has a higher elevation and therefore cooler evenings and drier weather.

On a Friday morning we were able to get a small taxi plane out and in a few hours we were back in what we call civilization. We didn't lose any time in Cuiaba for a bus was leaving for Parana a few hours after we arrived. It was an all-night bus ride again, but by noon the next day we were in Campo Mourao, thankful for a safe and blessed trip and happy to be back on a Saturday so we could fulfill our weekend obligations in the ministry here.

As decisions are being made concerning our possible work in that territory, I know you will pray with us about this. Here in the Parana field we also need more workers and much prayer. There have been several new couples who have come to the Lord in the work here during the last couple months. We rejoice in this; this is an encouragement to us; hold them up in prayer. Let us do our uttermost for His highest. Let us break forth with the Gospel on the right hand and on the left, strengthening our stakes and lengthening our cords. It is His will and it is very possible as we are obedient to our Lord.

A LIVING TREE

Outside my window there is a birch tree—

A beautiful tree with its bark of white,
With branches swaying in the gentle breeze

And leaves that glitter in the morning light.

This tree is firmly rooted in the ground—

God in His wisdom has made it so,
To give needed nourishment from the soil,
That it may live and that it may grow.

Its many branches are pointing upward

Like empty hands to a loving mother;
And how richly is filled its every need

With rain and sunshine from our Heavenly Father.

With branches constantly reaching outward—

Each twig has its place and each leaf a plan;

All are kept in touch with one another

Through God's gracious will, and His love to man.

Thus, we see in all of God's creation
The power and wisdom of His eternal Name.

Nothing can exist by itself alone—

Praise God, Who is now and forever the same.

Mrs. Laura Norum
Amery, Wis.

NOTES FROM THE PARISHES

The Dalton, Minn., parish held a picnic at Roosevelt Park in Fergus Falls, Minn., on Sunday, July 10, at 10:30 a.m. A potluck dinner was served at noon. Rev. Ragene Hodnefield is pastor of the parish.

The Mission Society of Spruce Lutheran Church, Roseau, Minn., still has some recipe books and napkins for sale. Spruce Church is served by Rev. Jerome Nikunen.

CLOQUET CHURCH HOSTED RALLY

The spring rally of the Lake Superior District Women's Missionary Federation was hosted by St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church, Cloquet, Minn., on Saturday, April 30, with 60 ladies in attendance. The theme for the day was "Study and Serve," using II Timothy 2:15 as a Bible reference.

Following a welcome message by Yvonne Rosenthal, Rev. Herbert Franz, local pastor, led devotions and prayer.

Rev. Amos Dyrud brought a most inspiring message, using Isaiah 9:2 and 6 as a reference. He also shared some of his personal experiences on the mission field.

Evelyn Emberson of St. Paul's sang a solo, "Take Time to be Holy," accompanied by her husband Reuben on the chordiana.

An offering was received for the AFLC Bible School and Seminary.

Student Pastor James Hoilamen led afternoon devotions and Mrs. Hoilamen favored us with a violin solo, "Living for Jesus." Other special numbers were a solo, "The Bond of Love," by Janice Stevens of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Virginia, Minn., a duet, "Each Step I Take," by Christine Hanson and Mrs. Quist of Faith Lutheran Church, Mason, Wis., a solo, "Something Worth Living For," by Doris Johanson and a reading entitled "God's Favorite Word—Come" by Rosamond Lee of Drummond Lutheran Church, Drummond, Wis.

Mrs. Eldora Koski of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church, Finlayson, Minn., gave a moving Bible study entitled "Your Spiritual Diet," using Ezra 7:9-10 as her key reference. Everyone became aware that in order to have a healthy, nutritional spiritual diet, we must study, practice and teach.

Many hymns were sung by the group, accompanied by Linda Moan on the piano and Mrs. Hoilamen on the violin.

The fall rally will be hosted by Moland Lutheran Church at Mason, Wis., on the last Saturday in September.

Verona Krohn, Secretary

senses and apologizes to me, I'll forgive him about the trouble over our lady preacher."

George stared down at the lettering on the hymnbook on the table. It seemed to leap and dance. "But Mom, he's going to die. The doctor says so. You don't mean to stand there and tell me that church split-up five years ago has turned you against Dad for good?"

"He knows the Word of God. He knows what he has to do. I'll be perfectly willing to forgive him after he admits to me that I've been right all these years and he's been wrong," his mother said.

More months went by. When word came that his father was dying, George Pratt fell into a cold shower to sober up, took the first train home. His mother stood in the hallway, unsmiling, watching George as he climbed the stairs to his father's room.

In the bedroom, on the floor by the bed, was a mound of blankets. George heard a groan. "Dad, Dad," he said. "What are you doing, lying on that floor?"

His father's voice was a jumble of moans and words. "Fell out of bed... early this morning. I can't get back." His mother stood in the doorway, her eyes angry and defiant. "Your mother, she won't help."

George bent down, lifted his father back into bed.

"Leave him alone... until he admits he's disobeyed God all these years, let him get back into bed the way he got out. Under his stubborn will."

Thus George Pratt's father died. And as George saw it, it was with God standing between him and his mother. After the funeral, George got drunk.

But he wasn't drunk when he met Golden Malone. Irish and beautiful with hair as black as a raven's wing, George would say, repeating some poetry he'd read somewhere and remembered. Golden Malone.

George and Golden talked a lot about their future. In short, eager sentences.

"You'll be the most wonderful cab driver in all of Chicago."

"I mean, we will live in Chicago."

"Just the two of us."

"I love you."

"I love you."

Golden came to visit where George's Mom lived. "Let that creature in the house? I should say not. For all her good looks, she doesn't eat the right things. She doesn't go to our church," his mother said.

Golden heard. George knew she would. But in all their short, eager talks, Golden, never critical, never mentioned his mother.

She just packed her suitcase and left. Left one night when she and George had a seven o'clock date. She never explained why. But George knew it was because of his mother. And she was too fine a girl, he reasoned, to force him to make a choice between them.

For six months, he wrote to Golden every day.

"Marry me."

"I'll go to Chicago."

"I love you."

Finally, "I'm coming to Indiana to get you."

The night he planned to leave, the telegram from the Indiana neighbors came. "Golden Malone died. Suicide. Come if possible."

George Pratt never got to Golden Malone's funeral. He went to Chicago and stayed there. He found a job driving a cab, and made a friend of a fellow named Bill. For six years, every day was like the one before. The days ahead all looked as if they were marching in the same dreary column. But George didn't care any more. He had Bill and their pals and a bottle whenever he wanted it.

George Pratt didn't fret about God any more. Except once in a while.

"I like you, Bill," he'd tell his pal. "You feel the way I do about God."

"Like I say, George, if there is a God, like they yack about in church, why is there so much suffering in the world. No self-respecting God would let little innocent children suffer," Bill said.

"Or let a guy find a girl like Golden and then let her take her own life."

"That's what I mean. He's a great God, a great God. Here, hold out your glass, George. It's half-empty."

In December, 1931, George Pratt drank through more days than he drove his cab. One morning, he woke

up and counted his change. Hangover or not, he had to work. He started toward the Loop in his cab. When he checked his meter, he found it was jammed. He circled back to a garage. The mechanic had a rush job ahead of it; two hours later, he fixed the meter for George. With the meter clicking, George hit the traffic again. The cab tilted, then bumped. A flat, no spare! Back in the same garage again; the same mechanic; he'd have to wait another two hours for service.

George slammed the cab door. "Fix it when you get around to it. I'm quitting for the day."

He walked downtown, secured a couple of dollars from another driver parked in front of the Palmer House, got warmed up in the nearest bar.

He was drunk enough to be mean when he shuffled down State Street. He turned his coat collar up.

"Hi, fella," someone said from a doorway.

"Huh?" George saw a clean-looking man. A sign over the door read, "Pacific Garden Mission."

"Come in and get warm," the man called.

"Who's cold? Leave me alone," George said. Then he stopped. "O.K., I will come in. And when I come back out, I'll tell you just how they're wrong there with that God business. I know."

George sat through the meeting. The Pacific Garden Mission God did not sound much like the God he'd heard so much about, the God that shook His fist in your face and shoved you around.

After the meeting, the man who had called out to him from the doorway was beside him.

"I don't believe in this love of God business," George said. "But I got to admit this God of love the preacher claimed he knew, and the God of a mother who blew sky high when I was a boy and chewed gum doesn't sound like the same God."

The man shook his head. "I don't know about your parents' religion, but some folks twist the Bible by their own stubborn disposition."

"But if He's such an all-loving God, why did the girl I love commit suicide?"

The man put his hand on George's shoulder. "Human suffering isn't

God's idea. Sin and suffering have separated man from God, but Jesus Christ came and on the cross stretched His own body over that space between man and God and bridged the gap. And because Christ died you, George, can walk through faith in Him right back into the arms of God.

"Your way of living isn't working now, is it?" he asked George.

"It sure isn't."

"Our way never does. Only His way works, Jesus Christ's way."

"O.K., I'll take a chance on what you said," George told him. "If it isn't true, well, what'll I lose? Uh, what'll I say to Him?"

George Pratt, maintenance man at the Northwest Armory, tells it that way. He runs his finger through his greying hair and grins. "Maybe we got chewing gum at our house today, but no bottles. Bibles and lots of letters from fellows I led to Christ after I entered the navy at forty-one years. (Some of them yielding to God later, when in base hospitals in New Caledonia and Auckland, New Zealand, because wounded Seaman First Class George Pratt came by their beds walking with Jesus.)

"By the way, I'd like you to meet my wife, Leona."

UNSHACKLED; Courtesy,
Pacific Garden Mission,
Chicago, Ill.

NO AMBASSADOR NEXT TIME

One issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* is omitted each year. Traditionally that is the second issue of August. Therefore, there will be no *Ambassador* for August 23.

The next issue will be dated September 6. Material for that issue should reach the Editor by August 20. Please remember his new address:

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The Best of Hallsby

THE GARDENER'S CLEANSING

"Every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:2).

The life of Jesus was full of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, meekness. And it is His will that the world should benefit by this through His disciples. They are the branches which receive the life of Jesus in order to live this life out in the world.

It is this which is to win the world.

Therefore the lives of the disciples are more important than their work.

The disciples of Jesus live only to bear fruit for Jesus. As much fruit as possible. And Jesus, who has been given all power in heaven and on earth, guides the history of our little lives and directs everything in our daily walk with the one end in view that we may bear as much fruit as possible.

That is what Jesus speaks of as cleansing or pruning the branches. The pruning is intended to make the branches as fruitful as possible.

If we reflected upon this a little, many of the things that happen to us in life would be easier to bear. Many of the deepest problems of our lives would be solved in a simple and edifying way.

At some time or other we all meet with adversity or sufferings so great that we cannot fathom or understand them at all. But if we can look upon these things as the gardener's wise and loving cleansing of the branches, we will be set free within, even though outwardly the adversity and the suffering still continue.

If a vine is not pruned, there will be no fruit, only foliage. And if the Lord did not prune us, we would first become spiritually barren, and thereafter die. We should thank the Lord that He does not hear all of our many prayers to be spared everything that is hard and heavy to bear.

We do not live in order to have a good time, but to bear fruit. Unto the glory of the Lord. If we will remember this, we will not be so surprised when the Gardener comes to us also with His pruning knife.

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editorials

EVERYTHING IS FINE?

It isn't unusual to see cartoons in which a bearded man is carrying a sign on which is written "Repent! The World is at an End!" or some such slogan. Such cartoons are not entirely serious commentaries on the part of those who draw or publish them. In fact, they may be more spoof than anything else.

Recently a Lutheran periodical carried a cartoon which turned the tables and showed a robed monkish-looking man carrying a sign which read "Everything is Fine." A man with a satchel has just walked by and seems to be wondering just what that means.

While many people may not believe, or at least want to believe, that the world is going to end soon, there can be very few who actually think that everything is fine, either. Rather, there is a universal feeling that problems abound and there isn't much hope of solving some of them.

Rev. Howard Kuhnle, in the previous issue ("Prescription for Tired Christians") recited some of the areas that trouble Christians. Then he correctly directed their atten-

tion to the comforting and strengthening words of Jesus, the Good Shepherd.

The recent AFLC Annual Conference in Fargo addressed itself to several trouble areas—homosexuality, pornography and abortion (on demand). While these evils have been around a long time, they have increased noticeably in the last two decades. Associated with them are the sins of adultery and fornication among heterosexual persons (encouraged by the use of the "pill") and prostitution.

The Conference resolutions call for some sort of official papers on these subjects to be made public, possibly through the *Ambassador* or in booklet form, perhaps both. Members of the church were also encouraged to write to legislators and those who sway public opinion to protest the presence and protection of immoral forces in society. For instance, if enough people protest the availability of lewd and pornographic literature in a community, it may be that it will be driven out. (And commend those who maintain relatively clean bookstands and newsstands.)

Everything is not fine in our world. There is a general feeling that we are heading toward judgment. The misuse of the Lord's Day as a day of business and pleasure and the breakdown of the structure of home and family are other signs of the sickness of society, and there are more.

While Christians await the return of the Lord Jesus and long for that day, it is necessary to work for the forces of good in this world and the defeat of unrighteousness. Therefore, do everything in your power to throw roadblocks in the pathway of what is evil and do all that you can to strengthen the hands of those who combat evil on whatever level of life.



WHAT THEN?

When all the great plants of our cities,
Have turned out their last finished work;
When our merchants have made the last bargain,
And dismissed the last tired clerk;
When our banks have raked in the last dollar,
And have paid out the last dividend;
When the Judge of the Earth says,
"Close for the Night!"
And asks for a balance—WHAT THEN?
When the choir has sung its last anthem,
And the preacher has said his last prayer;
When the people have heard their last sermon,

And the sound has died out on the air;
When the Bible lies closed on the pulpit,
And the pews are all empty of men;
When each one stands facing his record,
And the Great Book is opened—WHAT THEN?
When the actors have played their last drama,
And the mimic has made his last fun;
When the movies have flashed the last picture,
And the billboard displayed its last run;
When the crowds seeking pleasure have vanished,
And have gone into darkness again;

And the world that rejected its Saviour,
Is asked for a reason—WHAT THEN?
When the bugle's last call sinks in silence,
And the long marching columns stand still;
When the captain has giv'n his last order,
And they've captured the last fort and hill;
When the flag has been hauled from the masthead,
And the wounded afield have checked in;
When the Trumpet of Ages is sounded,
And we stand up before Him—WHAT THEN?

—Selected.

THE ONE WITH GREATER FAULT

by Pastor R. S. Persson,
Bemidji, Minn.

"Come, let us build us a city and a tower which will reach unto heaven" (Genesis 11:4).

Jesus spoke a most incriminating word to Pilate when he said, "You could have no power except it were given to you of God, therefore he that delivered me unto you hath the greater sin" (John 19:11). A sin greater than Pilate? Whence then the Apostle's Creed, "He suffered under Pontius Pilate"? Possibly the early Fathers in their formulating the Creed were desirous of establishing a time factor in the mentioning of Pilate and also to incorporate the Gentiles, the whole world being found guilty before God.

In considering the one with the greater guilt we consider the sin of God's chiefest representative on earth, namely Caiaphas. Such was one who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, a cold Sadducee, calculating and selfish. All of this in spite of his headdress being emblazoned with the blessed words "Holiness Unto The Lord."

A Glaring Question

The thought arises, how could such a one as Caiaphas come into the highest spiritual position on earth? We do not have to enquire too greatly inasmuch as we have the same problem today as such have ever existed since the day when men built the first tower to reach heaven. We have recognized and met such and indeed have suffered at their hands. The obvious fact is that it was within the church that there were the insidious destructive forces that railroaded Jesus to the cross. And it is the same today. From whence come the religious leaders who say "God is dead," "Jesus was a homosexual," that "Jesus was not born of a virgin," and a multitude of various heresies? They come from the seed of those who built a tower unto heaven to make a name for themselves. They are religious formalists, even as Caiaphas. There is nothing more fanatical, more hopelessly dead than cold religious formalism. It was Niemoller who said, "We leaders of the Church are perpetually in danger

of leading it astray by concentrating our efforts on establishing it in its power, whereas only the Church itself, in other words, the rank and file in the parishes, can ensure that the leaders themselves do not become Godless."

The Dilemma

Caiaphas and his followers had the problem that if Jesus were left alone all men would believe on Him and, secondly, the Romans would come and take away their place and their nation. Their position was being challenged, which struck at the very root of their pride. Thus when Jesus came with ignorant and unlearned fisherfolk, their priesthood was challenged. The tenet of the reformation, yea rather, of the Scriptures, of the priesthood of all believers strikes a crippling blow to those in exalted position who usurp for themselves the glory of God. Caiaphas was able to wield great power. Man innately loves power. Consider the awesome power wielded by men in subverting the glorious Gospel into a works righteousness, bringing souls into bondage, severing them from grace.

The Voice of Authority

Observe the arrogant spirit of Caiaphas as he says, "Ye know nothing at all." Such is the voice of one who has heaped up vast scholarly attainment. We have heard that voice in seminary halls. There are those who glory in their knowledge and derive considerable satisfaction in demonstration of great learning. May God keep us from becoming so intellectual that we cannot understand or comfort the feeble-minded. Someone has written, possibly Luther, "Faith and sinful life cannot endure each other's company. God's honor and our honor cannot be bedfellows. Therefore the desire for honor is always an immeasurably great vice, but it is never more dangerous than when it appears among preachers. For God has not given His Word that we should turn it into an honor, an industry, or business, and if a preacher seeks honor and riches it is impossible for him to preach or believe rightly." The threat of Jesus was to the existing tower of Babel. Such towers are con-

stantly being built. Today edifices are erected at fabulous costs. Man would build reaching into the heavens and even put a cross on top though the message proclaimed is anything but what God intended it to be. "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof" (Jeremiah 5:30-31)?

The one whom Jesus said had the greater sin ought to cause very Christian, and especially every Christian minister, to do some very serious thinking. When our delight in the Lord is diminished by fleshly concerns as regarding our status, what people think of us, our reputation and pride, we are well along the way to a religious formalism. From this preserve us dear Father in heaven. Amen.



"TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR CHURCH ETIQUETTE"

- I. Thou shalt not come to service late, nor for the Amen refuse to wait.
- II. Thy noisy tongue thou shalt restrain when speaks the organ its refrain.
- III. And when the hymns are sounded out, thou shalt join in, not look about.
- IV. The endmost seat thou shalt leave free, for more to share the pew with thee.
- V. Forget not thou the off'ring plate, nor let the usher stand and wait.
- VI. Thou shalt not make the pew a place to vainly decorate thy face.
- VII. Thou shalt give heed to worship well, and not in thine own business dwell.
- VIII. Thou shalt the Sabbath not misuse, nor come to church to take thy snooze.
- IX. 'Tis well in church thy friend to meet, but let thy ardor be discreet.
- X. Be friendly at the church's door, so shall the stranger love God more.

When God's peace fills and guards our hearts and lives, we are truly happy. Testings and trials come, but the Christian can experience peace and real joy in a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Memory Verses: Philippians 4:6-7

Closing Hymn: "When Peace Like a River," No. 213 in *The Concordia Hymnal*

WMF REMINDERS

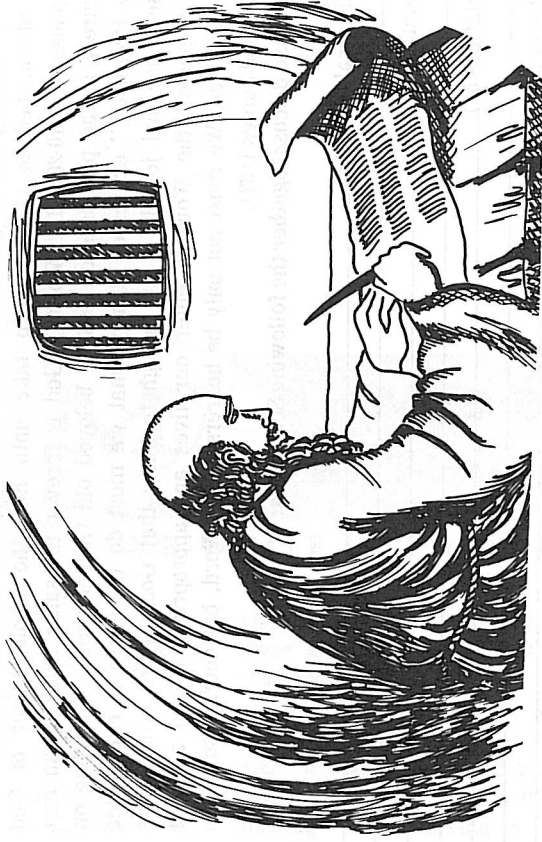
WMF REMINDERS

Dear Ladies of the WMF: Our project for September is Church Extension. This is a great need. As we expand our home base of congregations, we will reach more people for the Lord Jesus Christ here in the USA. Then we will gain more prayer warriors and sacrificial givers to expand our ministry on the foreign mission field. Will you give generously to this project, through which money is loaned to new congregations and those who expand their church facilities? As the loan is repaid, the money is reloaned. Let us enlarge our borders, as God commands us!

Mrs. Eugene Enderlein

W.M.F.

BIBLE STUDY



September, 1977

Lessons in Philippians

Philippians 4:1-7

Rejoice in the Lord

As we near the closing of this epistle, again we notice the tender, loving way in which Paul addresses the Philippians. He says: "My brethren, dearly beloved, and longed for, my joy and crown."

The heart of Paul is full of joy and peace. He is concerned that there be unity and peace among the Christians and he exhorts Euodias and Syntyche that they be of the same mind in the Lord. Jesus said, "Every city or house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matthew 12:25b). Christians should pray for one another and seek by God's grace to help one another to be at peace with one another. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus called the peacemakers "Blessed." Read also I Thessalonians 5:13 and Colossians 2:2.

1. In our Scripture we are admonished to do three things "in the Lord." What are they? Philippians 4:1 _____

Philippians 4:2 _____
Philippians 4:4 _____

2. "Stand fast in the Lord" (KJV). When we stand in an upright position, we are resting the weight of our body on the floor or ground. The Christian is admonished to stand and to take unto him the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-20). The Word of God is forever the same and we can rest securely in the promises of God. A beloved old Gospel hymn, "Standing on the Promises," expresses clearly what we must do if we are to experience true peace and joy. It is not enough to know that God's Word is true. We must permit the Word to enter our lives and appropriate it and apply it to ourselves. We must not only be hearers of the Word, but doers also (Luke 11:28 and James 1:22).

Read and discuss together the following Scriptures:

II Thessalonians 2:2 _____

Joshua 23:8 _____

Galatians 5:1 _____

II Peter 3:17 _____

3. What exhortations are found in these Scriptures to "be of the same mind in the Lord"? Colossians 2:2 _____

I Corinthians 1:10 _____

I Peter 3:8 _____

4. Examples of rejoicing in Scripture:

Habakkuk 3:17-18 _____

Acts 5:11 _____

Acts 16:23-25 _____

Hebrews 10:34 _____

I Peter 4:12-13 _____

5. How often are we admonished to "rejoice in the Lord"? (Philippians 4:4 and I Thessalonians 5:16) _____

Real joy is found only in the Lord Jesus Christ. Things of the world do not satisfy the longings of the human heart. Forgiveness of sin and a right relationship between God and man bring peace and joy

By nature we are full of care and anxiety. Many things we worry about never do happen. In prison, the Apostle Paul is praising and rejoicing in the Lord. He does not write about his trial and what may befall him in his imprisonment. His concern is that of a true shepherd of souls: that there may be no strife, disunity or disagreement among the Philippian Christians.

The word "nothing" may be divided into NO-THING. We are not to be anxious in any area of our life. What a privilege to unload all our cares, worries and petitions at the throne of grace. We are to do so with THANKS-GIVING and leave them there.

6. What are some areas of anxiety and what does Scripture say about it? Matthew 6:25-34 _____

In Hebrews 10:37, we read, "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (KJV). It is good for us to remember that the Lord's return is near at hand. How we need a spirit of forbearance and gentleness. Read also James 5:8-9.

7. We are to bring everything to the Lord in prayer with thanksgiving. Read and discuss together Daniel 6:4-23 and Luke 17:11-19.

8. Peace is a gift of God to His children. What do the following Scriptures tell us about peace. Psalm 29:11 _____

Psalms 119:165 _____

Isaiah 26:3 _____

John 14:27 _____

John 16:33 _____



Letter TO THE EDITOR

EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM APPROACH

I was recently buttonholed and persuaded to read some of Dennis James Kennedy's "Evangelism Explosion" literature. I was a bit skeptical of, though not foolish enough to openly question, its value. I am grateful for the opportunity to have read this literature.

Why should I have been skeptical before I investigated? I have been "taught" how to share the Gospel before, and it has only brought a burden of guilt upon me for my neglect. It hasn't helped. I have been witnessed to by people whose outlines have been so rigid that they couldn't hear me when I told them I was a Christian. I assumed this "new" program was like so many others I had previously encountered.

Dr. Kennedy's approach has a few things going for it that give it an edge over those others. He has considered some basic principles drawn from New Testament examples. It is the work of every believer to share his faith. Some people have particular gifts and callings to do this work, but God uses all His children at various times and in various ways to meet the spiritual needs of particular people. Just as a pastor must prepare himself to speak to his congregation, so we must prepare ourselves to speak when God calls upon us. No pastor relies on the Holy Spirit to give him a sermon at the last minute. He studies and learns in advance. We must learn to share the Gospel. In the New Testament, Paul taught Timothy by example and supervised experience. This is the "Evangelism Explosion" approach. It combines these elements, the security of personal guidance, a simple, yet thorough, outline

of grace, and firsthand experience, to make learning easy. You can employ the principles without losing your personality.

If you feel a need for more preparation in sharing what Christ has done for you, investigate "Evangelism Explosion." You may be pleasantly surprised.

Philip Rokke
Student Intern
Houghton, Mich.

NEWS ITEMS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

Bible School News

The AFLBS Choir left Minneapolis on July 24, for a 27-day concert tour of Norway. Hearts swelled with pride and happiness as the Charter Terminal crowd stood silently to hear the 32-voice choir sing just before boarding.

The Choir and their director, Mr. Don Rodvold, plan to return to the Twin Cities on August 20. The Homecoming Concert will be held at Medicine Lake Lutheran Church on August 21, at 7:30 p.m.

According to Rev. Kenneth Moland, Dean, the Bible School enrollment for the fall term currently is 42 seniors and 52 juniors. There is still time to register for the term beginning on September 11.

The Class of '72 celebrates its fifth year reunion at this year's Homecoming on October 7-9. All '72 Choir members will enjoy practicing and performing once again. All former students and graduates are encouraged to visit AFLBS for another outstanding Homecoming.

Seminary News

The annual summer short course offered by the AFLC Seminary began July 25. When the two-week course began, 12 students were registered to take courses in Worship, Hebrews, I and II Peter, and Means of Grace. Pastors Strand, Dyrud, Moland, and Monseth teach the accredited courses. More students were expected to attend the second half of the summer term.

The '77-'78 Seminary school year opens on September 6. Senior John Koski plans to complete his course work when first semester ends on December 21. There are 14 second- and third-year men. Currently there are six applications for first-year students. According to Rev. Amos Dyrud, Dean, additional Seminary faculty will be announced later.





RESENTMENTS

"I can never go back to that church again, Pastor. You don't know how badly some of those church members used me." The speaker of these words was lying in a hospital bed and was suffering from an illness that is often attributed to an emotional upset. He was a tense, defensive, grudge-carrying man who refused to forgive those who had wronged him. He was unaware of the fact that he was paying a high cost in attempting to get even with his "enemies."

A Japanese carpenter expressed to me his concern over not recovering his strength after having had tuberculosis. During our conversation I asked him about his family. He mentioned that his wife's parents lived next to them. Then he stated, "However, I hardly ever go there because of a disagreement." Carefully, I suggested, "Do you suppose that your resentment could be hurting your health?" Immediately he replied, "I know very well that it is the cause of my problem." Yet he apparently preferred to carry his problem rather than to be released from it.

Because Jesus knows the immeasurable harm resulting from hatred and resentment, therefore He deals much with this matter. A Christian doctor says, "When Jesus said, 'Forgive seventy-times seven,' He was thinking not only of our souls, but of saving our bodies from ulcerative colitis, toxic goiters, high blood pressure, and scores of other diseases. When you try to get even, you hurt yourself more than you hurt the other fellow."

If we have this problem of resentment we can solve it by confessing

it to Jesus and by forgiving our fellow men. Then Jesus' peace will heal both our spirit and our body.

—Einar Unseth

**KING OF GLORY!
KING OF HONOR!**

All our heartaches will be over,
All our burdens will be past,
As we behold the King in glory,
As we behold His face at last.

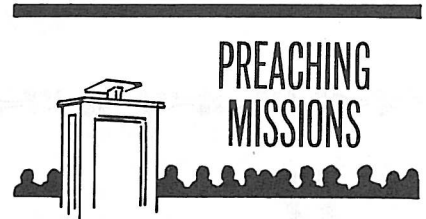
Chorus:

King of Glory! King of Honor!
King to praise and to adore!
King of Glory! King of Honor!
King to praise forever more!

What a precious, great reunion,
What a joyful, glorious day,
When we at last bask in His glory,
When we at last are there to stay.

Who but God could quell our heartaches?
Who but God could dry our tears?
Who but God gave all for our sakes?
Who but God could quell our fears?

Mrs. Kent Quanbeck
McVile, N. Dak.



Strandquist, Minn.
Hegland Lutheran Church
Merle Knutson, pastor
Sept. 20-25
Rev. Gerald F. Mundfrom, Nogales,
Ariz., speaker

PERSONALITIES

Rev. Larry V. Severson, who has served as pastor of Calvary Lutheran Church, Wallace, S. Dak., since the summer of 1972, has resigned that pastorate and accepted the call to serve Trinity Lutheran Church, Boscobel, Wis., and he is taking the work up there this month. The address of the Seversons will be 1203 Park Street, Boscobel, Wis., 53805. The telephone number is 608-375-4181.

ASSOCIATION OF FREE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS
3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

BUDGET RECEIPTS
February 1-July 31, 1977
(6 months)

Fund	Total Budget 1977-78	Current Budget	Received during July	Total Rec'd to date	% of Current	% of Total
General Fund	\$ 72,680.00	\$ 36,339.96	\$ 2,411.75	\$ 25,742.03	70.8	35.4
Schools	119,452.00	59,725.98	4,833.73	37,076.99	62.	31.
Home Missions	75,000.00	37,500.00	6,300.70	26,820.44	71.5	35.7
Foreign Missions	85,345.00	42,672.48	4,519.73	39,122.92	91.7	45.8
Praise Fund	30,000.00	15,000.00	3,443.91	10,555.41	70.3	35.2
TOTAL	\$382,477.00	\$191,238.42	\$21,509.82	\$139,317.79	72.8	36.4
1976-77	\$395,649.00	\$197,824.50	\$21,166.32	\$119,452.40	60.4	30.2

Legacies: \$21,597.46



CHURCH-WORLD NEWS



PILGRIMS MAP OF THE HOLY LAND AVAILABLE THROUGH ISRAEL GOVERNMENT TOURIST OFFICE

"The Pilgrims Map of the Holy Land"—a map of the Holy Land designed especially for those planning a tour of important Biblical sites in Israel—is available free from the Israel Government Tourist Office.

The map is a full-color depiction of the Holy Land as it appeared 2,000 years ago. Based upon Biblical accounts of the geography of the area, the map delineates the ancient boundaries of Judaea, Samaria, Phoenicia and Galilee. It lists over 80 important Biblical sites popular with tourists in Israel, such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, and the Mount of Beatitudes on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and provides a brief description of the significance of each site.

On the reverse side of the 11 x 23 inch map are full-color photos of major attractions such as the Via Dolorosa, Nazareth and the Western Wall. In addition to Jerusalem, the map

cites most major cities of the modern state of Israel such as Tel Aviv and Haifa.

"The Pilgrims Map of the Holy Land" is an important tool for tourists and a helpful aid to Bible students. It is available free upon request from the Israel Government Tourist Office, Dept. PR, 795 Peachtree St., NE., Atlanta, Ga. 30308.

LCMS DALLAS CONVENTION ENDS AFTER ACTION ON MAJOR ISSUES

DALLAS — Delegates to the 52nd Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, July 15-22, set the course for the 2.8 million-member church over the next two years, elected top officials and ruled on a number of sensitive measures dealing with relationships to other Lutherans and use of a proposed joint hymnal.

With 1,100 clergy and lay delegates from throughout North America, the biennial meeting at the Dallas Convention Center, under the theme "That We May Grow," was generally regarded as low-keyed and calm. This is in comparison to other recent LCMS conventions which have grappled with a doctrinal controversy over

interpretation and authority of the Bible that is now being resolved.

Though decisions covered all areas of the church's activity, resolutions on whether to endorse a proposed joint Lutheran hymnal and on the matter of the Synod's continued fellowship with the American Lutheran Church were key issues.

The delegates decided to study the hymnal, and to hold off with endorsement until the 1979 LCMS convention in St. Louis. Three other Lutheran churches involved in the hymnal project have tentatively approved it, but Missouri Synod theologians have pointed to a number of concerns with the book, slated for publication next year. The Synod is asking those other churches to postpone publication until the Synod's review of more of the book is completed.

On the ALC fellowship issue, the LCMS declared a "state of fellowship in protest" with that church, because of certain actions and doctrinal stances of the ALC that are contrary to Missouri Synod beliefs. Basically, these have to do with the ALC's allowing ordination of women, a practice not acceptable to Missouri, the ALC's more liberal stance on interpretation of Scripture, and that church's close association with other groups whose orthodoxy is questioned by the Missouri Synod.

The "fellowship in protest" decision means that though the sharing of clergy and Holy Communion can continue for LCMS and ALC parishes, the Synod will study its fellowship stance over the next two years before considering a further course of action in 1979. Fellowship between the two churches was established in 1969.

Direction on what to do about congregations and individuals with dual membership in both the Missouri Synod and the breakaway moderate Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches came early in the convention. Delegates recognized that dual

memberships are not proper, and that such congregations must make a decision on which of the two bodies to associate with, no later than thirty days before LCMS District conventions which begin next January. The AELC was formed by Missouri Synod dissidents last December and has almost 200 congregations, of which about 45 have also retained membership in the Synod.

Elections at Dallas filled many top LCMS posts. Dr. J. A. O. Preus of St. Louis, church president since 1969, was re-elected to his third four-year term on a second ballot, after missing election with the first ballot by only two votes. Returned as First Vice President was Dr. E. C. Weber, also of St. Louis. A total of 144 offices were filled for the Synod's 33 boards and commissions which administer the work of the national church body.

Delegates passed a measure that keeps the Synod participating in the Lutheran Council in the USA, a cooperative agency involving the major Lutheran groups in the country.

For the first time since 1964, the Missouri Synod decided to open a new mission field, as it prepared to start work in West Africa.

Celebrating a century of work with Black people, the Synod representatives established an administrative post for Black ministries and took measures to intensify the church's mission to Blacks. The convention also supported increased work among native Americans and Hispanics.

Other actions call for increased awareness of world hunger, stepped-up evangelism efforts among Jews and cults, affirmation of the church's strong stand against abortion, provisions for upgraded ministerial health plans, and better ministry to the handicapped.

The LCMS voted to start a new national organization for its youth and proposed budgets for church-wide ministries in 1978 and 1979 exceeding \$30 million each year.

As the convention closed July 22 at noon, four hours ahead of schedule, President Preus said it was his belief that "Dallas marks the beginning of a new era... a new mood... in the life of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod." "We stood as one when it

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came to our faith and mission," he stated.

Conventions of the LCMS, held every two years, serve as the chief legislative assembly of the church, which was formed 130 years ago.

MO. SYNOD ISSUES BROCHURE ON NEW CHURCH BODY, AELC

St. Louis—(LC)—A brochure titled "The AELC—Questions and Answers to Consider," is being offered to congregations and members of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to help clarify a number of concerns about the proposed Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.

Formation of the AELC by dissident members of the LCMS is scheduled in Chicago on Dec. 4-5. Five synods that will organize the new church body are holding their constituting conventions during November.

The publication on the AELC responds to six charges against the LCMS which appear as reasons for leaving the Synod in resource books prepared for congregations considering membership in the AELC.

It was issued "with the sincere hope that no congregation would decide to join the AELC and/or leave the Synod without first conducting a serious and rational study of all aspects of such possible action."

Other areas covered include projections as to the number of congregations that may join the AELC, differences between the doctrinal stance of the proposed church and that of the LCMS, AELC procedures for certifying and calling pastors, implications of belonging to both the Missouri Synod and the AELC, as well as of leav-

ing the Synod and how such actions will affect participation in the LCMS and its programs.

WOMEN'S ORDINATION DEBATED BY FINNISH LUTHERANS

Helsinki—(LC)—Four of eight diocesan meetings in the Lutheran Church of Finland have declared their support for the ordination of women, following a report from the church's Committee on the Ministry.

Discussion of women's ordination is continuing in both religious and secular circles. An advisory opinion is expected soon from the Bishops' Conference of the Lutheran Church of Finland and a final decision may be reached at the synod of the church next November.

The dioceses of Helsinki, Tampere, Mikkeli and Porvoo supported the ordination of women. The Turku, Oulu and Kuopio dioceses held that there is no theological basis for the ordination of women and the Laupua diocese suggested that the opinion of parish councils be sought before making a final decision.

The synod of the church is not bound by diocesan decisions.

Opinions expressed in the Finnish secular press have been almost all in favor of women's ordination, but the position of the church press has not yet become clear.

Chairman Harri Holkeri of the conservative National Coalition Party stated recently that "a negative attitude toward ordination of women is estranging society and its members from the church."