

January 11, 1977

The Lutheran Ambassador



CORN SHOCK IN WINTER

Roger C. Huebner, D. D. S.

MEDITATION MOMENTS

PRESSING TOWARD THE GOAL

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).

Our text tells us of two main thoughts—forgetting the past, and pressing forward toward the prize.

FORGETTING THE PAST—We cannot relive or remember what has gone. The past year has brought many difficulties. It has been a year of great struggle over unpleasant things. We must forget those things which the devil would use to destroy our peace in Christ.

There are some things, however, we do not want to forget. They are the many spiritual blessings we receive, causing us to grow in the grace of God. Some of these may fall under hardships through which means the Lord works. What we want to forget is the memory of circumstances and see the Lord working to bless us through them. We must forget all disappointments and discouragements. Above all, we must forget the sins which Satan would use for our harm in serving Christ.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE—We must do as the Apostle Paul tells

us, "press forward toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." We look ahead trusting our Lord to lead and guide, knowing not what will come to us. We can look with expectancy, knowing that we face the future with Christ.

The new year will present many opportunities to compromise our convictions. If we compromise, we will not be pressing toward the prize but may lose it completely. We, therefore, must seek to live by the power of God.

As we seek the power of God, we can live each day as He would have us to. Pressing toward the prize means living as if we would attain it even today. There was a popular song written, "One Day at a Time," that contains a message for us. This song expresses what should be our desire for each day of this new year. We know not of tomorrow but must seek the help of our Lord to do His desires each day.

Many people make resolutions for the year. May I suggest that each person make a resolution to dedicate his life to the Lord Jesus in a **fuller** way this year. May we each "submit ourselves to God," as in James 4:7. As we submit completely to Him, we can press forward in the new year and have power to resist the plans of Satan. May this be a more effective

service for God than the last one.

In speaking of service to Christ, we are reminded of the thought "Only one life, 'twill soon be past—only what's done for Christ will last." What is done for Christ this year is what will count for eternity, no matter how small the service.

May we pray that this will be the year in which friends and loved ones will come to know Christ as personal Savior. Our gift from God will then become real. The Christmas story tells, "Unto **you** is born . . . a Savior which is Christ the Lord." The peace of God's salvation can be received by personal faith in Him Who came to save us. God saves us not for what we are, but for what He can make of us.

In this new year, let us use every opportunity to live by His power and reach forth in service to our Lord.

I close with a New Year's poem my wife has written:

As once again an old year ends
We look to God above,
Who holds the future in His hands
And guides us with His love.

For with God's help and guidance
Through each and every day,
We need not fear, but trust Him,
And He, our strength, will stay.

M. J. Haara

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Letter to a Daughter Away at School

Margaret Johnston Hess

Dear Daughter,

Thanks for your long letter. It was good to get a "stream-of-consciousness" type of report—all the things that you would talk about if you were right here curled up on the foot of the bed. Your other letters were delightful and interesting, but I was wondering what was going on beneath the surface.

Please don't feel that we are upset by all those questions about the basis of your faith. I am sending you several books on apologetics recommended by a professor who would know just what you need.

Daddy says he's not dealing with apologetics right now and that he's not in the student atmosphere. In his ministry he's dealing with people who are facing matters of life and death, heartbreak and tragedy, practical problems of family living, and it's quite different. They aren't, for the most part, worrying about philosophies and theologies. They want something of practical use to them today, something to help them face and solve their problems, something that works. And that is what a practical, experiential Christianity does, as I know you have proved to your satisfaction.

Of course, in the environment in which you find yourself you are challenged to dig out the answers for the sake of those whom you meet and also to strengthen your own faith. It seems to me—am I not right?—that this is the first time all these questions about your faith have bothered you.

Do you remember how disgusted you used to get with your older brother when he would want to bat around such questions at the dinner table ad infinitum? He was always taking the opposite side of the question from us just to get our answers. Then he was

fortified to meet discussions on the outside.

As you know, his faith tended to be strengthened in an antagonistic environment and to waver in the environment of a Christian college. You, however, have always been the opposite in temperament; in a truly feminine way, you tend to yield to the atmosphere you are in. This yielding to an atmosphere can be both good and bad. It's good in that you are always able to gather the full value out of whatever situation you are in. You are able to concentrate on the good points and not worry about the bad. It is the quality of sensitivity that enables you to pick up the language, feelings, and ways of people of another culture and background. This quality will help you benefit to the full from your year in France.

But it's bad in that you will need to guard against having your spiritual life weakened by the unbelief around you. However well it is dressed up in scholarly and attractive form, it is still unbelief—a basic disinclination to yield the will to Christ. Becoming a Christian is primarily a matter of the will. There is either an honest desire to find out how to get into a vital, personal relation with God or else just an idle desire to argue and toss around scholarly terms, thereby further consolidating one's own refusal of Christ.

So by all means study all these questions to your own satisfaction. But don't let anybody who just wants to show how smart he can sound throw you off balance spiritually. If a person is truly seeking, help him. Give him all the answers to the limit that you have them. But don't ever for a moment think that, because you don't have an answer at your fingertips, there is no answer!

Plenty of thinking Christians have agonized through all these questions before you ever were here and have come through with their faith intact. During the first years of my Bible teaching, I was in about the same frame of mind you seem to be in now. I felt I had to know, that I had to work out in my own mind all the "whys." I felt I had no right to teach, that I could not stand before a class with any ring of conviction in my voice, if I hadn't beaten my way through every last question that occurred to me—and plenty of them did!

Finally, though, I became thoroughly satisfied, and my interest in apologetics shifted to the practical aspects of Christianity—the way it works in everyday life, the way prayers are answered, the beautiful, the poetic, the soul-satisfying aspects.

In my teaching I try to speak the language of those not committed to Christ and to bring in apologetics when necessary. Yet it really isn't argument that wins people to the Lord. It's just presenting the Scriptures and trying to make them come alive in as many different ways as possible, and then trusting the Holy Spirit to do the real work, not yourself.

But I know what you are after; you want to work through all these questions for yourself. And you should honestly face them. Then you will be ready to be a fine Bible teacher some day. I have wondered occasionally why you hadn't had to go through all this questioning before now. Just about everyone who is brought up in the Christian faith has to go through this shaking-down process sooner or later before his faith is absolutely his own and not just what he has gotten from his parents or from his environment.

So we'll see that you get the books as soon as we can get them for you. And in the meantime, be sure that you do everything you can be doing to keep your spiritual life strong and bright in a spiritually chilling environment. You haven't mentioned having any Christian fellowship at all in the few weeks you have been gone, or even attending any church services except one on ship and one in Tours.

You will have many Christian groups open to you when you get to Paris; with your knowledge of French you can no doubt have some spiritually thrilling experiences as you seek out these minority groups. It will give you the taste and flavor of what it is to be a Christian or a Protestant in an overwhelmingly pagan or Catholic society. Be sure to look up those Christians whose names we gave you.

I'm glad to hear you are keeping up your Bible reading. It's fine to read the Bible in French, but it might be that you would get more of a blessing out of reading it in English. Anyway, be sure you are getting spiritual nourishment for the day, not just more practice in French.

Another thing about trying to argue with these bright students. Don't forget that you're not the kind who finds it easy to win an argument of any kind, any more than I am. Smart as you are, you don't have that sharp, clipped, overwhelming manner of marshaling facts and arguments in a way that talks other people down.

Your brother Bob has more of that quality. He exults in argument and in his group in Heidelberg was able to take on all comers. Whether it was as intellectually dazzling a group as the one you find yourself in is a question, but still they had been exposed to the same ideas as your group. You are more likely to convince them by what you are and by what Christ means to you than by what you say in argument.

Well, send us another "stream-of-consciousness" letter when you feel like it. Of course, you're not homesick. You're a big girl now, all grown-up, or almost. Nothing can take away the wonderful years we have had with you. They are forever written into your conscious and sub-conscious mind. But I would feel that I had done

a poor and selfish job if you couldn't stand to be away from your parents at the age of twenty. I wouldn't like to think of you over there in the midst of that fine opportunity, all torn up with homesickness.

Of course you know we pray for you constantly.

With love,
Mother

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Christianity Today

MRS. ALF ELDEVIK

Mrs. Alf Eldevik, 69, of Fargo, N. Dak., died at her home Thursday, September 23, 1976.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, Sept. 28, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Fargo, with the Rev. Philip Haugen in charge. The final service was held at the Landstad Lutheran Church at Shevlin, Minn., that afternoon with Lay Pastor Walter Beaman officiating. Burial was in the Landstad Lutheran Cemetery.

Leona Stamner Eldevik was born August 26, 1907, in rural Watford City, N. Dak., to Olaf and Gertie Stamner. At the age of 12 she moved with the family to Fargo.

Her marriage to Alf Eldevik took place at Fargo June 19, 1930. Following their marriage they lived in rural Shevlin, moving to Fargo in 1961.

Survivors include her husband Alf and her mother, Mrs. Gertie Stamner. Also three sons and six daughters, Mrs. Merlin (Gloria) Walth, Tacoma, Wash.; Alton and Mrs. George (Eleanor) Schwertzer, both of Seattle, Wash.; Mrs. Vernon Nichols, Sacramento, Calif.; Mrs. Robert (Lorna) Turcott, Edmonds, Wash.; Mrs. Orville (Kathryn) Nyhus, Marion, Ia.; Robert, Ellensburg, Wash.; Curtis, Bagley, Minn.; Mrs. Lee (Dorothea) Erickson, Renton, Wash.

Also one sister, Mrs. Fredrick (Grace) Hagen, Pleasant Lake, N. Dak., and 18 grandchildren.

A TRIBUTE TO LEONA

She didn't always feel so well
As anyone of us could tell;
But always busy were her fingers
And with us that memory lingers.

These quilts that went to foreign lands
With love and care made by her
hands;

She would not sanction shoddy work
But always strove for a perfect mark.

So also was her Christian life.
She chose the best—Eternal Life.
Through her life Christ shone each
day;
He gave her strength along the way.

Then one fall day her hands were
stilled;

It was as her Savior willed.

He took her home with Him to be
And her in Glory we shall see.

She was my friend; I'll miss her so,
But with certainty I know
She now is where there is no pain,
And someday we'll meet her again.

by Mrs. Russell (Anna) Duncan



SOME WMF WORKSHOP DETAILS GIVEN

The annual Women's Missionary Federation Workshop will again this year be held in conjunction with the annual AFLC Winter Bible Conference. The Workshop will be conducted on Friday, February 18, at a place to be named in Willmar, Minn. It will begin at 4:30 p.m. and the Bible Conference session will close early enough so that no one will have to leave early, as has been the case in past years.

Missionary and Mrs. Connely J. Dyrud, home on furlough from Brazil, will be the Workshop speakers.

Letter TO THE EDITOR

GO ONLY TO SERVE THE LORD

I read with much interest the "open letter" from a "concerned reader" in the November 30th issue of the *Ambassador*. It did provoke some thinking on my part and, let me hasten to add, lest it slip my mind, I am personally thankful in two ways, first that the person had the courage to expose the concern felt and that secondly, the *Ambassador* felt the concern to publish it. I would like to add a few comments.

(a) I am sure it would be easily possible to line up 12 people, chosen at random, who have each read the letter, and 12 differing answers or reactions would be forthcoming. Seldom do two people react to a given acute situation alike. All humans have finite minds and we often see things as they affect each person. Only God is infinite and sees all. "Man's heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). God only knows our heart also.

(b) Something about the "open letter" led me to wonder if there might be a problem within the church, or the congregation, such as being "over-organized," or too social minded, or someone in an office being too autocratic. Any and all of these situations can in themselves destroy the attitude of people. When such things happen we lay people are expected to serve the church, not the Living Christ. Colossians 2:6-8 tells beautifully "as ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him. Rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." From personal experience I can testify that great sacrifices



BASKETBALL SCORES

St. Paul Bible College 78
Conquerors 56

St. Paul Bible College 75
Conquerors 69 (Overtime)

YMCA League Games
Conquerors 59

Calvary Lutheran 51
Conquerors 58

Cross of Glory Lutheran 42
Free Lutheran Seminary Team

Bethlehem Lutheran 53
FLS 23



Heidi Gruber, left, Everett, Washington, and Tad Spading, Kirkland, Washington, at the Fall Party at AFLBS.



Juli Benson, left, Kenyon, Minn., adjusts the stole on Mike McCarlson's gown before the Christmas concert on Dec. 12. Mike is from Webster, S. Dak.

must be made by individuals in order to build, maintain and increase a congregation. However, if undue and unwarranted advantages are being taken of people, and/or the emphasis is on personal satisfaction and success and NOT the Lord Jesus Christ, then woe be to those who inflict themselves, not Christ, on others!

(c) God created man; man fell into sin and out of fellowship with God. The wages of sin are terrible. The sin spread and expanded (leave it to Satan) until God had to be the righteous and Holy God that He is, and had to destroy the earth, sparing only faithful Noah and his family. From the beginning God has given each of us a will, however, so each person on earth must choose the way he will go, to heaven or to hell, between right and wrong, between God and Satan, yes, between accepting Christ and giving in to the flesh. God has no plan for accepting robots into His heaven. God does not even accept grandchildren; each resident in heaven must be a child of His. God graciously provides even the most illiterate from the darkest corner of the earth with a "built-in" sense of what is right and wrong. God provided us abundantly with the promise of the Messiah to come. When He did come God sacrificed Him on the tree, a propitiation for our sins, that we might know the fullness of God's grace and mercy, that we, too, might have eternal life. "All things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28). What a load is lifted off our hearts when we come to know that "He first loved us."

(d) When we examine our own unworthiness, when the Holy Spirit leads us and shows us what our pride (probably the root of most sin) does to us, when we heed the words the great reformer Martin Luther teaches us in the answer to the question "What does this mean?", concerning the Third Article of the Creed, and realize it is again God working through the Holy Spirit that gives us the reason and the strength to believe on Jesus Christ and come to Him, then we realize we must have a God who loves us beyond our ability to comprehend. Then we can rejoice in Him who indwells us. Only then do our burdens become light. Only then do our afflictions

and our weaknesses become as a tower of strength. Only when we repentantly come to Him in prayer and humble submission does the light begin to shine in and around us, visible to all. Then we see Christ and others see Christ in us, and all else is as nothing.

Never, never, attend a worship service, an organizational meeting, Ladies Aid meeting, cleaning or money-raising project, church dinner, evangelistic meeting, or any such, just to show your presence there. Go only to serve your Lord and Master, and do so only in love and gratitude for what He has done for you. Then you will be blest and will be a blessing to others, and the Lord will bless the act; it will not be an abomination to Him. Then you, like Luther, will be so very busy that you "must take at least four hours to pray today!" Then you can joyfully sing with the late Helen Lemmel, "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face.

And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His Glory and Grace." Then also you will not have to fight for time to witness to your mate, your children, your family, friends or others, for you will be a living witness to all around you, because you will be as described in I John 5:10a, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." Jesus said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

Be of good courage, God is with His children! PRAISE HIS HOLY NAME!

O Holy Spirit grant us grace,
that we our Lord and Saviour,
In faith and fervent love embrace
and trust and serve Him ever.
So that when death is drawing nigh
we to His arms may fly,
And find in them salvation.

C J. Jorgenson
Zumbrota, Minn.



GOING WEST IN '77
AFLC Luther League Federation Convention
July 12-17
OUR REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH,
KIRKLAND, WASHINGTON

NEWS of the Churches



UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH INSTALLS PASTOR

Installation services for Lay Pastor Burton Rygh were held at United Lutheran Church, Greenbush, Minn., on Sunday, Nov. 21, 1976, at 11 o'clock. Rev. John P. Strand, president of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, officiated at the installation and also brought the message to an overflowing church. The Sunday School sang and Rachel Kilen favored us with a piano solo.

At noon the congregation and their many guests partook of a delicious potluck dinner where the warm fellowship was enjoyed by all.

In the afternoon a Thanksgiving festival service was held with Pastor Rygh bringing the message. The Se-



Pictured at the installation service are, left to right, Rev. John P. Strand, Merton Kirkeide, Gerald Burkel, Gerald Dvergsten, Glenn Iverson, Lay Pastor Rygh, Ray Christianson, Don Melby and Joe Anderson. Not pictured are Gerald Berg, Otto Waage and Raymond Schaller, other Board members.

nior Choir sang "Count Your Many Blessings," a song which is very fitting for all of us as we have so much to be thankful for. The women's trio, consisting of Mrs. Charles Jenson, Mrs. Noral Sovde and Mrs. Rocky McFarlane, favored us with a number. The offering was designated for the General Fund of the Association.

We had further fellowship together over coffee and bars before going our homeward ways with thoughts of a wonderful day filling our minds.

—Corr.

ALTAR CLOTH WANTED

Olivet Lutheran Church, Spokane, Washington, could make use of a used altar cloth, if one is available. One in red, green or purple desirable. Should you have such an altar cloth to donate or sell, please contact Rev. Karl G. Berg, N. 11520 Lancelot Dr., Spokane, Wash. 99218.

NURSING HOME PROGRAM DEDICATED TO CENTENARIAN

The Junior Choir of United Lutheran Church, Greenbush, Minn., presented a Thanksgiving program at the Nursing Home in Greenbush on Wednesday, Nov. 24, 1976. They dedicated their program to Mrs. Nettie Lund, a member of their church, who celebrated her 100th birthday a few days later. They presented her with a corsage, gift and many birthday cards.



The choir members are shown here gathered around Mrs. Lund, along with their faithful director, Mrs. Gerald Berg.

—Corr.

ABERCROMBIE CHURCH HAD PARADE FLOAT

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (II Cor. 3:17) was the Scripture used as the theme of the float "The Liberty Bell," constructed by the Luther League of



Bethany Lutheran Church, rural Abercrombie, N. Dak., and entered in the Bicentennial parade at Abercrombie, September 11.

Rev. Dale Mellgren is pastor of Bethany Lutheran.

MINNESOTA CHURCHES TAKE IN NEW MEMBERS

The following were received into membership in Oiland Lutheran Church, Greenbush, Minn., on Sunday, Dec. 5: Alvin Sather, Marcella Sather, Ricky Sather, Tracy Sather, Aldyn Sather, Jon Martin Foss, Doyle Vatnsdal, Marcia Vatnsdal, Glenn Vatnsdal, Tresa Vatnsdal, Mrs. Layton Wahl, Mrs. Loren Melby, Mrs. Stanley Melby, Tamya Melby, Donald Thompson, Eleanore Thompson, Beth

Thompson, Lowell Thompson, Edwin Haaland, Dorothy Haaland, Randy Haaland and Stuart Nelson.

Received at Badger Creek Lutheran Church, Badger, Minn., was Mrs. Roy Carlson.

Both congregations are served by Lay Pastor Gustav Nordvall.



MIDWINTER CONFERENCE DETAILS ANNOUNCED BY LEM

The Rev. Francis Muttou of Toronto, Ontario, will be the evening speaker at the 41st annual Midwinter Conference of the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement (LEM), January 23-27, at Augustana Lutheran Church, Seventh Street and 11th Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota. He will speak evenings, Sunday through Thursday, at 7:45 o'clock.

Day sessions will begin Monday with 9:30 Prayer Hour, followed by a 10 o'clock Bible Hour led by the Rev. Theo. Maakestad of Cedar Falls, Iowa. Using the conference theme of "Faithful to the End," his studies will be based on Hebrews, chapters 10 to 12.

The 11 o'clock hour will be led by pastors involved in the work of mission: Alvin Berg and Ray Rosales of World Mission Prayer League on Monday and Tuesday, respectively; Lester Dahlen of St. Olaf Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, on Wednesday; and Carl Sunwall, director of Lutheran Braille Evangelism, on Thursday.

The afternoon hour, beginning at 1:30, will be led by the Rev. Victor Ernest, using the theme "The Christian Warfare and Victory," an antidote to the occult, demonology and spiritism involvement of our day.

Daily sessions will continue through Thursday, January 27.

The conference will be preceded by sessions for youth at Northrop Auditorium, University of Minnesota, Friday evening and all day Saturday, January 21 and 22.

The Best of Halesby

NOT EVEN A MERCIFUL GOD

"Lord, are they few that are saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able"
Luke 13:23-24.

Are they few that are saved?

This is, in truth, a pertinent question. Many in our day would answer at once: All. All are saved.

If any one dares to mention eternal perdition, they ask: Do you really believe that there is such a thing as eternal perdition? No educated person believes that any more. Would a good and merciful God do anything so brutal and senseless as to torture His opponents in all eternity?

I admit openly that no thought is as painful to me as the thought of eternal perdition. I am not able to think of it very long at a time.

But the time is past in my life when I permit my thoughts and my feelings to decide what is the truth. Jesus is my authority. I believe in Jesus Christ. Also when He speaks of eternal perdition.

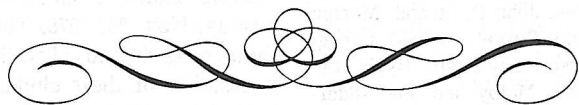
But people say that it is not compatible with God's mercy.

Pause a little, my bold friend, before you upbraid Jesus for not being merciful. When you have walked the way He trod in merciful love unto death itself, then you can begin to speak of mercy.

No one reaches the place of eternal suffering because God has ceased to be merciful. He does so because he has taken an attitude toward the mercy of God in which not even a merciful God can save him from eternal woe.

My friend, are you saved? Or are you also drifting along toward eternal perdition?

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editorials

SEVERAL NEW WRITERS

We are glad to present Rev. Marvin J. Haara as the new writer of Meditation Moments which appears on page 2 of every issue. He will write this feature for the first six months of 1977.

Pastor Haara is presently living in Sacred Heart, Minnesota. He has served AFLC parishes at Virginia and Brooten, Minnesota, and Pukwana, South Dakota, and is from L'Anse, Michigan.

We appreciate his willingness to write these devotional articles for us and ask God's blessings upon them, that they will minister to every reader.

Secondly, during 1977 we will be presenting one meditation in each issue from the pen of the late Dr. Ole Hallesby of Norway. They are from his well-known book *God's Word for Today*, a book which has blessed thousands of readers in the United States, Canada and Norway.

Of course, Dr. Hallesby is best known for what can truly be called his classic book on prayer, which is entitled *Prayer*. Now available in paperback, the book is enjoying a new popularity in the '70s.

We have taken the liberty to call this series "The Best of Hallesby." A subjective judgment is involved here, to be sure, but we have selected 25 of his meditations which, it seems to us, do speak to our hearts in a special way. We trust that you will agree. "The Best of Hallesby" will usually be found on page 8 of each *Ambassador* this year.

Finally, as another regular feature of the issues of 1977, you will find a brief article toward the end of each magazine, perhaps on page 14, under the general

heading "A Minister's Musings." Each is written by Rev. Einar Unseth of Ortle, South Dakota.

Actually, for the most part, if not entirely, they are articles which have appeared in newspapers in South Dakota. Thus, they were an effort by the pastor to bring God's message through the secular press. Now he shares them with us in *The Lutheran Ambassador*.

These last, "A Minister's Musings," replace the feature "Day by Day," which was written by Pastor Lars Stalsbrotten, and which were the musings of another minister. We thank Pastor Stalsbrotten for his good work of last year and trust that Pastor Unseth's articles will prove an equal blessing to our readers.

THE ASSOCIATION'S CHALLENGE

Last time we promised a look forward concerning our life and work together as a fellowship of free Lutheran congregations. Pointed out were the hopeful developments of an increased seminary enrollment and the securing of a director of home missions.

Not a great deal has been happening during the last several years in the Association as far as growth in the number of congregations affiliating in the fellowship is concerned. While the AFLC has never wanted to attach overly much importance to numbers, it is not a great exercise in common sense to ignore them either.

In the church there has been a widespread feeling that with more men and more money great efforts could be made. Almost all of us have believed that. Today we find ourselves in the place where God is answering our prayers and providing many new men for the ministry of the church. Twenty-four men have been studying in Free Lutheran Seminary during the first semester of this school year. One has now been graduated and ordained, having been called by the Board of Foreign Missions. He is Dean Casselton, who will serve in Brazil.

There is every reason to believe that there will be a steady stream of men entering the seminary in years to come. The Bible School will be one source of supply and is already that. But now the question comes, will there be places of work for these men under the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations?

Our unofficial look at the roster of AFLC parishes indicates that there are about four (three or four) self-supporting parishes vacant at the beginning of 1977. The spring graduating class could supply them all. Unless there is an unusually large number of retirements in the next several years it looks as though we could soon have a surplus of pastors. Unless—

Unless as an Association we are ready to enter a bold new program of home missions and foreign missions. And this is where the "more money" comes in, a great deal more money. We are getting the men; now we will need much greater contributions to do the work that lies before us.

Only the Boards of Home and Foreign Missions can tell us what it will cost to place new men in the field. The church will be waiting for them to tell us at the next annual conference what "master plans" they have, both for the utilization of manpower available and the

evangelizing of the world. Coupled with that will have to be a presentation of what funds they can reasonably expect to be forthcoming from congregations and other friends.

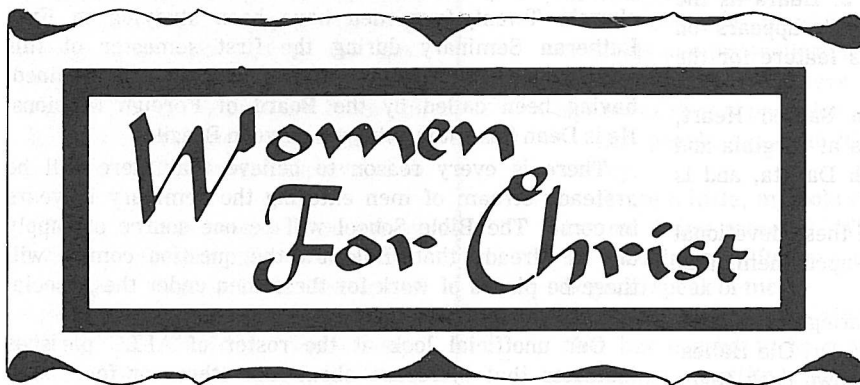
This great need for more funds to put our seminary graduates to work comes at a time when a) it is problematical that we will reach our budget for 1976-77, a much smaller one than those we will need beginning in 1978-79; and b) we have recently been reminded (our Dec. 28 issue) that the Association is currently paying about \$40,000 per year in interest on loans for the building of the two dormitories at Association Free Lutheran Bible School. In regard to the latter, in other words, there is still a large debt on what we have at AFLBS.

This is not being written to scare anybody. This is an attempt to be factual, to inform our people and friends about the challenge which is before us. We reiterate; it is a two-fold challenge: 1) to place the men the Lord is providing for Association ministry in situations here and abroad where there is a good chance of fruitful work; and 2) to provide the funds necessary to carry out this work and at the same time reduce and eventually obliterate existing debts at the Bible School. (A salient point: some of us at AFLBS can see the day coming when

there should be a classroom-library-administration building erected.)

Nearly ever major board in the AFLC must come to the next annual conference, the one in Fargo, North Dakota, in June, with well thought-out plans for the Association's future. We refer specifically to the Coordinating Committee, the Board of Foreign Missions, the Board of Home Missions, the Board of Trustees of the Schools and the Stewardship Board. These plans should have been arrived at jointly so that there is no jockeying for position among them at the conference itself. There are crucial decisions to be made now and they cannot be delayed.

The first regular annual conference of the Association was held in Fargo in 1963. It was an historic time for our still young church. Now, 14 years later, representatives of Association congregations assembled in Fargo must lay out a master plan for the decade ahead. The theme of the 1963 conference was about an open door, from Revelation 3:8. In 1977, it will be our lot as a fellowship of congregations, backed by other interested friends, to determine whether or not and, God willing, in what ways we shall meet the challenge of still open doors for work in evangelizing the world for Jesus Christ.



NEW YEAR 1977

The new year is here once again. This time of the year often brings mixed emotions. There is happiness for the good times we've had and shared. For some there is perhaps sadness, thinking of a loved one that isn't here to share the new year. There may even be feelings of relief, thinking we have another chance to change our lives.

Changing our own life is impossible. Oh, we may change our outward appearance, but the only way to really change our hearts and lives is by com-

pletely giving ourselves to the Lord. We can simply say, "Jesus, I'm Yours; You change me and mold me into a vessel fit for Your service." This change doesn't come overnight; we must be willing to work on it with the Lord.

Joshua's farewell speech to his people, in Joshua 23, has some very good applications for us today. He tells the people to be firm. Discipline plays a very important part in the Christian life and family. It is so easy to get up in the morning and just begin our daily tasks. Soon our day may become

boring or frustrating. What a difference it makes if we are disciplined to spend the first few minutes of the day with our Lord. The Lord gives us the energy and patience to deal with the tasks and problems that arise in the day.

We are also to cleave to the Lord and not to forsake Him. We must be constant and depend on the Lord. We must always stand our guard; we don't know when we may be hindering a soul from the Lord. What we do must be out of love for others and for the Lord. Never do acts of kindness out of slavish fear of the Lord. Often we are the only Bible non-Christians read.

Joshua assured the people that God will complete the work he had started among them in due time. It is great to know that even though we can't see the future or the end to some situation, God can. With Him as our heavenly Father we are in His hands. There is no greater place to be than in the hands of Jesus. We can rest from anxieties knowing that God has complete control of our lives.

Let's re-dedicate ourselves to the Lord in 1977 and let him change our lives.

**Mrs. Donald Balmer
Thief River Falls, Minn.**

THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER

18. Describe the reaction of the keeper of the prison when he awakened.
-
19. Praise God for the opportunity given to Paul and Silas! They were willing to be used of God right where they were. Read together verses 29-33 of Acts 16. In what way did the love of Christ shine forth from the jailer's life after he became a Christian?
-

CONCLUSION

We know that the church at Philippi brought JOY to the heart of the Apostle Paul. In Philippians 1:3, he writes: "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." Let us ask ourselves, "Can my pastor say this of our congregation? Can this be said of me?"

"If my people, which are called by my name, Shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (II Chronicles 7:14, KJV).

Sing together the hymn "I Lay My Sins on Jesus."

WMF REMINDERS

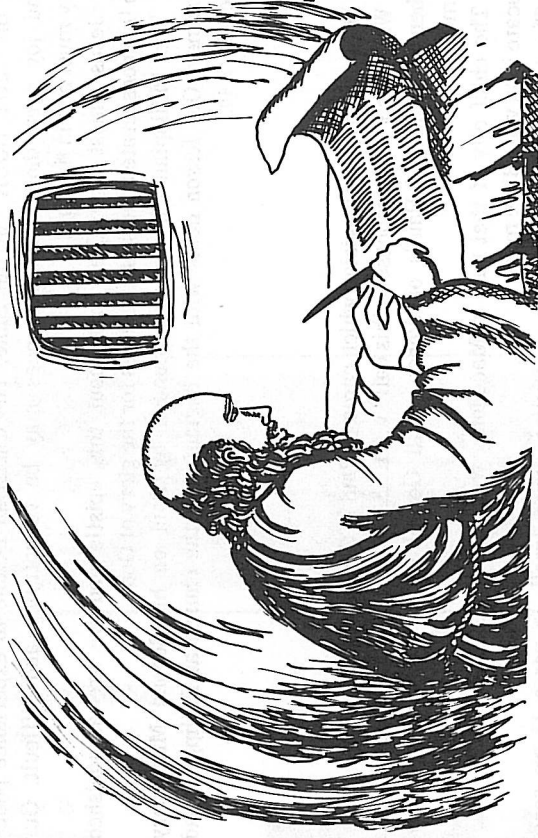
Church Extension was our project for January. Through this fund money is loaned to new congregations and those who need to expand their facilities. As the loan is repaid, the money is reallocated. We are still almost \$2000 short of our goal in this project. Please give this project your full support.

Our project for February is Praise Program. In this year when the emphasis is on debt reduction may we as a WMF do our part. This is so important.

Our Honorary Membership and In Memoriam project not only honors women of the church for their service but it also gives opportunities for memoriams to be sent in memory of members of congregations who have passed away. Will you help us reach our goal in this project?

Our Midwinter Bible Conference will be held February 16 to 19 at Zion Lutheran Church in Willmar, Minnesota. Our WMF Workshop will be Friday, February 18, at 4:30. Missionary and Mrs. Connelly Dyrud will be our guest speakers. We encourage you to attend.

W.M.F. BIBLE STUDY



LESSONS IN PHILIPPIANS

INTRODUCTION

As a preparation for our Bible Study, read and re-read the Epistle to the Philippians many times, preferably reading it all through at one time. May I suggest that you begin memorizing this little book of Philippians. The writer of these Bible studies memorized this book in her youth, and it has been such a blessing over and over again as the Holy Spirit has brought to memory what had been memorized at just the right time when it was needed. Conviction, admonition, encouragement, comfort and strength are all found in God's Word.

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105, KJV).

February, 1977

"Thy Word is true from the beginning: and every one of Thy righteous judgments endureth forever" (Psalm 119:160, KJV).

It is believed that the book of Philipians was written when Paul was a prisoner in Rome. It is interesting to notice how the words joy, rejoice and rejoicing are often used in this epistle. To me the book of Philipians is the "JOY BOOK" of the Bible. The Christian is able to experience peace and joy even though circumstances may be very trying and difficult. Our joy must be "in the Lord."

Jesus Christ is exalted throughout this epistle and we are admonished to live consecrated and spiritual lives for the glory of God.

The Philipian Church was founded by Paul on his Second Missionary Journey. Our lesson deals with the beginning of the church at Philippi. Read Acts 16:9-40.

1. Discuss together the vision which came to Paul in the night, v. 9
2. What was Paul's response to this call? v. 10 _____
When we think of Paul's obedience, what Gospel hymn or hymns are you reminded of?
3. The chief city of that part of Macedonia was called _____
Locate it on your Bible map.
4. The beginnings of the work at Philippi were small. In verse 13 we read that a few women met with them by the river side on the Sabbath.
What promises has Jesus given us in Matthew 18:20 and Matthew 28:20?

5. What has God promised to do if we are faithful in sowing the Seed?
I Corinthians 3:6-7 _____

Let us consider together how the Lord blessed the work at Philippi.

LYDIA'S CONVERSION

6. List four things we learn about Lydia in verse 14:
a. _____ b. _____
c. _____ d. _____
7. What response did Lydia have to the Gospel message? _____

8. How did Lydia show her love for the servants of the Lord? (v. 15, 40)

9. What does the Bible teach us about hospitality:

- Hebrews 13:2 _____ I Peter 4:9 _____
Titus 1:8 _____ I Tim. 5:10 _____
Romans 12:13 _____ I Tim. 3:2 _____

Discussion: What seems to be happening to Christian hospitality today?

THE SLAVE GIRL FREED FROM AN EVIL SPIRIT

10. What is meant by soothing (KJV)? _____
11. What is forbidden in the Second Commandment? _____
We need to impress upon ourselves, one another and our children the dangers about us in our world regarding witchcraft and demonism. THIS IS SIN.
God must be FIRST in our heart and life and His name is HOLY.

12. How was this damsel freed from an evil spirit? _____

13. What happened to Paul and Silas and why?

14. How do we know that Paul and Silas experienced God's all-sufficient grace while they were in prison? _____

15. Is praise pleasing to the Lord?—What does Psalm 50:23 tell us?

16. What miraculous thing happened? _____
56:3)? _____

This was an act of God and manifested His glory.

17. When we are afraid and fearful, what does God want us to do (Psalm 56:3)? _____

**Recommended Motel Accommodations for Winter
Bible Conference, February 16-19
Willmar, Minnesota 56201**

Motel	Approximate Rates
Western Motel	Single \$14.00-16.00
North Highway 71 612-235-3424	Double \$16.50-20.00 2 beds—2 people \$18.50-20.00 2 beds—3 people \$22.50 2 beds—4 people \$24.00 3 beds—6 people \$30.00
\$10.00 deposit required, 10% discount for more than 1 night. Permitted to make morning coffee, but there is a breakfast room at motel.	
Holiday Inn East Highway 12 612-235-6060	Single \$19.00 Double \$24.50 Children under 18, free May make morning coffee
Tri-Court Motel East Highway 12 612-235-9980	Single \$10.00—2 people \$13.00 Double (2 beds) \$16.00 2 Adults—2 Children \$16.00 NO COFFEE MAKING
Hi-Way 12 Motel East Highway 12 612-235-4500	Single \$9.50 more than 1 night \$9.00 Double \$12.50 more than 1 night \$12.00 Under 12, no charge They have 2 rooms that sleep 5 each at the cost of \$18.00. May make morning coffee.
Holiday Motel 1102 South 1st Street Highways 23 and 71 612-235-4444	Single \$11.00 Double \$13.00 Double (2 people) \$16.50 Double (2 couples) \$18.50 May make morning coffee—deposit required.
Edge-O'Town Motel South Highway 71 612-235-2500	Single \$10.00—2 people \$13.00 Double—2 people \$16.00 Double—3 people \$17.00 Double—4 people \$18.00 Large sleeps 6 \$24.00 Coffee makers in rooms or use your own. \$1.00 reduction for more than 1 night.

All the above motels are in the city limits of Willmar. They also would prefer if when making reservations that you specify AFLC Bible Conference.

Some rooms in private homes are available, too. Housing committee chairwoman for the conferences is Mrs. Martin Konsterlie, Route 1, Willmar, Minn. Please notice the change from the first announcement.

TV PROGRAM HAS BEEN POPULAR

ST. LOUIS, Mo.—When "This Is The Life" first went on the air in September, 1952, no one suspected that it would become the most widely broadcast public service television

program in the world and the longest running nationally syndicated drama in American television history.

Now in its 25th season, "This Is The Life," produced by the International Lutheran Laymen's League's Lutheran Television department, is

broadcast by about 400 stations in the United States and episodes have been translated into Spanish and Portuguese for both domestic and foreign use.

"It's certainly possible to see the hand of God in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's decision to allocate \$750,000 for a television ministry in 1951," commented Dr. Martin J. Neeb, Jr., manager of Lutheran Television. "The synod knew that television's birth was perhaps the most significant event of the century."

CHURCH EXTENSION

The Home Mission Board often receives requests from groups to affiliate with the AFLC. Many times such groups do not have a meeting place and are of such size that they need financial help in securing or building a place of worship. All monies used by the Home Mission Board in helping a congregation in the purchase of property or in building is taken from the Church Extension Fund and loaned to the congregation. Of course, these monies must be repaid with interest, and then can be used again to help in another new work.

As the AFLC grows and more new congregations are being established, the Church Extension Fund also needs to grow, and it may grow in two ways. First of all, by cash donations which are always welcome, and secondly, by loans from individuals to the Church Extension Fund.

Perhaps there are some of our readers who have money which could be loaned to the Church Extension Fund. Such loans would draw 7% interest for the lender, and at the same time could be used in the establishing of free and living congregations.

For further information concerning such gifts or loans, contact the President of the AFLC, Rev. John Strand or the Home Mission Director, Rev. Elden Nelson.

—Board of Home Missions

**BATTLE LAKE CAMP SCENE
OF DISTRICT RETREAT**

[Continued from page 16]



SWEET TO THE TASTE

"I never knew real joy until I started studying the Bible." Last week a lady expressed to me in this way what Bible study has done for her. A Japanese lady who was blind from birth, told me, "When I used to go to school I became so tired of our studies; but I never get tired of listening to the Bible." Not long ago a man said to me, "I now have a hunger for the Bible." Each of these people has experienced that the Bible is the wonderful book in which God reveals Himself to us.

In all of life's problems the Bible will help us. One time, while sick in Japan, I went to a Japanese doctor. The medicine that he gave me was in powder form, but was so exceedingly bitter that I could hardly swallow it. The idea came to me to try mixing it with honey. Having done this I was easily able to swallow it, for the sweet honey overcame the medicine's bitterness.

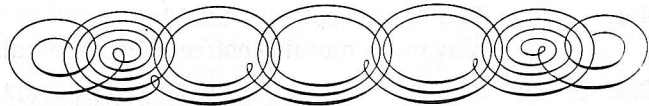
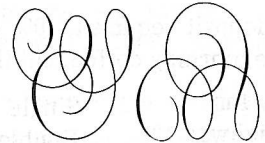
The Psalmist wrote concerning the Bible, "How sweet are Thy words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth." Yes, the Bible has a sweetness like honey that can sweeten the bitter experiences of life and make them bearable. The Bible supplies peace and joy and strength to man. Above all, the Bible shows us how we can have forgiveness and salvation through Jesus Christ. However, as the honey has to be received into our mouth to benefit us, so also the Bible has to be received into our minds and hearts in order to help us. If you lack joy and purpose in life, why not turn to your Bible and receive the help you need?

—Einar Unseth

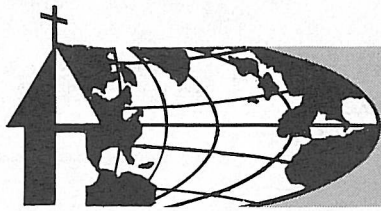
The Southwest Central Minnesota District Luther League held their Retreat, November 12-14, 1976, at Faith Haven Lodge near Battle Lake, Minn. The theme was "The Second Coming of Christ." The program dealt with the signs that are drawing closer around us. We divided up into groups and discussed the various floods, earthquakes and false prophets which reveal that time on earth is getting short. Then we would share and put to Scripture what we learned. The movie "The Sound of the Trumpet" was shown. Pastor Francis Monseth, Minneapolis, Minn., was the evening speaker and helped show us how to be ready for Christ's return. It was a very blessed camp and gave the youth an urge to win lost souls to Christ before He comes. Christ alone can give us Life.

Pam Johnson
Secretary

hearings will be held with officers of boards and commissions this month at which time a potential staff development program will also be discussed.



ASSOCIATION OF FREE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS 3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441							
BUDGET RECEIPTS							
February 1-December 31, 1976 (11 months)							
	Total Budget	Current Budget	Rec'd during December	Total Rec'd to Dec. 31	% of Current	% of Total	Needed to meet Total Budget
General Fund	\$ 82,600.00	\$ 75,716.63	\$13,316.16	\$ 54,119.07	71.4	65.5	\$ 28,480.93
Schools	128,249.00	117,561.51	16,940.30	77,587.96	66.	60.5	50,661.04
Home Missions	78,875.00	71,812.25	8,363.19	50,580.64	70.4	64.	28,294.30
Foreign Missions	82,800.00	75,900.00	10,416.32	64,827.00	85.4	78.2	17,973.00
Praise Fund	30,000.00	27,500.00	3,868.03	25,044.61	91.	83.4	4,955.39
TOTAL	\$402,524.00	\$368,490.39	\$52,904.00	\$272,159.28	73.8	67.6	\$130,364.66
1975-76	\$304,090.00	\$278,749.02	\$45,087.79	\$237,988.62	85.3	78.2	\$ 66,101.38
1974-75	\$264,200.00	\$242,183.37	\$47,954.91	\$212,467.90	80.		\$ 51,732.10



CHURCH-WORLD NEWS

LCMS REPRESENTATIVES DISAPPOINTED ABOUT DEC. 16 MEETING WITH ALC

Minneapolis—Representatives of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod indicated disappointment at the results of an all-day meeting of the American Lutheran Church—Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Commission on Fellowship held here Dec. 16.

The meeting had been requested by LCMS President J. A. O. Preus in order to provide the opportunity for ALC commissioners to substantiate charges made by ALC President David Preus in an April 5, 1976, letter to The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. In that letter he charged that the Synod's adoption of "A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles" had the effect of "narrowing down the Confessions of the Lutheran Church" in a way that is "neither evangelical nor Lutheran" and that the punitive use of that document has been "divisive and destructive—tearing down instead of building up fellowship." The two church bodies have had altar and pulpit fellowship since 1969.

In a September 23 letter to the American Lutheran Church, the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations had stated that it was "deeply distressed" at these charges and had requested a formal reply to the concerns raised by the charges of the ALC president. The CTCR, in addition to requesting the ALC to substantiate its president's charges, had also specifically asked whether or not the ALC could continue in fellowship with a church body which it believed to be neither evangelical nor Lutheran in its official stand.

The LCMS commissioners felt that the ALC representatives failed to give adequate response to the concerns raised by the CTCR. However, they expressed the hope that a more satisfactory response to its questions

would be forthcoming in the future.

During the meeting the LCMS representatives asked the ALC commissioners the questions contained in the CTCR's Sept. 23 letter, including substantiation of the charge that the Synod's adoption of "A Statement" had the effect of narrowing down the Confessions.

"While the ALC commissioners did assure us that they had no intention of breaking fellowship with us, their informal responses in substantiation of the ALC president's charges against the Missouri Synod were extremely disappointing," stated President J.A.O. Preus. "However, they have promised to prepare a more substantive response to our questions at a meeting of the commissioners scheduled for Feb. 11 in St. Louis." Dr. Preus concluded that the LCMS commissioners "categorically reject the serious charges made by the president of the American Lutheran Church, and we believe that they should be substantiated or retracted. I still pray that we can work out our difficulties together."

Dr. Karl Barth, another LCMS commissioner and chairman of the CTCR, voiced similar disappointment. "Many in the LCMS are very distressed that the president of the American Lutheran Church should publicly side with Missouri Synod dissidents in stating that 'differences that exist within the LCMS are not destructive of a confessional unity among Lutherans.' This is particularly puzzling with respect to the matter of inerrancy, since their constitution states that 'the American Lutheran Church accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament as a whole and in all their parts as the divinely inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God, and submits to this as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life.'"

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod representatives participating in the Dec. 16 meeting, in addition to Drs.

Preus and Barth, were Dr. Ralph Bohlmann, Dr. Theodore Nickel, Rev. Samuel Nafzger, Prof. Roland Hopmann and Prof. Richard Warneck.

LCMS BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT ON CONGREGATIONAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

ST. LOUIS—Congregational property rights, a proposed new hymnal, the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A. programs and changes in the Synod's pension plans were among the concerns dealt with by the Board of Directors of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod at its meeting here Dec. 1-3.

In a resolution regarding property rights, the board reminded member congregations that in the event of division or threatened division within a congregation, all parties are encouraged to deal with one another and with the subject matter with Christian love and concern. The board also said that it is not automatic that a minority in a congregation has no rights with respect to the congregation's property when the majority votes that the congregation terminate its membership in the LCMS. Nor is it true that courts are prohibited from deciding a church property dispute just because a doctrinal controversy exist.

The Synod's legal counsel was authorized to continue to make available helpful information to congregations so that respective rights and responsibilities within congregations can be known. A statement of the many theological, legal and practical ramifications of schism within congregations has been drafted and will be submitted for study and revision by various synodical officials, and for completion and release by the board at its next meeting in January.

In an effort to inform all pastors, teachers and congregations of the Synod of the contents of a proposed new hymnal before the 1977 synodical

convention, the board asked that a copy of the liturgical portion of the hymnal be provided to all pastors of the Synod so that their evaluations and reactions could be received as quickly as possible.

After review and study of a salary survey, the board approved various merit adjustments and approved a general cost of living increase for Synod employees of six percent, which included a one percent cost of living "catch-up," since the board felt the Synod had been behind in past years in cost-of-living increases. Budget

[Continued on page 14]

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Minneapolis, Minn. 55441

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