



# Luther Life

MARCH 1955

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MARCH, 1955

Vol. LXVII, No. 3

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LUTHER LIFE (Formerly *The Luther League Review*) is the youth magazine of the United Lutheran Church in America. It is published monthly by the Luther League of America, official young people's organization of the ULCA. John

M. Mangum, editor. Publication office: Kutztown Publishing Company, 241 West Main St., Kutztown. Changes of address should be sent to: The Luther League of America, 825 Muhlenberg Building, 1228 Spruce St., Philadelphia 7, Pa.

Subscription rates: Single subscriptions, \$2.00 per year. Club subscriptions of five or more, \$1.00 each, per year; ten or more, \$1.60 each, per year. Entered as second class matter at Kutztown, Pa.

## 'Christ Is Lord' to Be Theme of '55 Conclave

Theme of the 1955 LLA convention to be held on the University of Michigan campus, Ann Arbor, will be "Christ Is Lord," Executive Secretary Leslie Conrad has announced. It is abstracted from the constitutional purpose of the Luther League "to encourage the youth of the United Lutheran Church in America to respond to the love of Jesus Christ, their Lord and Saviour."

Convention hymn will be the Luther League rally hymn "O Christians! Leagued Together." Workshops and discussion sessions will concentrate on the five divisions of the LLA program: Christian vocation, evangelism, missions, social action, and recreation.

### Middleswarth to keynote

Keynote speaker at the opening session will be the Rev. Harner Middleswarth, associate secretary of the ULC Board of Parish Education. He will also address the convention every morning, presenting the Christian reasons for activity in each of LLA program divisions.

Pastor Middleswarth is director of weekday religious education for the Board of Parish Education. A graduate of Philadelphia Seminary, he has his master's degree in theology and has studied at the University of Pennsylvania; Union Seminary, New York City; and the University of Chicago Divinity School.

### Horn to lead music

The Rev. Henry E. Horn, pastor of the University Lutheran Association at Cambridge, Mass., will lead the "worship through music" periods at the



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Pastor Henry E. Horn to direct "worship through music" at Ann Arbor convention.

convention. He filled this capacity at the 1951 convention in Iowa City.

A former president of Marion College, Marion, Va., Pastor Horn has served parishes in Philadelphia, Pa.,

**WANTED:** Christians with dirty hands! Volunteer service for those unafraid of work. Young men and women ages 15-24. Cost: Effort, time, transportation, simple living. Reward: Christian community living, spiritual growth, alleviating social injustices. Time: Summer 1955. Youth interested should apply to **WORK CAMPS**, The Luther League of America, 1228 Spruce Street, Philadelphia 7, Pa.

and Augusta, Ga. He is chairman of the ULC Committee on Worship.

### Call for work campers

Call for leaguers willing to give a week of their summer vacation to participate in a work camp has been sounded by LLA Associate Secretary

Arthur Bauer. Sponsored by the LLA social action committee, work camps will be located in areas of special social significance.

One project will be conducted at St. James' Church, Chicago, an interracial Lutheran congregation that suffered a fire in October. Campers will assist in painting and renovation jobs. It will be held July 9-17.

Other sites for work camps are being investigated at strategic points of special social significance on the east coast. Local youth will cooperate with leaguers from other states, provinces, and countries in the work.

Leaguers volunteering for the work camps will not be paid for their services. In addition, they will be required to pay their transportation to and from the project and to pay between \$15 and \$20 to meet the expenses of the camp.

Former synodical LL presidents at the organization of the new Central States LL. Left to right: Dick Dasenbrock, Midwest; Dean Sudman, Midwest; Willis Cramer, Nebraska; Paul Emmerich, Kansas; Lyle Harms, Midwest; Arnold Tiemeyer, Kansas.







First officers of Central States LL. Front row: Dohn, recording sec'y; Fortney, corresponding sec'y. Back row: Taylor, veep; Sudman, prexy; Tiemeyer, treasurer.

Information and application blanks may be obtained by addressing: Work Camps, Luther League of America, 1228 Spruce St., Philadelphia 7, Pa.

### Central States LL. organized

The Central States Luther League was officially born, Dec. 30, when the former Kansas, Nebraska, and Midwest Luther Leagues were combined. The merger convention was held in St. John's Church, Salina, Kans.

Active membership of the new body numbers approximately 1,766, making it rank in size with the top six synodical leagues in LLA. Its membership is exceeded only by Ministerium of Pennsylvania, Ohio, North Carolina, Central Pennsylvania, and New York.

Sudman named president

Dean Sudman, Wisner, Nebr., a former president of the Midwest LL

and a junior at Central Seminary, was elected president of the new league. The Rev. Theodore Althof, Russell, Kans., served as chairman of the one-day conclave. A total of 131 attended sessions.

Other officers chosen were: George Taylor, Sidney, Nebr., vice president; Yvonne Fortney, Russell, Kans., corresponding secretary; Janice Dohn, Omaha, Nebr., recording secretary; Arnold Tiemeyer, Tarkio, Mo., treasurer. The Rev. Vernon Jacobs, Alliance, Nebr., was named pastoral advisor.

### Ohio elects female prexy

For the first time in its history, the Ohio Luther League has a president from among the fairer sex. She is Vivian Au, elected at the convention held in Trinity Church, Ashland, Ohio.

The more than 500 leaguers and

friends attending sessions saw an almost entirely new group installed as executive officers. In addition to Vivian, they were: Dick Giessler, vice president; Carolyn Cleland, re-elected secretary; Bill Elsass, treasurer; Elly Roller, lay advisor; Mrs. Karl Weick, elected to fill Vivian's unexpired term as lay advisor; and the Rev. George Billman, pastoral advisor.

### Streamline structure

Major portion of business sessions was devoted to a report of Ohio's "Hoover Committee." The group proposed constitutional amendments designed to increase the efficiency of the Ohio L.L. organizational structure. After serious and lengthy discussion, the report was accepted.

"The new amendments," Committee Member Arthur Bauer stated, "add the president of the Ohio Synod to the L.L.O. executive committee and shuffle the membership so that more youth are on it.

"Efficiency will come by proper sharing of responsibility, giving individuals and committees jobs to do that are not beyond them."

### L.L.A. announces apportionments

Every active member in the Luther League of America is requested to contribute \$1.25 in 1955 toward operating expenses of the ULC youth auxiliary, L.L.A. Treasurer Robert Sanders has announced, Total receipts anticipated from this source are \$39,357.50. Other receipts from Youth Sunday, special gifts, sale of literature, and ULC executive board will be necessary to enable the league to meet its budget of \$67,120.00.

Apportionment requested from each

of the state and synodical leagues is as follows:

<i>State or Synod</i>	<i>Active Members</i>	<i>Apportionment</i>
California	640*	\$ 800.00
Canada	1,023*	1,278.75
Central Pennsylvania	1,998*	2,497.50
Connecticut	205	256.25
Florida	191*	238.75
Georgia-Alabama	496	620.00
Illinois	1,582	1,977.50
Indiana	490	612.50
Iowa	682	852.50
Kansas	389*	486.25
Kentucky-Tennessee	275	343.75
Maryland	999*	1,248.75
Michigan	404*	505.00
Midwest	824	1,030.00
Ministerium of Pennsylvania	3,322*	4,152.50
Minnesota	939**	1,173.75
Mississippi	41	51.25
Montana		
Nebraska	553**	691.25
New Jersey	1,237	1,546.25
New York	1,767**	2,208.75
North Carolina	2,875	3,593.75
North Dakota	185	231.25
Nova Scotia	200	250.00
Ohio	3,287	4,108.75
Pacific	245	306.25
Pittsburgh	1,702*	2,127.50
Rocky Mountain	172	215.00
South Carolina	1,636	2,045.00
Texas	603	753.75
Virginia	764*	955.00
West Virginia	223	278.75
Western Canada	640	800.00
Wisconsin	897*	1,121.25
Total	31,486	\$39,357.50

\*1952-1953 Statistics

\*\*1951-1952 Statistics

### Gus talks Spanish

With the usual service read in an unusual language Gus Wedemeyer, New York City District president, and Pastor Antonio Contreras installed LL

officers at La Iglesia Evangelica Luterana de Sion. The service was held on the fourth anniversary of the formation of the church.

Following the service, using the Spanish edition of the Common Service Book, Gus and Pastor Contreras officiated at *Service de Instalacion para la Directiva de la Sociedad de Jovenes de la Iglesia Evangelica de Sion*. As the service progressed the candles were lit and the group sang *Sigue La Luz* (Follow the Gleam) and prayed together *Padre Nuestro* (Lord's Prayer). Concluding the service, the leaguers and congregation joined in singing *Oh Jovenes Cristianos*.

## GRASS ROOTS

### 1,200 scattered leaguers

The 14 districts of the New York and New England LL were "rally happy" at their annual Unity Day celebration. Almost 1,200 leaguers met simultaneously in small groups across the synod and talked about the same theme, "Christ Liveth in Me."

Eighty-six leaguers from 12 congregations in the Brooklyn District gathered at Reformation Church. Letters of greeting from other district presidents were read. . . . Almost twice that many leaguers attended the Genesee Valley dinner. Rochester's 1953 "Lutheran Layman of the Year," William Stackel, was speaker.

New York City's Unity Day opened with a district communion service at St. John's, The Bronx. The day ended with a fellowship circle binding 92 leaguers together in prayer. . . . Mohawk Valley, Schohanna, and Southern Tier districts converged on Hartwick

## Governor to Speak

● Governor of the State of Washington, Arthur B. Langlie, is among speakers tentatively scheduled to speak at the Pacific Synod LL convention. Sessions will be held in St. Paul's Church, Seattle, April 22-24.

College, Oneonta. Reservations for 130 had been sent in. Two hundred and seven showed up. Plans for a tri-district leadership training school in the fall of 1955 were received with enthusiasm.

### Variegated Lutherans

First All-Lutheran youth rally for Nassau and Suffolk counties on Long Island saw more than 540 young people jammed into Epiphany Church, Hempstead. Sponsored by the Inter-synodical Lutheran Pastors' Association of the counties, it was attended by youth of the American Lutheran Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Augustana Lutheran Church, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and United Lutheran Church.

A survey of the differences of the various Lutheran church bodies and the effects of the differences on Lutheran unity is scheduled to be released in June. Publisher is the Metropolitan Lutheran Youth Council, an inter-synodical group.

### N. J. districts merge

Another milestone in New Jersey LL history was marked when four districts consolidated to form the Central Conference LL. Convention speaker was Dr. Edwin H. Knudten, president of the New Jersey Synod. Sessions were in St. Mark's Church, Trenton.



New leaders of Louisville Luther Leagues: Stroup, left, vice president; Pifer, treasurer; the Rev. Eugene Bollinger, advisor; Scheer, sec'y; Schneider, pres.

Officers elected were: President, George Frank, Rahway; vice president, Jean Davis, Trenton; recording secretary, Lucille Tyson, Wanamassa; corresponding secretary, Beverly Bowler, Trenton; and treasurer, Lorraine Skok, Trenton. The Rev. Paul W. Kapp, Asbury Park, was named pastoral advisor.

#### Atlantic City conclave

Donald Schneider, Haddon Heights, was elected president of New Jersey's Southern Conference at its annual convention in St. Andrew's Church, Atlantic City.

Other officers named were: Vice president, Ingrid Wagner, Vineland; recording secretary, Ann Tharp, Haddonfield; corresponding secretary, Jana Varlejs, Atlantic City; and treasurer, Paul Mills, Collingswood. Lay advisors selected were Mary Williams, Atlantic City, and Eugene Kelchner, Pennsauken. The Rev. R. C. Lauffenberger, Audubon, was chosen advisor.

#### LLL likes to elect

A record crowd of 140 leaguers and friends swarmed through the doors of Third Church, Louisville, Ky., for the election of officers for the Luther Leagues of Louisville. Previously LLL had followed a policy of having its officers appointed by a committee of interested people.

Results: George Schneider, Christ Church, president; Elwood Stroup, St. John's, vice president; Norma Scheer, First, secretary; and Barbara Pifer, First, treasurer.

#### Tell-a-vision for officers

"What's your line, Mr. Martin?" The question was hurled at Billy Martin, president of the Georgia-Alabama LL. Instead of giving an evasive answer, Billy immediately began a detailed account of the work a Luther League president does.

Scene of the "tell-a-vision" program was the conference of LL officers spon-

sored by the Georgia-Alabama L.L. at Redeemer Church, Macon. Seventy delegates of congregational groups were on hand to get information.

Synodical officers were interviewed by Robert Freyermuth, Georgia-Alabama vice president. By using posters and skits the officers presented various aspects of the Luther League program for 1955.

#### Wanted: A satisfactory answer

Out in Portland, Ore., 55 representatives of 24 Pacific Synod leagues met for three days at St. James Church. They spent most of the time tracking down solutions to congregational league problems.

Questions such as, "How can we get the support of our congregation for our activities?" and, "How can we obtain and keep advisors?" were fired at a panel composed of pastors and synodical officers.

"The delegates were not content with just any answer," LUTHER LIFE Correspondent Beverly Bain reports. "Several times it looked as if the panel were going to remain at the church all day unless a more satisfactory answer were found."



Georgia-Alabama's Martin tells LLA convention plans to congregational officers.

been set up to resemble a small chapel. The only sound is Lenten music being played through an amplifier from the public address system upstairs. The room is lit entirely by candles. On a screen in the front of the room is projected a Lenten picture. The congregation sits in silent meditation.

Quietly a leaguer rises and announces the first hymn. A scripture passage follows. Then another teenager sings a solo. A 10-minute meditation centered on the painting projected on the screen is presented. The service is closed with a hymn.

Lights in an adjoining room then invite everyone to a breakfast of hot chocolate and buns. As we sit around the tables we enjoy not only the food but the fine spirit of fellowship leaguers can so readily have when they get together.

#### Inherited from young men

These Holy Week services were started at St. Paul's about 10 years

## SERVICE PROJECTS

### Holy Week services at dawn

If you believe that teen-agers just won't get up early for anything you ought to visit Lititz, Pa., during Holy Week. Should you walk down the streets there a little before 6:30 A.M. any morning you would find both young people and adults hurrying toward St. Paul's Church.

Follow them, and you will enter the church social room, which has

ago by a Sunday school class of young men. Older men presented the meditations. Younger men arranged the worship services and prepared and served the breakfasts.

When the young men's class was broken up by World War II, the Luther League took over the program.

On Palm Sunday evening the boys of the Luther League meet in the basement of the church. They carefully stack away tables and chairs used by church school classes and arrange the room to look like a small chapel. The amplifying system is readied and records are selected for the services. Tables and chairs are set up in the room next to the chapel for the light breakfast served every morning.

A wide selection of slides provides pictures for the meditation periods. The league has discovered that a series

is interesting. It may be composed of great paintings, starting perhaps with the triumphal entry on Monday and leading up to the crucifixion and resurrection. Some paintings that are always popular are Ploekhorst's "The Triumphal Entry," da Vinci's "The Last Supper," Hoffman's "Christ in Gethsemane," Harrach's "Peter's Denial," Ciseri's "Ecce Homo," Bonnard's "Peter and John Running to the Tomb," and Mundkacsy's "Christ Before Pilate" and "The Crucifixion." All these and many other Kodachromes may be secured from the United Lutheran Publication House.

St. Paul's leaguers have found that Cynthia Pearl Maus' book, *Christ and the Fine Arts*, is especially helpful in the preparation of meditations.

On Monday morning attendance usually is about 65 at St. Paul's. The

Acolyte ignites candles on wreath at St. Mark's service for high school students.



congregation grows each day, until at the end of the week it has exceeded 100. A number of adults attend each year. Some of these are persons who want to encourage the league in the work it is doing, but by far the most of them are people who come for the worship experience. Some of the adults are from other churches in the town. Many are on their way to work.

"All the leaguers agree," Pastor Francis R. Bell reports, "that starting the day with God makes a difference in the way they feel, their attitude in approaching their school work and in living the Christian life throughout the day. Most enthusiastic comment was made by one girl who said that she wished the services would be held each day throughout the year."

### Put Christ into Christmas

How to "Put Christ Back into Christmas" was explained to 483 Baltimore District leaguers and friends in a unique manner at Our Saviour Church, Baltimore, Md. A Christmas tree was used as a worship center. As a star, an angel, and lights were placed on the tree, leaders quoted scripture and gave short meditations dealing with the symbols. A newly organized girls' chorus from Baltimore's Southern High School sang a concert of Christmas music . . .

St. Mark's Church, Kitchener, Ont., is located next to the Kitchener-Waterloo Collegiate High School. So every Wednesday and Friday morning in Advent a devotional period for youth was held between 8:35 and 8:45 A.M. An average of 23 high school students attended.

An Advent wreath with 27 candles was used. On Wednesday, candles for

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday were lighted. On Friday, candles for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday were ignited. Pastor Frank Jensen led the devotional periods. . . .

### From Pennsylvania to South Carolina

In Collingdale, Pa., leaguers of First Church invited the entire congregation to attend the pageant "Come Into My Heart" (*December LUTHER LIFE*) on the First Sunday after Christmas. After the vesper service, Pastor and Mrs. Henry Hodel received the leaguers and the congregation in the parsonage. While the Yule log burned, the entire group sang Christmas carols. . . .

New York's Genesee Valley District marked Christmas in a special way when 75 leaguers sang carols at hospitals and the penitentiary in Rochester. At each place they were requested to return next Christmas. . . .

St. Stephen's L.L., Lexington, S. C., prepared paper angels bearing Christmas greetings and distributed them to the old people at the Lowman Home on Christmas morning. They also sang carols for the guests.

### Leaguers parade floats

Floats were the major time-consumers of a league in Hooper, Nebr., and of four leagues in Hagerstown, Md. In Nebraska the occasion was the Dodge County Fair. In Maryland it was Hagerstown's annual mummers parade.

"Christ, the Hope of the World" was proclaimed with large letters on both sides of the 8-by-14-foot display of Zion L.L., Hooper. Under a simulated palm tree sat a "for real" missionary, Elaine Wagner, on furlough



Hagerstown float was designed and constructed by youth from four local churches.

from British Guiana. Seated in front of her were leaguers made-up to represent the various nationalities of British Guiana: East Indians, Negroes, American Indians, Chinese, Caucasians.

This float, with its Christian theme, was in sharp contrast to the Roman Catholic float that followed it in the parade. In keeping with the Marian year, the Roman float depicted a kneeling person and bore the words, "Mary, Born without Sin, Pray for Us."

#### Wins honorable mention

"Christians Leagued Together" was the motif of the float prepared by leaguers of the four Lutheran churches in Hagerstown. It depicted the Christian vocation theme.

The float was designed and constructed entirely by leaguers themselves. It won honorable mention.

#### Service to service men

Keeping in contact with church members who are away from home is the project of Christ LI, Rosedale,

N. Y. Each month *The Outlook*, church paper, is mailed to servicemen and students away at college. Devotional booklets and tracts are often enclosed.

To start the project, a Christmas card was sent in 1953 to about 20 young people away from home. Then Lenten booklets were sent out. On Palm Sunday, the church bulletin and a cross made from a palm leaf were enclosed in an Easter card.

The devotional booklet, *Light For Today*, was sent in May and June. In September, the Youth Sunday bulletin was mailed.

A "Prayer Pact" was enclosed with the November issue of the church paper. Half of the "Prayer Pact" was to be kept by the serviceman, the other half mailed to a friend, mother, or wife. At a certain time each day the serviceman and his "prayer date" would say a similar prayer, binding them closer to each other. In November, a Thanksgiving card was mailed with a Lord's Prayer leaflet enclosed.



## One thing leads to another

A project can get mighty complicated, leaguers of Indianola Church, Columbus, Ohio, have learned. Last year they adopted the simple project of cleaning up the basement of the parish house. But that was just the beginning.

Enthusiastically they accepted paint for the room, donated by the father of one of the leaguers. But before painting could begin the walls and floor had to be scrubbed with soap and water. Hours and a lot of elbow grease later the room was spotless. Then, however, it was discovered that the soap had sunk into the cement floor and that paint would not stick. Finally acid had to be used before the paint could be applied.

After many smeared faces and sore muscles the walls and floor were beautiful. But the room was empty. Furniture was needed. So local disc jockies were asked to request donations of furniture. To encourage potential givers, the league rented a trailer and offered to pick up furniture at back doors. Quite a bit of furniture was offered.

One of the leaguers made curtains. And the basement room finally shaped up surprisingly well. It was worth the months of effort, leaguers decided.

## Use sickles and bills

In Brooklyn, N. Y., leaguers of Messiah Church decided that words should be accompanied by actions. So on one Sunday evening they studied a film on stewardship and the following Friday assembled at the church with rakes, sickles, hedge trimmers, etc. They worked the entire afternoon

(no school that day) cleaning up the church premises. This activity was followed by a supper party.

Leaguers at St. Mark's, Bloomfield, Nebr., have been expressing their sense of stewardship by reaching into their pockets and pulling out money. At each meeting they pass a small church-bank. Funds will be used to tile the church's basement floor.

## EVANGELISM

### LL sponsors Little League

"Well, why can't I go to league with you?" a 10-year-old brother asked of a member of Miller's L.L., Knoxville, Tenn.

"Because you get tired of listening before the program is over," big sister replied.

"All right then," quipped the small-fry, "why don't you have a lesson that I won't get tired about?"

That evening the big sister learned that other leaguers had had similar situations with brothers and sisters. The group decided to make the small-fry a Miller's L.L. project.

Children, aged 8 to 12, were invited to several L.L. sessions. Thus the kids saw at first-hand the workings of a league. Then they were invited to start coming one hour earlier than the regular league time. They elected their own officers, and carefully too, just like the older group.

Later their meetings were changed to a weekday afternoon so they might have a longer session and incorporate some practice in singing. Out of the Little League has budded a first-class junior choir.



Good Shepherd choir. A Negro heads the congregation's worship and music committee.

## They Erased the Color Line

A small, determined group said that the gospel was for all men. Result: A new, inter-racial mission in Detroit.

*By Clyde G. Steele*

**G**OOD SHEPHERD CHURCH, Detroit, is unique among the more than 4,250 congregations in the United Lutheran Church. From the day of its organization it has contained members of differing skin colors. Many churches change in character and become inter-racial, but Good Shepherd has had Negroes, Indians,

Japanese, and Chinese in its fold from the start.

It first came into being because in 1953 one of Detroit's newest super expressways made it necessary to demolish the church and parsonage of 12-year-old Augsburg Lutheran congregation. A majority of the Augsburg members voted to use the \$90,000 paid for the property to relocate in a suburban section of the city. But

determined minority, without property or funds, resolved to build a new Lutheran church in the same community despite the fact that it was rapidly becoming all-Negro.

#### First aid from BAM

The United Lutheran Church's Board of American Missions agreed to assist the minority on the condition that the new congregation would receive all persons who came to it, regardless of race or nationality. The Michigan Synod readily sent a canvasser into the field and supplied leadership for the initial worship services.

On the day of organization 103 persons, 63 adults and 40 children, banded themselves together in this pioneer congregation. The Rev. Richard I. Knudsen, professor of church

history in the School of Religion at Howard University, was called to serve as pastor.

Of the original membership, about 30 per cent were Negro. When time came for the selection of the church council, some of the Negroes were selected for important posts. Among the first 10 members of the council were two Negroes—Mrs. Mattie Gill-espie, probably the only Negro councilwoman in the ULC, and L. Brown Jackson, who was appointed stewardship chairman in the parish. Another Negro, George Saunders, headed the music and worship committee. Other Negroes were selected as teachers and officers in the Sunday school.

In an effort to bring into focus a complete picture of this new endeavor in the United Lutheran Church, I vis-



Synod president installs council. "We have to explode the myth," Pastor Knudsen warns, "that Negroes are lined up waiting to get into Lutheran congregations."

ited a cross section of the congregation, rapping on doors from house to house. The results of my interviews give a strong indication of the spirit, the personal feelings, and the outlook for the future of Good Shepherd.

One Negro man, active in the affairs of the congregation, could see no problems for the present. He thought that considerable progress had been made and that the machinery of the church was functioning smoothly. He said that barriers in the minds of some of the whites outside the congregation had to be broken down. But he also pointed to barriers that needed to be destroyed in the minds of some of the Negroes. He felt that within the congregation skepticism about the future success of the work had ceased to exist.

A Negro woman who formerly belonged to a Missouri Synod inter-racial congregation was very enthusiastic about the project. She said in substance: The Supreme Court decision was one more step toward complete freedom for the Negro . . . People will have to accept it that way whether they want to or not . . . It's going to come to more and more churches.

Other Negroes impressed me with their complete faith in the success of the experiment. Almost without exception, optimism and a spirit of co-operation was expressed in every interview with a Negro family.

### Whites agree

"All my life I have been taught not to regard the color of a person's skin," said Mrs. Theodore Braham, active leader in Good Shepherd and president of the Detroit Council of Church Women. "I'm all for this new

venture in the ULC." So far as she had been able to ascertain, the new group was working harmoniously, with no signs of racial differences.

Members of another white family were in complete agreement with Mrs. Braham. In the beginning, they thought, there may have been some slight feelings against eating together. A few of the whites refrained from entertaining the Negroes in their homes out of fear of criticism from their white neighbors.

Referring to the practice of issuing and accepting invitations from the Negroes, one white lady said, "Twelve months ago it was unthinkable. Today it is a matter of common custom."

### Youth adds a word

An attractive 16-year-old girl, fairly regular in attendance at the worship services, was interviewed concerning the possibility of an inter-racial Luther League. No such auxiliary had been started.

"We have no objection to having Negroes in the church with us," she said. "We would welcome them in a Luther League. We have Negroes as neighbors and find them very nice people."

I took the matter one step further and asked about having them in her home and about the matter of dating. She replied that there would be no objection to having them in her home, but on the subject of dates she threw

● The Rev. Clyde G. Steele is pastor of the Michigan Synod's largest congregation, Hope Church, Detroit. He is a correspondent for *The Lutheran* and a contributor to *Pulpit Digest*.

out an emphatic, "No."

Up to that time there had been practically no mixing of teenagers on the social level.

### Bubbles in the paint pot

The picture of Good Shepherd congregation has some ugly streaks through it. When the first canvass of the community was made, approximately 75 persons, most of whom were formerly members of Augsburg, indicated an interest in forming an interracial congregation. Only 40 of these 75 actually became a part of the charter membership.

What happened to the others? Many who found the idea attractive in theory panicked when they found that the congregation was serious in its invitation to Negroes, Japanese, Chinese, and Indians. Others thought a few persons of a different race would justify the label of "interracial." They were afraid that the whites might find themselves outnumbered. In several cases families have found themselves divided on the issue—a wife joining, for example, while her husband refrains.

The original statement of principle of the interracial congregation was made by Pastor Knudsen. It has been strictly followed.

"We don't preach race at Good Shepherd," he said, "nor do we feel especially virtuous about being inclusive. . . . Though the realization of such a brotherhood will take time, someone has to start somewhere. So we're venturing on faith. Pioneering costs, but we are willing to pay the price. Judgment day will bring the really important segregation."

"Our aim," he continued, "is a really open church with arms out-

spread to embrace every poor and unself-righteous sinner who needs it, regardless of hue of skin."

For many people the clinching argument against an interracial church is the possibility of its leading to intermarriage. That possibility has been faced squarely. Such marriages are neither encouraged nor discouraged.

One such marriage exists at Good Shepherd. During the course of my interviews it was mentioned repeatedly.

The couple told me that in Good Shepherd they had found the answer to their search for a spiritual home. The husband and wife, both talented musicians, work in many churches and fraternal groups. The wife proudly admitted that in Good Shepherd they had found a better atmosphere than in any other of the churches or groups in which they had labored.

### Problems to be solved

"One thing must be done," Pastor Knudsen said, "We have to explode the assumption unconsciously held by many white Lutherans that Negroes are lined up waiting for the ribbon to be cut to get into our congregations. This is far from the case. Not only do we have the normal obstacles to urban evangelization to contend with but, in the case of Negroes, we are up against a tradition of generations of white oppression that is not simply forgotten overnight."

"To win Negroes to the Lutheran church means even greater effort than to win whites. The Negro is fully capable of assessing the difference between gospel propaganda on the one hand and genuine personal love on the other. Only the latter will bring him in."



Much of James Wines' work evidences strong influence of Christianity in his life.

## *A Special Kind of Artist*

James Wines believes that every man has been given creative ability that he should use for those around him.

*By Nancy Bauer*

"AN artist is no special kind of man. Every man is just a special kind of artist." This is one of James Wines' favorite sayings. And it fits him well, for Jim is a special kind of young artist whose work has received recognition and prizes for many years.

Just three years ago, for instance, Jim was awarded the \$1,500 Pulitzer Traveling Scholarship. He earned it with four stone lithographs and two woodcuts depicting the birth and death of Christ. The prize included \$500 in cash in addition to the traveling scholarship.

Now that he has been graduated from Syracuse University's College of Fine Arts, he plans to use the award to study at the Academy of Art in Florence, Italy, for a year. There he will be close to the works of Michaelangelo, whom he admires as one of the greatest artists of all time.

### **Gives Luther bust**

Jim is primarily a sculptor. He has done several outstanding statues for churches. Recently he presented a bronze bust of Martin Luther to his



Although primarily a sculptor, Jim majored in printing mediums at the university.

home congregation, Ascension Lutheran Church, Towson, Md. It has been copied for use on Lutheran posters and in several Lutheran publications and has received much acclaim as a new interpretation of the Reformer.

In speaking of the bust, Jim explained that first a statue is created in clay. Then, since clay is not a permanent medium, it is cast of a harder metal—in this case bronze. Sometimes there is an intermediate step in which the statue is cast in a material that is harder than clay but less permanent than the final material.

In 1951, Jim won the United Nations International Poster contest. While he was in high school he received a total of 24 state and 12 national awards in art that are made each year by *National Scholastic Magazine*.

### Key to his personality

Although he is primarily concerned with sculpture, Jim majored in printing mediums such as lithography, wood engraving, and etching while at Syracuse University. This seeming contradiction is a key to his personality and philosophy of art. To Jim it is essential that art communicate to the people for whom it is created. He feels that it is impossible to create any art without taking into consideration all other forms of art. According to this theory, in order to communicate adequately with society, the artist must be able to understand all forms of art and to appreciate their qualities and values.

His latest project, conducted in co-

operation with an architect and a painter, grew out of this theory. The three formed a group that is trying to bring into reality a church that is truly expressive of modern society. Their aim is for such complete coordination that no painting or sculpturing could exist outside the walls created for them, and no room would be complete without the painting and statues that should accompany it.

The group feels that in too many churches paintings and statues are picked up as afterthoughts. Their plan is to offer a package unit whereby the financial limitations can be set before the work has begun. The finished church will be an integral unit in which the art and architecture would lose meaning if isolated. They feel that churches stand to gain by using the services of dedicated artists who will work almost entirely for the love of it instead of relying upon commercial firms that are in the business for the profit.

Climax of several months of planning came when the three artists displayed their ideas and samples of their work in an exhibit at the Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts during the first days of last June. The display included a model of the proposed chapel; several of Jim's statues, woodcuts, and stone lithographs; and samples of paintings by the third member of the group. Jim spoke for

● The cover picture on this issue of *Luther Life* is part of a woodcut entitled "Christ Mocked." It is one of the six prints with which Jim won a Pulitzer Traveling Scholarship.





Bronze bust of Dr. Martin Luther presented by Jim to Ascension Church, Towson, Md.

the group by expressing the hope that they soon may have an opportunity to bring their plans to reality.

Jim is an artist because he feels he has to be. He has an inner compulsion to express himself in art.

He has chosen religious art because he believes it to be a natural medium of common understanding with society. People need art to help them express their religious feelings.

He has declared that he wants to become an integral part of society and will not be content to live in the "ivory garret" to which so many artists retire. Already he has started to create art for the local community. This results from his being one of those rare people who have begun to live today where they are instead of waiting for the nebulous "tomorrow" that never arrives.

# YOUR PERSONALITY

## Will Affect Your Career

A genius who has never developed his personality is as bright to most people as a light bulb minus electricity.

*By Vernon L. Strempeke*

ONE HUNDRED large business and industrial corporations were recently asked what was the most important factor in the selection and promotion of employees. The answer was: Personality. Your personality to a large degree holds the secret to your success or failure. Your personality can either make or break your career.

It is as hard "to put your finger on" your personality as it is to step on your own shadow. You catch only fleeting glimpses of your reflected personality. Your personality is what you have been, what you are, and what you can be.

**You are unique!**

You have heard about "identical twins." Have you ever seen them? No, you never saw "identical twins" in the literal sense of the term! There are no two people just exactly alike in this world. There aren't even two peas in a pod that are perfectly identical. God never uses carbon paper!

So, you really are unique! God has made you different from everyone else. Do you know how different you are from other people? It is safe to say you don't fully know yourself. You need to try to understand yourself more completely so that you can choose and plan more intelligently your future career.

**Personality counts!**

Your personality is "the thing" in successfully working and living with others. You need an attractive personality to get your knowledge "across" to the next person. The genius with a "dead personality" is as bright to most people as a light bulb without electricity. You are finally known by your ability or inability to get along

● Dr. Vernon L. Strempeke is a staff secretary with the United Lutheran Church's Board of Education. His headquarters are in Washington, D. C.



You are judged by your social manners, physical appearance, spiritual motivation.

with people, your promptness or tardiness, your "push" or laziness, your well groomed look or likeness to "what the cat drug in." Believe it or not—your career is largely determined by what people find in you in comparison to others on the basis of social manners, physical appearance, mental alertness, emotional depth, and spiritual motivation. Have you noticed your personality, lately?

You desire to succeed in having friends, learning from experience, receiving recognition for good work, living happily with your family, and serving God with effectiveness. The successful attainment of these ambitions is largely dependent upon yourself and your environment. Your influence on your environment is limited, but you can change yourself a

great deal. Your personality can grow and change to your advantage in realizing a satisfying and distinguished career.

The first step necessary in changing your personality is self-analysis. Know your personality for what it is and what it is not. Evaluate your personality as you would another person. Be objective, be honest, be fearless in your attempt to understand who you are and why.

#### How to evaluate yourself!

Rating scales and personality tests can be used to discover "clues" in better understanding yourself even though they aren't absolutely dependable. The simple test presented with this article is to be used as a mirror in viewing your personality. It is to your advan-

(Check YES or NO)

YES NO

- |   |       |       |
|---|-------|-------|
| 1. Do I usually smile easily and naturally?   | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Do I always look clean and neat?   | _____ | _____ |
| 3. Do I refrain from "poking fun" of others?  | _____ | _____ |
| 4. Do I often give people genuine compliments?  | _____ | _____ |
| 5. Do I always express my appreciation of everything others do for me?  | _____ | _____ |
| 6. Do I control the desire to avoid prying into the personal affairs of others?   | _____ | _____ |
| 7. Do I enjoy meeting people and making friends?  | _____ | _____ |
| 8. Do I have most of the following: A hobby, a favorite movie star, a pet, a personal library, an interest in sports, a love for music and art? | _____ | _____ |
| 9. Do I avoid holding grudges?  | _____ | _____ |
| 10. Do I have a pleasant voice?   | _____ | _____ |
| 11. Do I keep promises?   | _____ | _____ |
| 12. Do I listen attentively to others without interrupting?   | _____ | _____ |
| 13. Do I avoid appearing to others as a "worrier?"  | _____ | _____ |
| 14. Do I go out of my way in showing an interest in the concerns of others?   | _____ | _____ |
| 15. Do I really practice honesty?   | _____ | _____ |
| 16. Do I keep from showing a superior attitude?   | _____ | _____ |
| 17. Do I criticize others in the same manner in which I want to be criticized?  | _____ | _____ |
| 18. Do I remember with comparative ease names, faces, and dates?  | _____ | _____ |
| 19. Do I maintain a sincere sensitivity about the feelings of others?   | _____ | _____ |
| 20. Do I use good English?  | _____ | _____ |
| 21. Do I always maintain correct posture?   | _____ | _____ |
| 22. Do I usually reflect optimism, hope and confidence?   | _____ | _____ |
| 23. Do I successfully avoid disagreements?  | _____ | _____ |
| 24. Do I keep confidences?  | _____ | _____ |
| 25. Do I often get enthusiastic about something?  | _____ | _____ |

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

tage to use this mirror of personality with complete honesty.

Add the number of answers in the "yes" column only, and multiply by 4. Is your score below 35? If so, you should not depend upon your personality in achieving success in a career that requires ability to get along with people. If your score is between 35 and 65 your personal relationship to people should be of limited significance in your career. If your score is over 65 your personality will assist you in a career that depends upon your ability to influence, to cooperate, and to serve people.

If you think you can take it, ask a trustworthy friend, pastor, or teacher to rate your personality on the above test. Discuss the negative answers with them and search for help in gaining a better personality. Evaluate yourself from time to time with the help of tests and encourage the growth of your personality through successive steps of improvement.

Whether your personality is below average, average, or outstanding, you need to evaluate it in relation to your

career. Ask God to help you understand, accept, and change your personality. He can also guide you in your choice of career and your use of the personal gift he has given you. God desires that you reflect the glorious personality of Jesus, the Saviour, in your career.

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● In the British Museum one can see 75 drafts of Thomas Gray's poem, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard." Gray didn't like the first way he wrote it, nor the second nor the third. He wasn't satisfied until he scribbled it over and over 75 times.—*Household Magazine*.

● There is one type of woman rarely seen in a psychiatrist's office. That is the woman who is glad she is a woman. Although now a minority in our female population (only 34.4 per cent according to a survey made by *Fortune* magazine), she honestly enjoys homemaking, and more than anything in the world wants to raise a family of healthy, normal youngsters. During my 20 years of listening to distressed patients, I have never met her in my office—because she doesn't need help.

—*Marynia P. Farnham, psychiatrist and author.*

# Rising Tide in the Orient

The poverty-stricken people of Asia are hungry. And they are angry with being exploited by the West. It's no wonder that they listen when Communists woo, "Coolies, unite!"

*By Robert Paul Roth*

A TIDE of hatred for the Western world has been rising in Asia and Africa since the end of World War II that is more than embarrassing to us. It is a heartbreaking and perilous riddle.

The West is like the rich man's daughter who wants desperately to get married but lacks suitors. All of the eligible young men are afraid of being accused of marrying her for her money.

We have everything a nation could want: Wealth of resources, techniques of production, complete freedom of movement and expression. In contrast non-Western countries live in poverty and fear. Yet instead of befriending us so as to become more like us, they are turning to Russian Communism, a slave system with second-rate scientific know-how.

Here is the score: Russia has not had to engage in a single large-scale military effort since the defeat of Germany. In that time, however, she has sucked into her power Poland, Czechoslovakia, China, North Korea, and the northern half of Indo-China.

And in the case of the Orientals, Communism has inspired fanatical millions to engage in bloody civil wars.

Some non-Western nations, it is true, are committed to the cause of freedom. Burma, Siam, the Philippines, Pakistan have taken care of the Communists within their own borders. They can be counted on to continue as faithful allies.

But the vast areas of India, Ceylon, Indonesia, and the countries of Africa are still non-committed. Where will they turn? How can we draw them our way? These are complex questions with no easy solution.

## Dangerously explosive

These people whose friendship we are diligently courting have certain characteristics in common: They are all of colored races. They are mostly pagans. They are members of arrested civilizations.

The latter is a simple way of saying that they are poor, under-privileged, lacking in scientific and industrial technology, and lost in tribal customs and cults. In short, they are not a self-conscious people aware of what

they are doing and why they are doing it. They act simply on the basis of blind habit. If you were to ask a villager in India why he builds his house with mud and cow manure when he could make bricks, he will tell you that it is because his father and his father's father did so before him.

Because these people have been part of a stagnant culture, however, they are dangerously explosive. These unself-conscious masses have come into contact with such highly self-conscious nations as the United States and Russia, and the friction is setting off fireworks.

For the first time these sleeping peoples are aware of the fact that they are brown or black or yellow. For the first time they are conscious of their extreme poverty and ignorance.

Formerly a man who was born a Sudra in South India never dreamed of rising from his station in life to a better one. His religion and his culture told him he must accept his *Karma* (or *Tao*, or *Kismet*, or *Sayonara*). Now he learns that his poverty is not inevitably decreed by the gods. Suddenly he finds that his gods are dead and he is free.

But his freedom is like the freedom of Adam. It is an empty vacuum with both perils and possibilities waiting to rush in.

Into this vacuum come two rival powers contending for permanent station. The one says, "Coolies, unite. You have nothing to lose but your imperialistic landlords." The other—but what does the Western world have to offer? There is no simple slogan, no clear-cut, one-step program. We cannot simply say, "Throw off your



Victim of hatred in China is Missionary Paul Mackensen, who is imprisoned on charges of engaging in germ warfare.

masters and be free," because we know that freedom is not gained until it is deserved in a responsible way.

Throughout the Orient the peasants have been attracted by a flag with a white plow superimposed on a red field. The propaganda catchword is, "The land to the tillers. To each as much as he can till!" What could be a better prospect for a miserable slave-coolie whose family has been tied to the land for generations? He does not stop to reason whether he can compete on a free market with his produce. Nor does he dream that by casting off the Zemindars and joining the Communist system of state ownership he simply shifts from one tyrant to another.

One major difficulty we have in at-

tracting the friendship of the Orient is our recognition of the basic fact that freedom cannot be won in a single, simple step. We point to the fact that to be truly free we must also be individually and nationally responsible. Earning such freedom requires the laborious process of education, law, and constitutional government. In comparison, the ignorant masses find Russia's offer of "freedom" on the basis of revolution much more attractive.

### Force and charm

The two expanding cultures that are competing for control over the stagnant civilizations of the world are using two methods to gain the ascendancy: Force and charm. History has shown that a nation can dominate weaker peoples either by forced subjection or by the attractiveness of its cultural charm. While Britain was winning battles in India, French was the court language in Moscow.

Russia is generally regarded as seeking to control through use of the police state, and she does not hesitate to use force to gain her ends whenever she is confident of victory. Actually, however, Russia is winning her battles more effectively with her charm and attractiveness.

No nation goes to war unless her leaders think they can gain by bloodshed, and atomic warfare promises to be so deadly that neither side can hope to win. It is therefore not at all surprising to find Russia using methods short of war to extend her influence. It is surprising to find her charm more attractive than ours.

On our part, of course, the use of direct means of domination is no

longer morally accepted. There was a time when British, French, and Dutch imperialism was conscientiously pursued. But today even if we could win a so-called preventive war, our Western governments would not embark upon it.

Our moral stand concerning the use of force has complicated our problem through the fact that Oriental people respect strength and despise weakness. An Indian proverb says, "If possible grab a man by his pigtail, if not kiss his feet." This characteristic of the Oriental mind means that if we would only show the masses the power of our super bombs we could easily control them. We saw this demonstrated at Hiroshima. But such a power argument is valid only so long as our bombs are bigger than Russia's.

### Bribes from Uncle Sam

In the meantime, since we cannot follow the alternative of force, we are applying the pressure of charm. (Korea and Indo-China demonstrate that we still use force as a containment measure.)

In order to meet the Communist promise of a better life, the Western world has begun "missionary" projects such as the Point Four Program, the Overseas Information Program, and a host of UN-sponsored agencies.

In short, since we have found threats to be impractical we have resorted to bribes. But a bribe is never offered for the benefit of the person who receives it. The Orientals, eager as they are to receive bribes, can hardly be expected to respond to our efforts with any kind of loyalty. Our own people, on the other hand, have not yet achieved the selfless Christian



spirit of sacrifice that would prompt them to render assistance to the people overseas without expecting a return on their investment.

Whether it be mutual assistance or outright grant, a further problem arises in connection with the aid program. The Oriental people are human beings with a dignified pride. They mean to be respected. Their integrity as men must not be sullied. How can we render them assistance without its appearing to be a crumb thrown to dogs? How can we help them to help themselves?

Various practical helps have been suggested and even tried on the level of control by attraction. If missionaries become unwelcome in the Orient, let us make it possible for unlimited Oriental students to come to America to study in our schools and factories. If the government aid program is too impersonal and is not properly administered, let us transfer our flow of assistance to private and church agencies such as LWA, CROP, CARE. If colonialism has failed, let us face up to the facts and immediately inaugurate steps to free the subject peoples politically as well as economically. If a show of military might is unable to reverse the rising tide, let us make every effort to win the hearts and souls of these people. We cannot win by feeding their bodies alone.

All these points have been made again and again, and I emphasize their

validity. But, in addition, let us probe a little deeper into the peculiarly Christian appraisal of the world crisis.

### Rod of God's anger

The Christian solution to the clash between East and West begins with God and his plan of salvation for mankind. It is God who first and finally guides the destinies of men and nations through history. He used Nebuchadnezzar as a rod of chastisement to punish the errant Israelites. He used Cyrus to set them free.

"O Assyria, rod of my anger, and staff of my fury! Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I charge him, to despoil them, and to prey on them, and to trample them down like mire of the streets. . . . But when the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and Jerusalem, he will punish the arrogant boasting of the king of Assyria, and his vainglorious pride." (*Isaiah* 10: 5-6, 12)

It is not impossible for God to use Russian Communism to punish the Western world for its selfish materialism. Indeed the prophetic message of scripture would teach us to solve our problems with the nations by first putting our own house in order. We must begin by getting right with God!

A materialistic capitalism will never defeat a materialistic communism because they are essentially the same thing. The difference is that materialistic capitalism is controlled by a few loose-jointed private interests (Five per cent of the businesses in the United States employ 95 per cent of the labor!), while materialistic communism is controlled by the monolithic organization of the state. When ma-

● Dr. Robert Paul Roth gained background for this article while serving as a theological professor in India. Currently he is on the faculty of Southern Seminary.

terialism fights materialism the more tightly organized nation will win.

We are speaking of the exercise of power. In human society power can be wielded only with organization.

Thus it was possible for laborers to rise from serfdom to a remarkably high standard of living through the organization of labor unions. It was possible for struggling doctors to rise to become the highest paid profession through the organization of the American Medical Association.

But when organized power goes too far, it becomes intoxicated and tumbles into ignominious defeat. This is the action of God in history: *Quem deus vult perdere, prius dementat*—whom God would destroy, he first makes mad. If the West has exercised an irresponsible management of its talents, we should not be surprised when God sends us a rod of chastisement. Moreover, if that rod of chastisement becomes overly proud it too will be dashed to the ground.

Our Christian responsibility is to avoid both the error of arrogant activism in which we try to play the role of God in history and the error of selfish quietism in which we refuse to let God use us as his instruments, whether of punishment or mercy.

Although our Christian roots have brought forth the freedom of democracy, science, and industry, it would be utter folly for us to boast that the democratic control of the West is identical to the reign of God. The kingdom of God comes indeed of itself, says Luther, without our prayer, without our vote, without our Point Four program.

When it comes it is God's doing through the love and grace of Christ.

Our concern is simply that we shall receive it gratefully when it comes and act in willing and cheerful accord with God's will throughout its establishment. It belongs to a new age that knows neither threats nor bribes, for it is beyond the law.

But while we yet live in this present age, God still works his will and guides us in accord with his plan of salvation for the age to come.

## TOPIC IDEAS

### Worship outline

HYMN: "O Where Are Kings and Empires Now?" CSB 203

PSALM 2

TE DEUM LAUDAMUS of Matins service (sung or read)

SCRIPTURE: II Thessalonians 2: 1-12; Luke 13: 18-35

LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN: "For All the Saints who from their Labors Rest" CSB 250

### Discussion questions

1. What is God's plan of salvation for mankind?
2. In what way is Christianity responsible for the rich fruits of democracy, science, and industry?
3. Is the Oriental mind essentially different from the Western mind?
4. How can the church influence the government in international affairs?
5. What is the difference between the ascendancy of Russia and the U. S. and the ascendancy of the kingdom of God? How does God use nations to further his ends?
6. Study the *Te Deum Laudamus* from the Matins service to discover the traditional Christian understanding of the working of God in history. What is the role of prophet and martyr? How is the prophetic voice heard today in our struggle with the Orient?

For your Lenten Bible study, the Luther League of America presents a series of five topics explaining

## Revelation: Book of Courage and Comfort

By John David Newpher

**S**ECTS and individuals have sought to find in the book of Revelation exact predictions concerning such things as the rise and fall of nations, disturbances in nature, heresy in the church, and the end of the world. Although it does have a great deal to say in general terms about the ultimate outcome of history, that is not the point of the book at all.

The point is easily missed because Revelation is a confusing book. Even the reader who makes an honest attempt to wade through the pages tends to get lost in symbols, figures, mysticism.

Some light begins to appear when we remember that the Eastern mind functions differently than the Western mind. The Westerner likes to present ideas in logical, concise, objec-

tive fashion, using Roman numerals and subsections liberally. But anyone who tries to outline precisely the book of Revelation is soon tearing out his hair. For the Eastern mind prefers to portray truth subjectively, in pictures and symbols, allowing the listener to use his own imagination and intuition in grasping the essential idea. The Western reader must be prepared to get behind the symbols and pictures to the essential idea. He must not mistake the symbol itself for the objective truth.

Light also comes when we realize that some of the obscurity in the book is deliberate for the sake of safety. Two Christians corresponding with each other in Communist China today would be expected to make allusions, to refrain from mentioning names, to

veil their ideas with hints, and to use symbols. They would hope that the censor would miss the point of the letter but that the friend would be able to read behind the lines and find the truth.

The author of Revelation wrote in perilous times. Christians lived under the threat of persecution and were faced with official action against them. Yet to these Christians John was able to convey a message of warning, of comfort, and of joy.

We must be prepared to get behind the obscurities to the essential idea. We must not mistake the figure used, the hint dropped, for the thing-in-itself.

### Bleak moments of history

The 20th century reader must also remember something about apocalyptic writing, for Revelation falls into this category. Apocalyptic literature appears in the bleak moments of human history. And Revelation appears to have been written during the reign of the Emperor Domitian, A.D. 81-96.

Somehow Rome had developed the idea, probably fostered by the emperors themselves, that the head of the Roman empire was a god. As such the emperor should, thought Rome, be worshipped and adored. Decrees were beginning to go throughout the empire requiring that sacrifices be made to the god-emperor. Local civil authorities were to enforce the decrees, while local priests of the official Roman cultic religion were to organize and direct this worship. Trouble was ahead for men who believed in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

Apocalyptic literature does not

spare words in picturing the bleakness of the current situation. In fact, it shows how the situation will grow worse. Men will suffer and die. Nature will be convulsed. Heresies will abound. Signs and wonders will occur.

Apocalyptic writers see history as a cosmic battle between God and Satan. They paint their picture on a large canvas with broad, sweeping strokes. We would make a tragic error if we would put a microscope on one small segment of that large canvas. We would be doing violence to the meaning of the writing if we were to examine critically one particular symbol or figure and then say, "This means that in the year 19— thus and so will happen."

Instead we must look at the whole canvas and seek to understand the general eternal truths the artist has been inspired to convey to his immediate readers and to all generations of true believers.

Strangely enough, in spite of the bleakness, apocalyptic literature is filled with hope. The apocalypticist knows that no matter how dark historical conditions become the eventual victory will be won by God. He also knows that if a Christian believer remains faithful he will eventually share in that victory. This is the reason why we are calling Revelation a book of

● The Rev. John David Newpher is pastor of Ascension Church, on the campus of Philadelphia Seminary. A former fellow and instructor at the seminary, he is now doing graduate work in systematic theology at Temple University.

warning, a book of comfort, and a book of joy.

The author warns his readers of the difficult days that lie ahead. He warns them that times will come when it will seem easier to give up the struggle. Yet he comforts them by assuring them that on their side fights the valiant One. He tells them that when the enemy's worst is done he will have nothing won, for to the faithful will be the kingdom of God. And the author finally pictures the joy, the peace, the power that will come to those who remain at the side of the valiant One. The future belongs to God and to his people.

### John in exile

Tradition points to John the apostle as the author of Revelation. It is believed that he, while exiled on the island of Patmos, sensed the troublesome times ahead for the church.

He writes in particular to the churches in northwest Asia Minor, churches he had personally known and served. Yet so piercing is John's view, so many are the seeds of truth his message carries, that Christians in every age have found comfort in his words.

John begins by authenticating his work. Verses 1-3 show that this is not the revelation of man, but of Jesus Christ. God gave it to Jesus. In turn Jesus sent it by his angel to John. The introduction of an angel as a messenger is typical of apocalyptic literature.

Notice how the idea of tension, of urgency, is immediately introduced by such phrases as "things which must shortly come to pass" and "the time is at hand." This is an urgent book.

It seeks to awaken, to arouse, to prepare those who read. John is not tolerant of indifference and inaction on the part of Christians. He sees that if we are to pray, we must fight. And if we are to fight aright, we must pray aright.

Having introduced the note of urgency, John immediately brings his readers to Him who is their hope in the midst of peril. Note in verses 4-8 the glowing terms in which John speaks of Jesus: He which is, which was, which is to come; the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead; prince of the kings of earth; alpha and omega; the almighty. Only a man who has staked his all on Jesus can speak of Jesus thus.

John writes that through Jesus, the lowly, the persecuted, and the down-trodden shall be made kings and priests unto God. What words of power to those whom Rome regarded as weak, miserable, scarcely worth the trouble to torment. Men, says John, may regard you as the scourings of the earth, but God calls you his kings and priests.

The first chapter closes with a description of how John received his revelation. On one Sunday on the island of Patmos, perhaps while he is brooding over the condition of his churches, he hears a voice like a trumpet and is bidden to write what he sees. Note in verse 11 that he is to see and then to write. Here is no mechanical dictation.

Note also in verses 13-16 the majestic terms in which the Son of Man is described. It is as if John is saying, What does the majesty, the pomp, the glory of Rome, or any other earthly power, compare to the glory of him

that lives, and was dead, and behold lives forevermore, having in his hand the keys of hell and death (*verse 19*). Can you not catch already the approach John is going to use to comfort and encourage his people?

Before we leave this chapter, two points should be explained. In *verse 16* mention is made of the sharp, two-edged sword. This echoes Paul's phrase in *Ephesians 6: 17* concerning the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. It also is parallel to *Hebrews 4: 12*, "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Jesus himself is the Word of God, that Word which both cuts and improves and heals and comforts.

### Seven churches in Asia Minor

Finally we note several references to the number seven: The seven spirits, the seven churches, the seven golden candlesticks, the seven stars, the seven angels. Often in Jewish literature the number seven is used as a symbol of completeness and also as a reference to the eternal Spirit of God. In the use of this symbol John is trying to show that his revelation is authentic and real. It is to the whole church. It comes from the authentic and complete One, and this One is the sufficient One.

Chapters 2 and 3 contain messages to seven churches in Asia Minor. These are not symbolic churches, but actual congregations.

Probably John knew the congregations intimately. He knew their

strength and their weaknesses. He knew their historical situation.

That historical situation, as well as the inner spiritual condition, was not the same in each congregation. In some of the churches persecution was already active. In some of the churches particular temptations were confronting the Christians. In some of the churches were spiritual powers not possessed by the others. Yet while John writes to specific local congregations, his messages are so striking and carry so many seeds of truth that they contain something for both first century and 20th century Christians.

Chapter 2: 1-7 contains a message to the church at Ephesus. This congregation was the largest and most important of the seven churches. It had been blessed with capable leadership. Paul had labored there two years. Timothy later was assigned there. John himself served at Ephesus.

John finds much to praise in the group. *Verses 2 and 3* indicate that the members had much patience and endurance. *Verses 2 and 6* show that the Ephesians were doctrinally sound. They had not been misled by the Nicolaitanes, men who taught such a liberal viewpoint in morals that some people came to believe a Christian could live any type of moral life he chose and engage in worldly and pagan practices as long as he professed intellectual faith in Jesus Christ.

*Verse 4*, however, indicates that something is wrong at Ephesus. A lack of warmth, a cooling of love, is noted. Often it happens that love, tolerance, sympathy, and Christian forbearance are lost when there is constant tension over exactness of doctrine and purity of teaching. Those

who emphasize the need for fundamentals in doctrine and practice are many times cold, austere, and harsh. Doctrinal correctness must always be coupled with Christian charity.

John sharply warns the Ephesians that they will lose their church—the candlestick will be removed—unless they repent. Yet the passage closes, as do all these seven letters, with a note of promise and blessing to those who repent and overcome (*verse 7*).

### No spectator on the balcony

Verses 8-11 of chapter 2 deal with the church at Smyrna, a wealthy port city 50 miles north of Ephesus. Note how John writes concerning the place of Jesus in their lives (*verses 8 and 9*). Our Lord knows our tribulations. He knows them as one who is no mere on-looking God but as one who because of his witness faced death himself. Our Lord is no mere spectator up on the balcony, but an active participant in the arena of life. Because of his action and his victory, those who remain faithful to him know with certainty that they will be given the crown of life. Victory, victory, victory is the bold cry of the church.

A whole sermon could be written on verse 10. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and you shall have tribulation 10 days." The Christian faith is no witch-craft religion that assures its followers a perpetual Christmas Day. It is no magic protection from testing, from pain, from suffering.

John pulls no punches. He tells his readers that their very faith will bring

persecution on them. They are neither to seek persecution, nor to run from it. Always before the man who overcomes is the assurance that while physical death may be his lot, yet he shall not be hurt by the second death—separation from God (*verse 11*).

### Lourdes of Asia Minor

Revelation 2: 12-17 presents the message to the church at Pergamum. This city lies 50 miles north of Smyrna. It is the capital of the province. Here is a temple built to the dead emperor, Augustus Caesar. Here also is the Lourdes of Asia Minor, headquarters of a cult of healing dedicated to Aesculapius. Because it is the capital and hence has in it the local civil and religious pagan leaders, and because it is the seat of so much cultic activities, John refers to it as the seat of Satan.

False beliefs and false teachings seem to trouble Pergamum. In verses 12 and 16 John brings the sharp, two-edged sword of the Word into opposition to these false doctrines.

The Christians at Pergamum were evidently proud and stubborn people. Verse 13 indicates how, in one sense, their stubbornness helped them in face of persecution. They would not bow their necks to worship the statue of the emperor. Evidently Pergamum was the city in which recriminations against the Christians first broke out in the province.

On the other hand, stubbornness led the Pergamum Christians to intellectual pride and to immoral living. Some, at least, were led to believe that as long as they held to the "creeds," as long as they confessed their faith, they were free to mingle

in pagan society, adopting pagan customs (*verses 14, 15*).

John undoubtedly was a bit of a puritan. Yet in the face of persecution, in the face of the attempt of many to synthesize Christianity with Graeco-Roman philosophy and pagan cultic practices, was John not right in demanding that Christians take a stand not only against worldliness in teaching but against worldliness in living?

Verse 17 of chapter 2 sounds quite mystic on first reading. John seems to be saying: Entrance into the feast of God is assured to the faithful man. He will be a new man—symbolized by "a new name." Only the faithful in Christ can have this new experience and can thereby know God. Only the Christian knows God's name—that is, God's person and nature.

In the last analysis, Christianity is only comprehensible from within Christianity, after a man has been con-

verted. If you would know God, be a Christian.

Paradoxically one does not become a Christian through mere study and knowledge, but by taking the leap of faith and surrendering himself to Christ. Why things work out this way is one of the mysteries of the working of the Spirit. The ultimate key words of the Christian faith are not those of philosophy. "Know, study, reason" are not the important words; "Surrender thyself, trust" are.

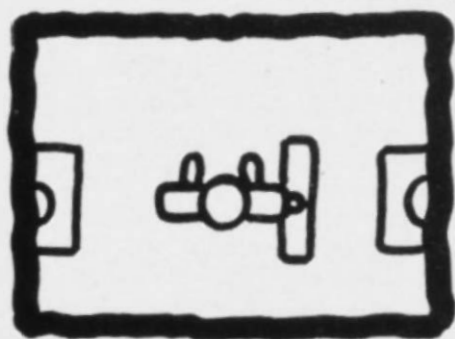
### The depth of Satan

The final passage of chapter 2 contains the message of the church at Thyatira. This commercial city of the province of Lydia lay between Pergamum and Sardis.

From the human viewpoint, Thyatira is the least important of the seven cities mentioned in these two chapters. Yet to this church is addressed the longest message.

"This church, unlike Ephesus, has made continual progress (*verse 19*). Yet the issue is the same as at Pergamum—the mingling by Christians in pagan society. Perhaps some socially prominent Christian woman was the leader in this practice, hence John's harsh words about a Jezebel (*verse 20*).

Much can be said for John's demand that Christians disassociate themselves from pagan practices and pagan influences—the depth of Satan (*verse 24*)—unless their presence among them is specifically evangelistic. Some of us are too prone to allow liberty in morals to descend to the point of license. It is true that Jesus associated with publicans and sinners.



*What is this?*

*Answer:* An air view of student entering Memorial Gateway at Carthage College. Are you interested in entering a strong, co-educational liberal arts college? Then write: Director of Admissions, Carthage College, Carthage, Illinois.



But he did not engage in their practices. His presence there had a redemptive purpose and was not simple self-enjoyment.

The letter to Thyatira closes with a promise to those who remain faithful. Now Rome has the prestige, the grandeur, the power. But in verses 26-29, John reminds his readers as to who has the real grandeur and the real power. The power of Rome shall some day be broken to shivers, but the power of God shall endure forever.

### TOPIC IDEAS

1. This study has been prepared in such a way that it is almost imperative for each leaguer to have his Bible open to the chapters in Revelation under discussion. For intelligent discussion the text must be read. The group may read the chapters silently. Or the leader may read each section aloud before discussing it.

2. Since the King James version has been used in the quotations in this article, it may be well for the leader to read from

that version while the group follows in the Revised Standard version.

3. Discuss the three items that help us to understand the use of symbols in Revelation: A) The approach of the Eastern mind. B) The deliberate obscurity for the sake of safety. C) The significance of apocalyptic literature.

4. Ask the following questions to set the stage: A) Who was the author? B) When was the book written? C) Where? D) To whom? E) What kind of historical conditions prevailed at the time?

5. Be sure to get across these main ideas: A) The note of urgency under which John writes. B) The warning he gives to those who may prove unfaithful in face of persecution. C) The method of comfort he uses to Christians under persecution—that is, the assurance that ultimate victory belongs to Christ and his faithful people.

### Worship suggestions

HYMNS: "Once to Every Man and Nation"

"Rise, Ye Children of Salvation"

"O Day of God Draw Nigh"

PSALM 23 or 91

PRAYER: *Christian Youth Hymnal* No. 32 or 34.

● I have not much sympathy with those who regard the bomb as more wicked than previous methods of warfare. From the time of bows and arrows onwards, warfare has always been as wicked as people knew how to make it. . . . The attempt to prohibit this or that weapon in the hope that war may remain an agreeable pastime is futile, and is inspired, in some, by dislike of perpetual peace, which has become the only alternative to complete disaster.—*Bertrand Russell*.

● Dr. Wilfred Jarvis, outstanding Australian Christian, recently told of a conversation with a religious leader on a university campus. Dr. Jarvis had been speaking to about 300 university students. "You have a wonderful group of Christian young people here," he mentioned to the leader.

"Yes, I suppose so," said the leader, shaking his head, "but I cannot help but recognize that 300 Communists would be having more effect on the life of this campus."—*H. E. Borne*.



Sculptor Hans Schuler's conception of the four horsemen referred to in chapter 6. They represent death, famine and food profiteering, lust for power, and warfare.

## Jesus Is the Saviour

Revelation calls him the Lamb in the Throne. He has satisfied God's demand for purity, righteousness, obedience.

*By John David Neupher*

**I**N the first session dealing with Revelation we completed the second chapter of the book. We took a look at the letters written to the churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, and Thyatira. Now we are ready to discuss the letters addressed to the churches at Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

Verses 1-6 of chapter 3 are written to the church at Sardis, lying 35 miles south of Thyatira. Sardis was once an important city, but by John's time it has become one of those towns that history has passed by. Perhaps because it is not under the pressure and tension of some of the other churches, the Sardis congregation has only a nominal Christian life.

It is significant that Sardis and

Laodicea, the two churches least troubled by persecution and false teachings, were the two congregations that were most dissatisfactory. Complacency was their temptation.

"Remember therefore," John warns, "how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (*verse 3*).

But there is in Sardis, as in any church where the gospel is rightly preached, a few Christians who are worthy. It is to such—the energetic, the faithful, the enduring—that the promise is given that God will not blot their names out of his book.

### Praise for Philadelphia

It is refreshing to turn from the censure in the letter to Sardis to the commendation in the letter to Philadelphia (3: 7-13). The Philadelphia Christians have been faithful and have not denied Christ's name. As a result, John tells them, they will receive a three-fold reward:

1. They will find security in their relation to God (*verse 8b*).

2. They will achieve victory over their immediate foes. These foes are not the Roman officials but Jews who have denied their Messiah (*verse 9*).

3. They will be delivered in the final crisis (*verse 10*).

It will be worthwhile to examine what John means in *verse 7* when he speaks of Jesus under the symbol of the key. Every thinking person stops from time to time to ask what life is all about: Why are we here? Where are we going? Is life here simply a little space between nothingness and

nothingness? Does it consist only in eating and sleeping and filling the belly?

The whole point of life, says the Christian, is fellowship with God. Man was created that he might find life. And it is Jesus Christ who has the key to this life. He alone can open and admit through forgiveness. When he opens, no man, no tragic experience, no effort of the world can shut the door on the believer.

John indicates in the introduction to the message to the church at Laodicea (*verse 14*) that Jesus is the Amen, for he guarantees the truth of any statement and the execution of any promise. He is both the beginning of the creation and the end. He is the goal of all of life.

### Lukewarm Laodicea

The message to the seventh church is a biting one (3: 14-22). Laodicea is a lukewarm church. And John says that this is the worst condition. It is easier to win one who is in opposition than it is to arouse the indifferent, the complacent, the self-satisfied.

The Laodiceans are self-satisfied because their standard of self-judgment is poor. They have forgotten to look in the mirror of the Word of God and see how weak they are, how spiritually poor and blind. They use human standards of judgment instead of divine standards. The man who compares himself to his neighbor may appear fairly decent. But when he compares himself to Jesus he is as nothing.

The Laodiceans are complacent also because they are poor historians. In spite of the perilous situation, in spite

of the threat of false teachings, they are unable to sense the times and see the need for urgent action.

And they have forgotten that it is not by human efforts or good intentions that one receives spiritual riches, but from Jesus (*"of me,"* verse 18). In their blindness they do not see that it is from those whom Christ loves that he demands the most (*verse 19*).

Yet even to these blind, smug Christians remains the promise that if one does repent, Christ will abide with him and through Christ he will gain the final victory. Again and again we hear the promise of victory. But this victory comes only through great tribulation.

### A look at heaven

Having finished, for a moment, with the present historical situation, John turns his attention to heaven.

John is the recipient of a series of visions that deal with such things as the throne of God, the Lamb, the book of the future, the overthrow of the city of Rome, and the bliss of the saints. Note in verse 1 of chapter 4 that these visions are revelations and not just idle speculations.

For our present purpose we need not become overly concerned about trying to understand every symbol. Many of the symbols used are from ancient rabbinic sources. We would have to be excellent scholars of Hebrew antiquity to understand every reference. It is enough to catch the tenor of John's essential ideas.

Chapter 4 contains a vision of the throne of God surrounded by 24 elders and four beasts. Verses 3-5 picture God in majestic terms with his heavenly court around him. By using

terms that fill the reader with a sense of the might of God, John seeks to inspire and brighten the expectations of the believers. Naturally we dare not interpret these descriptions literally.

Chapter 5 tells us that in the right hand of him who sits on the throne is a book sealed with seven seals. It contains, symbolically, the full contents—again the use of "seven" as a figure of completeness—of God's eternal purpose for the future. This purpose is hidden from every created being—man, angel, and demon.

Only the Uncreated One can open God's divine purpose for men. This Uncreated One is the Lion of Judah. Yet the Lion is the Lamb, the one who was slain. He alone has the power and the searching insight of the Spirit.

In effect, John is simply saying that Jesus alone is the author and finisher of our faith. He alone is the key of life and history.

This chapter concludes with a hymn of praise to him who alone can open the book of God's purpose. Verses 9 and 10 are worthy of special comment. In verse 9 the interest is centered in redemption—ever the real kernel of the Christian message. Men are brought into fellowship with God only through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And Jesus, John points out, is not just the Jewish Messiah. He is the Saviour of the whole world, "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (*verse 9*).

This Jesus has not only redeemed men, he has made for men a kingdom. This kingdom shall some day rule the whole earth with the believers as kings and priests before God (*verse 10*). Naked earthly power with its lust for prestige and its emphasis

on material security will be vanquished. It will be vanquished by the Lamb who was slain.

### Book of eternal purpose

Revelation 6 to 8:1 deals with the opening of the seven seals on the book of God's eternal purpose. The construction here may be difficult to follow. We would expect seven consecutive visions, one vision for the opening of each seal. Yet between the sixth and seventh seals is an intermezzo of two visions that are not directly connected with the opening of the seals.

When we come to the climax—the opening of the seventh seal—we see that somehow the vision dissolves into the visions of the seven trumpets. Thus the order is: 1) The first six seals. 2) An intermezzo of two separate visions. 3) The climax of the seventh seal dissolving into seven new visions. All of this has the effect of heightening the suspense and making the reader understand that God will not move to his final acts until the time is ripe and he is ready.

Having assured the church that Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith, John turns his attention to the future and the coming judgment. Revelation 6: 1-8 deals with the opening of the first four seals. Under the symbol of the four horses men are warned of the plagues that will fall upon unbelieving men. These are: 1) The lust for power and the agitation to conquer. 2) The constant warring and lack of peace. 3) Famines and the resulting food profiteering. 4) The unleashing of pestilence, death, and the satanic forces. It is interesting to com-

pare these verses with the 24th chapter of Matthew.

The fifth seal (*verses 9-11*) tells of the continuing martyrdom for believers. It assures them that God has not forgotten them. But they must wait until the coming day of the Lord.

Revelation 6 concludes with the vision of the sixth seal. This tells that the day of wrath is coming with concurrent convulsions in nature. This upset signifies the divine punishment of those who persist in their pride and unfaithfulness. "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (*verse 17*).

Before God's demands for perfect righteousness, goodness, purity, and obedience, who can be saved? John uses the next chapter to answer this question.

### Who can be saved?

Revelation 7 is a pause between the sixth and seventh visions of the seals. Here are presented two interlude visions. Verses 1-8 inform that the faithful have God's sign placed upon them. Although the redeemed must undergo martyrdom, they are remembered by God. They need not fear the judgment despite the fact that they must endure the other five wraths visited upon earth.

The number 144,000 should not be taken literally. Use of the number is merely a stereotyped method of naming God's children.

Note that in the list of the 12 tribes Joseph is substituted for Ephraim and the name of Dan is dropped. This follows the rabbinic tradition that from the tribe of Dan will come the Antichrist.

The first interlude vision deals with

the spiritual safety of the redeemed on earth. The second interlude vision (7: 9-17) deals with the bliss of the redeemed in heaven.

Words of joy are offered to believers of all ages: To those who wonder if life is worth living, to those who mourn, to those who are lonely and perplexed, to those who must make their witness before hostile pagan authorities.

Here is a multitude that no man can number. They are from every nation and people. They are victorious because, having remained faithful, they have conquered. Yet they have not conquered on their own. They have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (verse 14).

They are under God's presence, free from material needs and free from suffering. Their Saviour is with them.

If you were an Ephesian Christian who had been threatened with imprisonment, torture, and death, would you not find strength and power in saying these words confidently to yourself: "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (verses 15-17).

This series of visions concerning the opening of the seven seals on the book

of God's eternal purposes concludes with the opening of the seventh seal (8: 1). Instead of describing the climax—as would be expected from verses 6: 17 and 7: 2—Revelation simply states that when the seventh seal is opened there is an ominous period of hushed awe in heaven.

Then immediately the vision dissolves into a new series of visions concerning the seven angels with the seven trumpets. Thus suspense is heightened and curiosity is aroused. John is not yet ready to reveal the end.

## TOPIC IDEAS

1. Remember that for profitable study of this topic each leaguer should have his Bible open to the particular chapters in Revelation under discussion.
2. Is there in our churches today a sense of the urgency of the times? Give reasons which show why the church should not be complacent today.
3. Discuss in what sense Jesus is the Key. The Amen.
4. Explain what it means to lose and yet to win, to be chastened and not killed, to die and yet to live.
5. What is the kernel of the Christian message?
6. How does John answer the question concerning what God shall do for his faithful ones in trying days? Refer to chapter 7.

## Suggested worship

### HYMNS:

- "O Come, O Come Emmanuel"
- "The Church's One Foundation"
- "My Soul, Be On Thy Guard"
- "For All the Saints Who From Their Labors Rest"

CANTICLE: "Dignus est Agnus," page 359, *Christian Youth Hymnal*

PRAYER: 1 of 58 in CYH.

# The Seven Trumpets

Blowing of the final trumpet announces the start of the last great struggle between the forces of good and evil.

*By John David Newpher*

WE HAVE examined John's introductory vision, his letters to the seven churches, his vision of the throne of God, and the visions concerning the book of God's eternal purposes. We have noted in the visions of the opening of the seven seals that between the opening of the sixth and seventh seal there is an interlude consisting of two other revelations. And we have seen that the vision of the seventh seal dissolves into a fresh series of visions.

In the next series of visions—dealing with seven angels with seven trumpets—the same general order prevails: 1) The blowing of the first six trumpets. 2) A pause of two interlude visions. 3) The blowing of the seventh trumpet with the vision dissolving into new visions.

By doubling his visions John heightens the effect and brings home to us the power of God's judgment. In both the visions of the seven seals and the seven trumpets—together with the seven bowls, about which we shall study later—John's essential idea is that God shall judge the world and

overcome evil. This is the message we must cling to. We must avoid getting bogged down in details, in numerology, in correlating the seals or the trumpets or the bowls to this or that stage of history.

Before the blowing of the trumpets there is a little scene (8: 2-5) that describes how an angel mingles together the prayers of the saints and the angels to form an incense before the throne of God. These prayers were for the speedy end of the world, the coming of Christ, and the quick application of judgment on a persecuting and unbelieving world. The mingling seems to indicate that even heaven is reinforcing the petitions of the militant saints with its prayers for the end and the judgment. The seven trumpets that follow show that these prayers were to be quickly answered.

## The trumpets blow

Revelation 8: 6-13 discusses the blowing of the first four trumpets. The earth, the sea, the waters, and the sky are affected. Yet note that only one-third of these things are to be destroyed. The thought is that God is merciful in spite of his judgments.

We must be sure not to push these symbols in such a manner as to correlate them to some actual historical series of events in some chronological order. Rather we should catch: 1) The note of warning. 2) The certainty of a judgment against evil. 3) The assurance that the power of heaven and earth is the Lord God's.

Now we build up towards the climax with the blowing of the last three trumpets. Each of the trumpets is accompanied by a woe. Compare 9: 12, the first woe; 11:14, the second woe; and 12:12, the third woe.

The blowing of the fifth trumpet (9: 1-12) unleashes a plague of locusts that torture, but do not kill, the unbelievers for five months. The locusts are like demons that are allowed to sting men. Their leader (*verse 11*) is the king of the abyss. Perhaps we can see here the thought of the torments of conscience, torments that follow sin.

Focus your attention for a moment on verse 6 of chapter 9: "And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."

When life is going his way, the evil man hates death. But when life is not to his liking, he looks to death as an escape into nothingness. Then the withholding of death is to him a curse, for he must answer to the circumstances his evil has created.

The Christian, however, neither seeks death nor is afraid of it. He looks forward to death as the door into the life to come. At the same time he knows that his times are in God's hand and that whether he lives or dies he is the Lord's.

## Day of accounting

Revelation 9: 13-21 deals with the blowing of the sixth trumpet and the unleashing of the second woe. Here John uses some historical allusions to clarify his point.

The river Euphrates was regarded as the boundary between the Roman empire and Rome's dreaded enemy, the Parthian kingdom. The Parthians were awesome warriors, noted for their fine horsemanship and excellent archery. It was from their habit of shooting a cloud of arrows at their foes at the moment of retreating that we have the saying a Parthian or parting shot.

Perhaps John is suggesting here that Parthia will be an instrument of punishment on sinful Rome, just as in the Old Testament God used the Assyrians and the Babylonians as instruments to punish disobedient Israel and Judah.

The symbol of the four angels (*verse 15*) was a familiar Jewish apocalyptic idea. Each nation was supposed to have its angel or prince. The binding or loosing of the angel indicated whether the nation was to know peace or have destruction visited upon it.

John here is saying that a man, a family, a nation, a civilization can deal with evil just so long. Then comes the day of accounting. God is the Lord of men and of history. And the day of accounting will not be a pleasant day to the unrepentant man or family or nation.

Even in the face of punishment, John points out, some men will not be warned. "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their



hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (verses 20, 21).

Some men will not hear the gospel. They think they are the lords of the earth. They believe they can get away with anything. They will not listen to warnings.

### Another intermezzo

At the end of the vision of the blowing of the sixth trumpet we come again to an intermezzo. It contains two visions. The material runs from Revelation 10: 1 to 11: 14.

With the beginning of chapter 10 we come into more difficult territory. Up to the end of chapter 9 the method of presentation and the symbols used are reasonably clear, but now both the arrangement used and the figures employed become quite diverse and complicated. Chapters 10 and 11 seem to be a pause before the final catastrophes are depicted.

Thus far we have been led through the preliminaries to God's judgments. Now the seer seems to be ready to proclaim the final judgments. We say "seems to be ready" for we shall find later that again there are more visions that must first be reported. He becomes more ecstatic. The visions and revelations come faster and sometimes are dealt with more fleetingly. But this has the effect of making the reader's task more difficult.

Revelation 10: 1 shows us that John is back on earth once more gazing up into heaven. He sees a mighty angel

whose message is for the whole world. The message, however, is not to be written down. John does not describe the vision of the seven thunders. The inference is that it is too terrible to describe. Instead John is assured that there will be no more delay in God's final judgment. The interval of rest, mentioned in 6: 11, is over. The final judgment shall come when the seventh trumpet sounds (cf. 11: 15). Then the final battle will take place with: 1) The fall of the dragon from heaven (chapter 12). 2) The battle against the beast on earth.

Meanwhile (10:8-11) John is told to go, take the little book that the angel has in his hand, and eat it. The book is to be sweet to the taste and bitter to the stomach. A similar idea of eating the Word of God is to be found in the experiences of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

The point seems to be that the experience of being inspired by God is pleasant, but the burden of announcing God's Word to men is often disquieting. The relationship with God is delightful, but difficult duties are given to the prophet and the saint.

Why are we told nothing more about what the little book contains? Perhaps either because John is unable to find words to describe his vision or because, like the reference in Daniel 12: 10, "Many shall be purified and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."

At any rate, by not disclosing the significance involved John heightens the suspense and makes us realize that in the final analysis we do not need

to understand all of God's purposes. We need only to trust in him.

### Enter two witnesses

Chapter 11:1-14 contains the second interlude vision between the blowing of the sixth and seventh trumpet. This vision of the two witnesses is an assurance that in the midst of the dark purposes of God there will be preservation for God's saints.

In verses 1 and 2, the seer is told to measure the temple. He, however, is not to measure the outer court—the court of the Gentiles. The act of measuring is a sign of preservation. The saints within the temple are to be preserved through God's measuring, but the heathen shall not be preserved. They shall be given up to destruction.

Or the thought may be that the inner spiritual life cannot be harmed, even though the Gentiles will have destructive influence over the external life. They can trample down the body, but will be unable to harm the soul. We need not be concerned about the time symbols used here, for they are figures to be found in Jewish apocalyptic literature.

Verses 3 to 13 discuss the two witnesses. It is impossible to assign identities to these two witnesses.

John seems to have tied several allusions together here. Verse 4 carries overtones of the two witnesses mentioned in Zechariah 4: 3, 11-14. Verses 5 and 6 make us think of Elijah and Moses. Or there may be allusions here to two godly witnesses who died during the persecutions in the time of James. But symbolically the two witnesses stand for all the Christian witnesses and martyrs who find deliverance—not from death but through

death. They receive their power from God (verse 4). They are not meek witnesses, but have the power of punishment. Yet (verses 7-10) evil is temporarily victorious over them. The world rejoices at their death.

Note in verse 8 how the witnesses are identified with Christ's crucifixion. This is one of the few references in the book to the historical life of Jesus.

There is also the promise of ultimate victory, for the witnesses are raised from the dead and translated to glory, as the Lord also ascended. If John were speaking in simple language to us he might say, "Look, don't expect your faith to be a magic amulet that will keep all evil and danger from you. In this world, if you proclaim your faith and live and preach the gospel, you are going to run into opposition. Your very faith will antagonize evil men and torment their conscience. And there will be times when evil will defeat you externally. Evil men may even cause your death. Yet in dying for your faith you will win.

"Your victory will not come through escape from death," John might continue, "but through death. But death will have no hold over you. Through death you will come to glory."

Perhaps American Christians cannot realize the utter power of John's promise. These words were not written for peaceful historical situations, but for times when the church was being rocked to its foundations by governmental edicts. Spies were in the pews. Prison terms threatened those who preached the Word of God. Yet Christians in China, in Russia, and in some South American countries need this consolation right now.

## The seventh trumpet

Chapter 11 closes with the blowing of the seventh trumpet (*verses 14-19*). This trumpet signifies the preparation for the last great series of battles. But, as we shall note, the vision dissolves into fresh visions.

It is as if John were saying: 'The Lord has begun to reign. The day of the Lord has come. Yet it is only the dawn of the day. Much must be done before the day is over, for the forces of evil are still in the field and must be overcome.'

You, John says to his readers, are living in the final day of conflict. History has been a war between the forces of good and evil. Christ is in the field, but while the victory is ours, the battle still goes on. The present trouble you face is simply the final phase in the antagonism between God and evil.

John tries to comfort those in persecution by showing them that their difficulties are not just meaningless, isolated events, but a part of the great conflict. Thus they can see significance in their struggles and be comforted.

Whenever we know that what we have to endure has meaning and is leading somewhere, we can take it much more bravely than we can if the tragedy is senseless.

While times and conditions have changed since John wrote, we can be sure of two things: The battle between good and evil is still raging, and victory belongs to the faithful.

NOTE ON 11: 19: It was a part of Jewish tradition that the day of restoration of the people would include the

restoration of the lost ark of the covenant. Once more John borrowed Jewish tradition and apocalyptic figures and adapted them to Christian expectations.

## TOPIC IDEAS

1. What is our attitude toward death when we think of life as a little space between nothingness and nothingness? How should the Christian regard death—as an evil or as a blessing?

2. What is there in some people which makes them stubborn and unrepentant even in the face of repeated warnings in God's Word that there will be a day of accounting?

3. Discuss what John means when he talks about both the sweetness and the bitterness of the Word of God.

4. What does John mean when he tells us that victory for the saint comes through death rather than through escape from death?

5. Can tragedy be differentiated between the senseless and the meaningful? Is it easier to bear suffering when you can see that suffering adds to the gospel's witness?

6. Are we right to describe history as a battle between good and evil with God at work on the side of good in order to bring about his purposes, or is history simply an unplanned series of interrelated events?

## Suggested worship

### HYMNS:

"O Word of God Incarnate"

"The Son of God Goes Forth to War"

"Who Is on the Lord's Side?"

"In the Hour of Trial"

PSALM: 1 or 27

PRAYERS 30 or 57 in *Christian Youth Hymnal*.

● Let us not park our brains at the door as we enter church, nor our hearts at the door as we leave.—Robert M. Holmes.

# Satan's Angry Rebellion

The evil angel gets kicked out of heaven. Then he takes his revolt to earth and rallies immoral men to his cause.

By John David Newpher

**I**N our last study in Revelation we came to the sounding of the seventh trumpet. This action signified the dawn of the last great day of battle. John told his readers that forces of evil were still to be overthrown.

Chapters 12 to 14 discuss the enemies of the church. John seems to see three antagonists to be overcome: 1) The local Asiatic governmental and priestly authorities who foster paganism and compel worship of the Roman emperor. 2) The empire itself that stands behind these local authorities and gives them power. 3) Satan himself who lends his power to the empire and all the empire stands for.

John does not discuss these three enemies and their overthrow in a logical, concise fashion. Instead he uses visions.

Revelation 12 deals with the vision of the woman with her child. The symbolism is easy to understand. We are naturally led to thoughts of the church and of Jesus. The woman seems to stand for the true Israel—the church. She is glorified by the use of the figures of the sun and moon and stars (*verse 1*).

The dragon prepares to attack the child, but the child is caught up into heaven. So the dragon turns his attention to the woman, but she flees to a place in the desert prepared for her. Perhaps John is referring to periods of temporary rest that the Palestinian church experienced.

## War in heaven

Verses 7-9 describe a war in heaven. If we follow the traditional view that this war occurred before the creation of man, then there is some confusion in time here. But the thought is that Christ's victory—his death, resurrection, and ascension—has really overcome Satan. What follows is merely the death throes, the final assaults of a beaten Satan.

Heaven rejoices over the fall of Satan (*verses 10-12*). But a warning is quickly given to earth concerning the wrath of Satan, who knows that he must act at once. He is aware that his time is short.

The dragon is finally conquered by the blood of the Lamb and by the faithful testimony and witnessing of the saints (*verse 11*). Evil is always overthrown when the faithful do not love their life so much that they seek to escape death.

Having been thrust out of heaven, the fallen Satan angrily pursues the woman. He seeks to destroy the church. But the woman flees before him. We catch undertones here that remind us of the flight from Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea.

### Vision of two beasts

Next comes the vision of the two beasts. The first beast is undoubtedly the Roman empire to whom Satan, now in the background, has given his power.

What did the Christians have against the empire to see in it the beast of Satan? First, the requirement to worship the emperor as a god and to sacrifice before his idol. Secondly, the permission given by the empire to the tremendous number of idolatries and pagan religions that flourished at the time. Thirdly, the concurrent immorality, vice, and evil in the empire.

First-century Christians were not as easy-going towards immorality, dishonesty, and license as we are in our century. They believed that any authority or agency or group that permitted idolatry and immorality was a tool of Satan.

It is quite evident in chapter 13 that John is using symbolism that does not apply to some future age, but to the age in which he writes. Some think that the 10 horns mentioned on the beast (*verse 1*) represent the 10 Roman emperors who reigned from Augustus Caesar to the time when the book is being written. The seven heads stand for the seven of those 10 emperors who lived long enough to be worshipped. The blasphemous name would represent the custom of these

seven emperors to call themselves *deus* or divine.

In verse 2 John combines the four beasts mentioned in Daniel 7 into one beast—the empire. And in verse 3 is a reference to the most hated of the emperors, Nero, whose death was followed by bloody revolutions that seemed about to topple the empire. Yet the empire was preserved under Vespasian.

So terrible is the power of Rome that it is able to continue even in the midst of its own self-destruction. And that power exists on Satanic worship and worship of the beast—Rome. But those who worship such power and such evil are those whose names are not written in the book of life.

*(Note concerning the 42 months mentioned in verse 5b: This is a reference to the period when the Jews were persecuted by Antiochus Epiphanes in the pre-Christian era. It is used here symbolically for the period when evil is in the saddle.)*

In the face of this evil, this worship of power, what are Christians to do? They are to avoid fighting evil with evil's weapons: Force, persecution, torture, dishonesty. Certainly John would not agree with the Jesuitical motto that the ends justify the means. Christians are to remember that "he that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword" (*verse 10*). Christians are to remain patient, to endure martyrdom instead of striking with the sword. In the end the meek shall inherit the earth.

Revelation 13: 11-18 discusses the second beast. We judge that it stands for the local authorities, political and

religious, who seek to force people to worship the Roman authority and the false divinity. Through trickery and pretension of miracles, they seek to induce men to idolatry.

And behind their trickery and their magic is coercion. We see in verse 15b that failure to worship the emperor and the empire meant death. Those who subscribed to that worship were evidently given some imperial certificate, coin, or talisman certifying their subservience. Those who bore this mark were permitted to trade and to engage in public business. Those who did not subscribe to idolatry were excluded from public life and not allowed to do business.

Their modern counterparts are those Christians behind the Iron Curtain who are refused labor certificates or ration books if they refuse to subscribe to official Communist edicts and policies.

In verse 18 is the famous number 666. Many different sectarian movements try to correlate 666, the Antichrist, and some particular historical personage of the age in which they are living.

Many Biblical authorities believe that this mystical number refers either to the Emperor Nero as the outstanding figure of all that Rome stands for or to the current pagan legend that the dead Nero would return and rule Rome once more. At any rate, it seems obvious that the reference is to some particular person who represents the beast and enforces imperial worship either influentially or actually.

But, John says, let the heathen have the mark of the beast upon them. For if you as Christians are faithful you also have a mark upon you. The

Father's name is written on your forehead. And the business you engage in is God's business.

Thus in the first five verses of Revelation 14 John comforts the faithful ones. Only they know the holy song—a song of joy and victory. Of course, we must not interpret literally the number 144,000 and believe, as do some sectarians, that only 144,000 people will be saved. The number is a symbol representing the perfect number of the saints.

Men are divided into two groups—those who have the mark of the beast on them and those who bear on their foreheads the name of God.

### The final outcome

What will be the ultimate outcome of these two groups?

Those who bear the mark of the beast will be destroyed. For "the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name" (verses 10, 11).

Those who are patient and faithful will receive glory. Of them it shall be said, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (verse 13).

The gospel is preached for all men to hear (verse 6) and all men are told to "fear God, and give glory to him,

for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (verse 7).

But if men will not hear this gospel and this warning then before them is the wine-press of God's wrath. Note the terrible figure John employs in verses 15-20 of chapter 14.

It is obvious that John does not think of God as some kindly old grandfather. He would not agree with those Universalists who believe that in the end all men will be saved. John saw God as One who is merciful beyond description to those who love him, but who will have nothing to do with those who will not listen to both his word of warning and his word of grace.

There are those sentimentalists who

feel repugnance about any thought of eternal punishment and torment. And we must believe that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ takes no delight in the torments of the unbelievers. But we must remember that when men deliberately rebel against God and harden their hearts they will know separation from God in this world and in the next.

Furthermore we must remember certain things: 1) John has something of the wrath of the Old Testament prophets against those who persecute his faithful ones. 2) The times in which the seer is laboring are tense. 3) Throughout this book John is speaking in symbolic language. It is unwarranted to handle a symbol figuratively in one place and literally in another. To me it is sufficient to speak

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of the destination of the unbelievers in terms of separation from God.

### Seven bowls of plagues

After a partial description (*chapter 14: 6-20*) of the wrath of God, John turns to a more full description in the visions of the seven angels with the seven bowls of plagues. This series of visions is in chapters 15 and 16.

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Before John describes the terrible outpouring of God's wrath on the heathen he pauses to give a word of comfort to the faithful. This comfort comes in verses 1-4 of chapter 15 in the little vision of the sea of glass. This sea of glass is mentioned in Revelation 4: 6 as a part of the description of heaven. It evidently alludes to the firmament of heaven. Those who have gained the victory over the beast stand on the sea of glass (are in heaven) and sing a song of praise to God for their deliverance.

John again makes an allusion to the escape of the children of Israel from Egypt (*verse 3*). This is a continuation of his idea that the Christian believers are the true Israel. Just as Moses delivered his people from the wrath of Egypt so Jesus will deliver Christians from the wrath of the beast.

In the entire passage that follows John seems to infer that before the bowls are poured out, the redeemed are removed from earth to the safety of heaven. The plagues fall only on the unbelievers. This, it will be noted, is a different idea from that found in the plagues of the seven trumpets. There the believers had to share in the misfortunes of earth. It is obvious that John is through with preliminaries. He is talking about the ultimate wrath of God.

Chapter 15 concludes with a description of the appearance of the seven angels who are going to pour out this ultimate wrath on the world. "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power," *verse 8* states, "and no man was able to enter the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." Now God is



unapproachable until his wrath is outpoured, says John. Now the period of rest is over, the opportunity to repent is past.

### Sores, blood and fire

In chapter 16 John describes the terrible things that befall earth when God's wrath is outpoured. No interlude or intermezzo visions are here. Although chapters 17 and 18 may be regarded as a fuller description of the working out of the seventh bowl of wrath, there is no dissolving of the seventh vision into new visions.

The first bowl brings grievous sores on men. The second bowl's contents cause the sea to become as coagulated blood. The third bowl causes the rest of earth's waters to become blood. The fourth outpouring causes men to be scorched with fire.

The fifth bowl is poured on the seat of the beast itself—Rome. The kingdom is filled with pain and darkness. The sixth bowl causes the river Euphrates to dry up. The kings of the East—the enemies of Rome—are permitted to cross the river and war against Rome. The nations gather at Armageddon in a confused battle. At one and the same time they war against each other and also against the Lamb. They are misled and influenced by three false spirits from the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. John is again referring to the enemies of the church—Satan, the Roman empire, and the local pagan authorities.

The seventh bowl outpoured causes the great city itself to be divided into three parts. When Rome falls, all the

other pagan cities fall. The islands flee away and the mountains are not. Great hail stones weighing over 100 pounds fall on men.

It would seem that with this final plague John would come to the end of his visions of God's wrath. But as we shall see in the final section of our studies, chapters 17 and 18 contain a fuller description of the fall of the city of Rome. Chapters 19 and 20 describe the fall of the empire, the overthrow of idolatry and of Satan, and the judgment of the wicked. Then, and then only, is John ready to describe the delights awaiting the faithful.

## TOPIC IDEAS

1. What are the forces that overcome evil? Is moral action enough? Discuss the place of the atoning work of Jesus in the overcoming of evil.

2. How did John use the historical event of the flight from Egypt as a means of comforting the faithful?

3. How does John tie up immorality with idolatry?

4. With what weapons are Christians to fight evil? Why are we not to use the methods of evil to fight evil?

5. What is the mark the Christian bears?

### Worship materials

#### HYMNS:

"Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty"

"O Where are Kings and Empires Now"

"Brightly Gleams Our Banner"

PSALM: 8 or 46

PRAYER: 29 or 50 from *Christian Youth Hymnal*.

● A man really believes only as much religion as he is willing to apply to his daily living.—*Harold E. Garner.*

# Even so, Come, Lord Jesus

After much complicated prophesy, Revelation concludes with a simple prayer of yearning for Christ's kingdom.

*By John David Neupher*

THE concluding section of Revelation contains some of the most difficult passages of the book. In chapters 17-20 John describes the ultimate outpouring of God's wrath. In doing so he uses many confusing symbols coupled with what appear to be historical allusions to specific rulers and historical events.

While it is difficult to understand some of the specific designations, the general idea is quite clear. It is that before the wrath of God all that is pagan, cruel, idolatrous, and blood-thirsty shall be overcome. The meaning becomes clearer if we see that chapters 17 and 18 are a description of the fall of Rome. Chapters 19 and 20 depict the fall of the whole empire, the overthrow of idolatry and of Satan, and the judgment of the wicked.

In chapter 17: 1-6 John describes the Roman empire as the great harlot. Throughout Revelation, as well as in some passages of the Old Testament, idolatry is discussed under the figure of adultery. The idea is that when a man worships an alien god he is unfaithful in his relations to the one true God. Thus the nations have com-

mitted evil in coming to worship Rome, the government that is seated on many waters (that is, ruler over the known world).

In verse 3 the woman can be interpreted as the city of Rome, while the beast on which she sits is the whole Roman empire. The entire picture, however, must not be pressed too far. It is evident that God's wrath shall fall on total Rome—city, empire, and government.

What John thinks of Rome is contained in symbolical language in verses 4-6: She is rich, strong, and proud in her pomp. Yet in her is great evil and abominations — sexual irregularity, cruelty, injustice, a persecuting spirit.

In verses 7-11 the vision alters a bit and the beast, which first stood for the empire itself, now stands for Nero as the symbol of all that is Rome. There was a legend current at the time that the dead Nero would somehow revive and restore the glory of the empire. Perhaps John sees Nero in Domitian, the second great persecutor of the Christians, Nero being the first. This would clarify verse 8, which talks about "the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

In verses 9-11 the symbol of the

seven heads of the beast is used in two ways. First, it refers to the seven hills upon which Rome is built. Secondly it seems to refer to the seven emperors who lived long enough to be called *divus* or divine. They would be Augustus (27 B.C.-A.D. 14), Tiberius (14-37), Caligula (37-41), Claudius (41-54), Nero (54-68), Vespasian (69-79), and Titus (79-81).

The eighth head (*verse 11*) would then refer to Domitian, the second great persecutor. Many Bible scholars believe the book of Revelation was written during his reign.

In verses 12-18 John writes of a very confused war. Perhaps he is thinking of an impending revolution within Rome. It would seem that Nero reborn will gather to himself the 10 kings of the East—perhaps the Parthians—and war against Rome for rebelling against him. Yet (*verse 14*) the two protagonists—and it is evident that John holds no brief for either—are also at war against the Lamb and his faithful ones. The Christians are to be caught in the middle of this confused war. If they remain faithful, however, they will be saved.

The 10 kings, together with Nero reborn, are successful against Rome. They assume the empire, only to become the last great foe. "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of the Lord shall be fulfilled" (*verse 17*). Here again are echoes of the Old Testament. Remember how God used the evil nations of Assyria and Babylon to bring about his will.

Chapter 18 contains songs celebrating the fall of Babylon—the city of Rome. The language throughout is



Nero's servants set fire to Christians so the emperor's garden will be illuminated.

prophetical. We catch again the majestic phrases of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Verses 1-3 proclaim the fall. Heaven sings in exultation. At the same time the faithful are warned to

disassociate themselves from Rome and not to participate in her evils. The foes of Rome are told to repay her double for all her evil (*verses* 6-8). Yet this does not seem to be addressed to the Christian people, for they are not told to punish Rome. Instead they are to disassociate themselves from her.

But while heaven rejoices over the fall of Rome, the subject nations that have come to obey her and to idolize her lament over her. The merchants, the traders, the sailors and shipmasters, all who grew rich through Rome and in turn helped her to grow rich mourn over both the loss of their trade and the destroyed wealth of the city. These passages remind us of chapters 26-28 in the book of Ezekiel where it is written that men lamented over the fall of Tyre.

This dirge for Rome, however, is over-ridden by the rejoicing of those who have been trodden down by Rome. The chapter closes with another song of doom on Rome. The overthrow will be sudden, violent, and irrevocable. The city will be utterly desolate (*verse* 23) as she made desolate the ones she persecuted.

### How interpret prophecies?

How are we to interpret these prophecies concerning the fall of the city of Rome? It is evident that when John wrote Rome was still in its glory. And it continued to be in its glory for centuries after the author died. And Rome did not collapse in a day. It slowly yielded to the Germanic invasions. Even after the power of the empire moved from Italy to Constantinople the city of Rome continued to

be a center throughout the medieval age.

What are we to say? Are John's words of non-effect? Or is their fulfillment still to come?

Certain things must be pointed out. It is dangerous to particularize these prophecies to any one age or any one historical development. Yet the essential truths that John is trying to bring to his readers still remain: 1) Evil cannot perpetually endure. The Roman empire did come apart at its seams. Evil nations, evil families, evil home, evil institutions and agencies, evil persons cannot perpetually endure.

2) To every man the day of accounting eventually comes. God hates and despises evil, and in the end he will overthrow it and judge it. 3) Christian people believe that some day the whole evil civilization and world will be overthrown and judged and a new day will dawn.

4) Those who trust faithfully in God will find safety in him. Their safety, however, may come through death instead of by escape from death.

### More rejoicing in heaven

John now addresses himself to this wider range of thoughts. The city of Rome has fallen. The empire, idolatry, Satan himself will be overthrown. The wicked will be judged. Yet John first has to tell his readers of the rejoicing in heaven over what God has already done and what he is about to do. The first 10 verses of chapter 19 describe this rejoicing.

Heaven exults that the Lamb will be married to his bride. The church will be united with her Lord. "Blessed are they which are called unto the

marriage supper of the Lamb" (*verse* 9).

But before the marriage feast can be consummated the final victory must be won. Verses 11-16 describe Jesus riding forth as the royal Victor. He is the Faithful and True One (*verse* 11). The robe of only the Faithful and True One is dipped in blood, for he alone conquers his enemies. He does this through the Word, the revelation and authority of God. The picture here describes the absolute superiority of Christ, since he alone is King of kings and Lord of lords.

Against this victorious Lord the empire, under the symbol of the beast, and the local pagan authorities (the second beast) gird themselves for battle.

The first 10 verses of chapter 20 describe how Satan is cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years. During this period those who have refused to yield to the beast reign with Christ. The rest of the dead live not.

Verse 7 says that after the thousand years are over Satan is loosed for a little while. He stirs up trouble among the nations and gets them to war against the saints. But now fire comes down from heaven to devour the insurrectionists. The devil himself is cast forever into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are already.

### The pre-millennialists

The passage of scripture just described has caused much misunderstanding in the church. Groups such as the Seventh Day Adventists and the Mormons, and others known as pre-millennialists, have insisted on a literal

interpretation of the passage. They teach that there will be a first and second resurrection and that between the two resurrections Christ will reign for a thousand years with his saints. The evil dead will not yet be raised.

The church as a whole has rejected a literal interpretation of this passage. It accepts only one second coming of Christ and one bodily resurrection.

Our own Lutheran church in the Augsburg Confession, Article 17, rejects any pre-millennial view: "They also condemn also others, who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions that before the resurrection of the dead, the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed (exterminated)."

Here are some points to be remembered in interpreting this difficult passage. These 10 verses comprise the only section in the New Testament that teach a thousand-year reign and two resurrections. Remember that scripture must be interpreted in the light of scripture.

And, of course, we must remember that, in view of the figurative approach throughout Revelation, we are unwarranted to interpret literally this one section. With the coming of the

## WAGNER

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gospel era—that is, the age following the revelation of Jesus Christ—the work of Satan is naturally restricted. Those who come to believe in Jesus live with him now and are assured of the life to come. Thus those who turn from sin know, figuratively and spiritually, a resurrection from sin and evil to the life in God. Immediately before Christ's second coming there shall be great apostasy and anti-Christian activity. But in the end Christ will defeat evil, as he defeated it in the cross, and will gather his believers unto himself. Here again is the note of comfort for the faithful.

The final five verses of chapter 20 describe the final judgment and the destruction of death and hell. All men must appear before the Lamb (*verse 12*) and will be judged by what they were in this life. Since deeds merely reflect what the real inner faith of a man is, the actual basis of judgment is faith in God. Any man whose name is not found in the book of life is rejected before God (*verse 15*).

Two things are plain here. First, John sees clearly that Rome and its paganism shall eventually be overthrown. The Word of God shall be victorious against this specific enemy. This, we know, has happened. The institutions of the Roman empire are gone, the empire itself smashed by the Germanic invasions. And the gospel also has conquered Rome spiritually through evangelization and missions.

Secondly, John sees clearly that in the end God will be victorious over all evil. Christ will come again to overthrow Satan, judge the world, and bring about his kingdom. John, however, does not specify the length of time that will intervene between the

judgment on pagan Rome and that final act. We are still living between these two events. Nor does John indicate that there will be other pagan governments and institutions that will rise to hamper and persecute the church. But John would certainly prophesy that just as evil can never be ultimately victorious, so these pagan nations and institutions must, in turn, fall before the living Word. In the end evil itself, personified in Satan, must fall.

Here is the warning: Have nothing to do with evil.

Here is the comfort: God knows your trials. He is fighting with you.

And here is the joy: Victory will be to God and to his faithful ones.

### Visions of the holy city

Chapters 21 and 22 deal with the final series of visions—the visions of the holy city. Verses 1-8 of chapter 21 stand as a prelude to the final vision. John sees a new heaven and a new earth (*verse 1*). But the sea is not present, for the ancients regard the sea as a symbol of evil, of restlessness, of separation. Now God is no longer absent from men. "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (*verse 3*). Everything that has marred life is done away—sorrow, pain, crying, death. The Alpha and Omega reigns with his faithful ones. The apostates, the idolaters, the immoralists are cast out.

Next John turns to a description of the holy city (*verses 9-21*). He sees it as from a high hill. It is a city with 12 gates and 12 foundations, probably

signifying both the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles. Thus both the Old Testament and the New Testament church are included.

The measure of the city is like a cube, signifying its perfection and completeness. The stones mentioned correspond roughly to the stones on the Jewish high priest's breastplate. Perhaps the thought is that that which was once reserved to the high priest is now the privilege of all of God's people.

There is no need in the city for a temple (21:22-22:5). God himself is the temple. In like manner the city has no need for physical light. The glory of God is the light. People live without fear and pass freely to and fro. The life is abundant, prosperous, secure, filled with uninterrupted worship of God.

Of course, again, we must not make the mistake of taking this as a literal description of heaven. But the keynotes of the life to come are clear: 1) The presence of God. 2) Fellowship with his glory. 3) Absence of evil. 4) Abundant spiritual life.

### The end, at last

In the epilogue (22: 6-21) two truths are emphasized again and again. 1) This book, says John, is an important authentic revelation. 2) The end is near.

This prophecy is not a private opinion of John, but is a direct testimony of Jesus (verse 16). Men are not to add to, tamper with, or alter this book

(verses 17-18). "Behold I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (verse 7).

Then the book closes with what must always be the prayer of the church, whether the church is living in peaceful or in troubled times. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (verse 20). For every believer longs and yearns for the time when Christ will come to establish his perfect kingdom. Who would not exchange the life in this world for the life eternal with God? And "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

### TOPIC IDEAS

1. How does John use the Nero legend?
2. Discuss the similarity of chapter 18 in Revelation with chapters 26 to 28 in the book of Ezekiel.
3. What are the four essential truths John is trying to convey to us through his description of the fall of Rome?
4. Discuss what John is trying to say through his description of Jesus as Victor. What does he mean when he says only Jesus really knows his own name?
5. Why does our church reject pre-millennialist concepts?
6. What are the ingredients which go to make up life in the holy city?

### Worship materials

#### HYMNS:

"O Zion Haste"

"Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun"

"Ten Thousand Times Ten Thousand"

PSALM 145

PRAYER: 90 or 91.

● He who says he has never known fear is afraid to face the truth, for in one way or another, every human being has known some degree of fear in his lifetime.—*Janet Kempton.*

## REVIEWS OF CURRENT MOVIES



John Ericson, clerk in the town's only hotel, is reluctant to give Spencer Tracy a room. He suspects Tracy of coming to investigate four-year-old murder. (M-G-M)

### Tracy has 24 harrowing hours in "Bad Day at Black Rock"

*By Eugene Hoeffman*

Stark drama comes to this desert waystation the day the streamliner stops to let off war veteran Spencer Tracy. The reason? The day after Pearl Harbor something ugly had been permitted to happen which the conscience of the community cannot forget. Strangers are unwelcome because of what might come to light.

Unwittingly Spencer walks into this trap which is sprung by chief menace Robert Ryan and his two hatchetmen. Although Tracy operates with one arm disabled (from the war) you'll not want for action when the trouble starts.

Tense and suspenseful. CinemaScope and Eastman Color. Co-starring Anne Francis, Dean Jagger, Walter Brennan.



## 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea (Walt Disney)

19th-century science-fiction writer Jules Verne's classic of Captain Nemo and the submarine *Nautilus* is here given the Disney touch and emerges in CinemaScope and Technicolor as a wonderful adventure tale.

Kirk Douglas, Paul Lukas, and Peter Lorre—as unbidden guests of James Mason aboard the underseas craft—travel around the world observing the marvels of the deep. Once the sub is attacked by a giant squid! Another time Kirk encounters cannibals, a humorous episode. Head-on charge of the *Nautilus* as she preys on shipping is guaranteed to evoke gasps. Film ends with a tremendous explosion which wipes out the captain and his enemies but spares the three onlookers.



Prisoner Kirk Douglas, who has found captain's cabin, opens sub's "seeing eye."

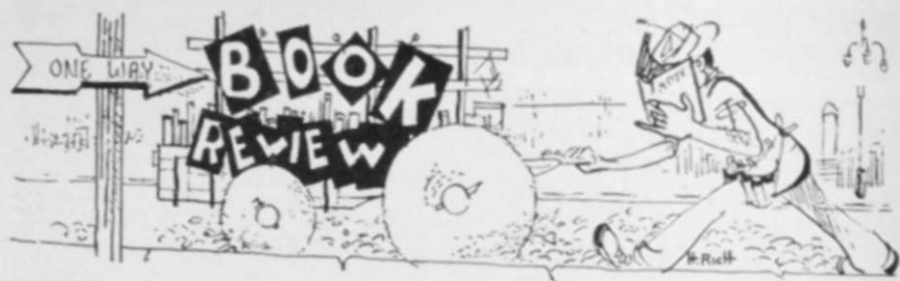
## There's No Business Like Show Business (20th-Fox)

A big, gaudy musical with six top stars, oodles of famous tunes handsomely done, and a story line about the fortunes of a family of vaudeville troupers.

Ethel Merman and Dan Dailey are a song-and-dance team who work up the act family-wise to "The Five Donahues," headliners. Johnnie Ray departs the company to enter the priesthood, and curvaceous Marilyn Monroe further breaks up the act by signing Donald O'Connor and Mitzi Gaynor to appear with her in a new Broadway show. "Lazy" sequence is real c-u-t-e. Hippodrome benefit performance reunites everyone. CinemaScope and Deluxe Color.



Vaudeville's "Five Donahues" fall apart when Johnnie Ray decides for priesthood.



## Duvall Advises How to Handle that Mother-in-law Problem

*IN-LAWS: PRO & CON.* By Evelyn Millis Duvall. New York: Association Press. 400 pages. \$3.95.

"Mother-in-law" is the most publicized in-law—even in Dr. Duvall's book. The author—a mother-in-law herself—knows well that the moment "in-law" is mentioned, it rings a mother-in-law bell concept most of the time. So, the author starts with the most-talked-about in-law and works down the ladder.

Dr. Duvall begins where most everybody else begins: Jokes, puns, and stories about mothers-in-law. She seems to want the reader to get that much out of his system before both she and the reader get down to business. Frankly, it's gonna be hard for me to forget some of her printed gems. For example, this one: "A mother-in-law rocks the cradle, but a mother-in-law rocks the boat." Or this one from an Iowan who wrote Dr. Duvall: "I like my mother-in-law because she is always right. Anytime I'm unsure about the date, time, color or smell of anything, she knows the answer. She certainly reminds me of my shortcomings and keeps making them shorter."

Then follow several chapters about the mother-in-law situation: "Mother-in-Law Roles in Mixed Marriage," "Mother-in-Law as a Mother," "Mother-in-Law as a Person," "Mother-in-Law as a Grandmother," "Mother-in-Law is the Most Difficult."

Dr. Duvall doesn't forget the other in-laws. Note her chapter titles: "Sister-in-Law is a Real Problem," "Brother-in-Law is Not So Bad," "Some Fathers-in-Law Are Troublesome," and "Becoming a Better In-Law." Her final chapter is "How to Become a Good Mother-in-Law."

This volume—like all Duvall volumes—is worth bookcasing for ready reference, that is, providing you've got in-laws or ever expect to have 'em!

—LESLIE CONRAD, JR.

### 20th-century tension

*THE DILEMMA OF CHURCH AND STATE.* By G. Elson Ruff. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press. 103 pages. \$1.50.

Because men are naturally selfish, just laws must be enforced by the state. But the state must be sanctioned by

common faith that moves the people to willingly live by the law.

When Constantine Christianized the Roman Empire and moved the imperial capital to Constantinople, the Christian bishop at Rome was obliged to maintain order in western Europe. The Roman Catholic church became the "reign of God on earth," owning land, collecting taxes, supporting armies, and crowning kings. The church came to dominate the state.

The opposite happened in the East. The state ruled the church. For 16 centuries the church was the slave of the state, unable to judge it.

#### The American scene

On the American scene church and state were separated because: 1) So many different Christian groups settled the colonies that a state church was not feasible. 2) The deism of the founding fathers asserted that one's rights as a citizen were not related to one's faith in Christ. But the religious motivation of the colonies fostered a Protestant religious culture. All levels of government sought to fulfill Christian duty in meeting the needs of citizens.

In the last century, however, the scene has changed. Public education now strives toward "lofty neutrality" in religious matters. Educators are replacing Christianity with the cult of democracy. The "American way of life" is taught as a religion.

Why haven't Protestant Christians more effectively alleviated social injustices? 1) We have preached petty, personal, Old Testament morality. 2) We have not rigorously considered the mind of Christ in complex social problems. 3) The Protestant people have

been pulled down to the standards of the world.

And how may the conscience of the state be improved? 1) We Christians must pray against ourselves that through our penitence God's will may be done on earth. 2) The church must train alert Christian citizens who, as holders of public offices, are Christian stewards in their work and who, as voters, persuade the state by the convincing insights of conscience.

In provoking, incisive fashion, Dr. Ruff outlines the responsibility of the church in the common life of men.

—JOHN STACY

*Youngstown, Ohio*

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## THY WORD IN MY HEART

### Bible Selections for Lent Emphasize God's Love for Man

*By Russell Frank Arman*

**N**O doubt the publishing of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible three years ago, with the great publicity that went with it, has done much to account for the fact that more Bibles are being sold today than ever before in all history. And because the new version is so much more easily read and understood, the Bible is probably being more widely studied than ever before.

But this new interest in the scriptures goes deeper than that. It roots in lives that have tried all the other ways of salvation and have found them leading to dead-end streets. If there is real hope offered through the pages of Holy Writ, this generation is now determined to find it. If there is no way out here, then there is no way out anywhere. Thank God, our Bible not only offers a way out, but the way onward and upward to life that is eternal.

We shall find that way only if we know how to study the Bible. A few suggestions are therefore in order.

1. Study the Bible daily. Get the habit. Set aside a certain time each day and keep it. Persistence will pay big rewards.

2. Study the Bible to find out what it has to teach you. It is always of interest to know what others have found in it. But the only truth that will be of lasting value to you is what

you discover in the Bible. There are few joys in life more thrilling than the joy of discovery of new truth.

3. Study the Bible to find those great verses which lay hold upon you with abiding challenge and light. Then memorize these verses. Even one verse thus memorized each week would give you a priceless store of 52 of them in one year. Jesus met temptation victoriously quoting great verses from the scriptures.

4. Study the Bible as the Word of God. That's what it is. All the great saints and men of God, all the great Bible students have found it to be just that.

We will claim the blessed promises of Christ in child-like faith, knowing that "He is faithful who has promised." We will obey its commandments implicitly, no matter what the cost may seem to be. We will see in it God speaking to our hearts and lives, in the interest of our highest welfare.

When we study it as God's Word, we will do so as in the presence of God, our Lord talking to us as we meditate. We will study it with a mind eager to learn, a will surrendered to him, and consciously seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

March 1955 finds us in the midst of the season we call Lent. The church through many centuries has set this season aside for special emphasis upon the deepening of our spirituality; for

heart searching; for growth in true holiness. It is a season when we in thought accompany our blessed Master through the days of his passion—his sufferings and death for our sins. The daily readings therefore will have to do with man's sin, his sorrow for it, his confession of it, and the glorious reality of God's full and complete forgiveness.

The daily readings for March:

March 1—Matthew 7:15-20. Wicked men produce a wicked world.

March 2—Matthew 12:33-37. What's on your mind?

March 3—Matthew 15:16-20. You are what you think, not what you think you are.

March 4—Romans 2:1-8. The judge who passes sentence on himself.

March 5—Ezekiel 8:7-13. What do you do in the dark?

March 6—Proverbs 7:1-23. The price of a life.

March 7—Proverbs 4:1, 2, 19, 20. The evil man has no future.

March 8—1 John 3:8-10. How to identify a Christian.

March 9—Romans 7:21-25. Who shall deliver us?

March 10—Psalm 51:1-9. I know my transgressions.

March 11—Psalm 51:10-14. Create in me a clean heart.

March 12—Isaiah 55:6-9. Call on God if you can.

March 13—Luke 5:29-32. When you are sin-sick.

March 14—Luke 15:8-10. When there is joy in heaven.

March 15—Luke 15:11-24. When a man comes to himself.

March 16—Luke 13:1-5. But I'm no worse than these.

March 17—Acts 17:22-31. God has fixed a day.

March 18—Psalm 32:1-5. Why men waste away.

March 19—James 5:13-18. The confession that brings healing.

March 20—1 John 1:5-10. The red road to forgiveness.

March 21—1 John 4:13-17. He abides in God.

March 22—Matthew 5:21-26. Gifts on the altar.

March 23—Matthew 12:22-32. The man who cannot be forgiven.

March 24—Matthew 18:21-35. If you do not forgive.

March 25—Psalm 86:1-7. Abounding in steadfast love.

March 26—Psalm 130. There is forgiveness with Thee.

March 27—Mark 2:1-12. Christ brings healing and forgiveness.

March 28—Romans 8:31-39. More than conquerors.

March 29—Ephesians 2:1-10. By grace—through faith.

March 30—Titus 3:1-7. Saved by His mercy.

March 31—Philippians 2:5-11. The Name above every name.

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"YOUTH should be our most important concern!" When a high-ranking officer of the USAF fired that first-round statement, I reached for my pencil, knowing it would be busily employed as long as he was on the platform.

The speaker was Major General Charles I. Carpenter, Chief of Chaplains of the U.S. Air Force. He was speaking to the delegates of the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches, which represents 34,542,367 Protestant and Orthodox church members in the U.S.

"It's an old, old story"—this matter of the church sticking close to its youth wherever they go, admitted Chaplain Carpenter, "but it's a story that has to be repeated!"

That "old, old story (which has been reported on this page before) is the church's responsibility to its youth in the armed forces." I can still sense the accuracy as he fired his second round of ammunition: "Ladies and gentlemen, it is not a matter of whether we shall have war or peace; these young men and women are in the military now! The problem is theirs today! And it's the church's responsibility to face up to their problems."

Problem No. 1 is this: "Many of these youth are not ready to face the environment into which they are thrown. U.S. service men and women are stationed in 50 countries of the world. We've been dumping into foreign lands ill-prepared youth who

sometimes tear down what missionaries and others have built up."

The leisure time of service personnel gives chaplains an undue amount of concern. Laying the facts on the dotted line, General Carpenter confessed, "We've never learned the solution of why a young person will leave a first-class recreation center to spend his spare time in a dirty joint with a street walker. You say it's 'human nature.' Maybe it is, but we've got to point out that something can still be good and clean even though it is not unusual!"

He hit at the indifference of the public toward service personnel. "There's a 'welcome mat' in front of every joint in town. However, such is not the case when you turn to many churches and homes in the communities located near military bases. As a result, they go where they are welcome!"

Before he concluded, he reminded his listeners that the church had better be awake when these young people are discharged. They must be welcomed back into the church when their tour of duty is done; the actions of these men and women could spell out hope or tragedy for our future world.

No doubt, you remembered the servicemen and women from your congregation with a greeting—or a package—at Christmas; but what's your contact-score since Christmas? (It's a long time between Christmases for a 19-year-old who is away from home!)

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