

CONTENTS

God Is the God of All Peoples / Nathan Huang	3
Out of the Mouths of Babes / Nelson L. Dawson	6
Facing the Harsh Reality / Cyrus R. Vance	8
Easter Houseplants / Vera W. Jones	10
A Daughter of Abraham / Katakshamma Paul Raj	12
The Roommate / Carol Elrod	14
You Make a Difference Around the World / Paula Kadel	16
Responsible Freedom / Prakai Nontawasee	20
This We Believe / Donna C. Paulson	22
Changing Roles / Elna Stratton	23
Bible Study: LIVING FAITHFULLY: STUDIES IN LUKE'S GOSPEL / Elizabeth Ann Bettenhausen	24
What's Happening Here	26
Current Books	28
Prayer Calendar	30
Invitation to Convention / Barbara Lembcke	31
LCW Offers Human Development Grants for 1980	32

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GOD IS THE GOD OF ALL PEOPLE

Pastor Huang, who was born in China, has spent his ministry in the United States. He makes some provocative criticisms of American churches, especially Lutheran ones, and offers some controversial solutions.

Pastor Huang serves St. John's in Dravosburg, Pennsylvania.

When I first came to the states to study theology at the Chicago Lutheran Seminary, I shared an apartment with another Chinese student from Hong Kong. Since we were the only Chinese students on campus, we stayed together all the time, having bull sessions in Chinese in order to ease the pain of loneliness and homesickness. But one of my professors, seeing that I was making no progress in speaking English, suggested that I move in with an American student in the dormitory. This I did obediently, though reluctantly. After I began to live in "the white man's world," I made progress in English conversation and at the same time acquired an understanding of American culture and customs, which later became a foundation for my ministry among Americans.

After completing seminary in 1961, I did graduate study in comparative religion at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. During my three years in Iowa City, I could have easily shared an

apartment with other Chinese students, but remembering my experience at the seminary, I decided to continue to stay with Americans. On weekends and holidays I frequently visited American families. What I learned from these experiences was far more precious than what I learned in classrooms and from books.

While I was in Iowa City, I met my wife Suzy, who lived in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Shortly after I received my M.A. degree in 1964, we were married. An American herself, my wife has been a great help in my ministry among Americans. When I think of this, I praise God for all that He has done in my life.

After the wedding, Suzy and I moved to California, where I became lay assistant to the pastor of a newly organized Lutheran mission congregation near Long Beach, at a salary of \$300 a month. Living on this salary was pretty tough, even though my wife was willing to share a simple life with me without complaining. My work was also tough. Every day I went out knocking on doors trying to persuade people to become members of the church—whether they believed or not. Sometimes, if the people were rude, they shut the door in my face, making me feel like a rejected wanderer.

The church was more social than spiritual. There was no Bible study

BY NATHAN HUANG



Pastor Nathan Huang

or prayer meetings. The worship service was ritualistic (as it is in many Lutheran churches) and not spiritually uplifting. But because I was only a lay assistant, I seldom had a chance to preach. The pastor and I never had a prayer fellowship together, so my spiritual life was backsliding. To be honest, this experience was a real shock to me. I couldn't cope with it. It was my first working experience with an American congregation, and it was a failure, but also a good lesson.

Six months later, I took a position teaching religion and social studies in a Lutheran school in Los Angeles. I also assisted the pastor of the congregation that supported the school in worship and preaching. The spiritual atmosphere here was just the opposite of that in the mission congregation. The church was spiritual, and the people were more friendly. I was accepted as one of them. Even though I wasn't ordained at the time, all the members of the congregation and the students called me "pastor," which made me feel honored and at the same time unworthy.

Then I received a call from the Pacific Southwest Synod of the LCA inviting me to work among Oriental people in Hawaii. We left for Hawaii on July 4, 1965, and I was ordained the following Sunday—the first Lutheran pastor ordained in Hawaii since 1883. During the ceremony, I prayed silently that I would offer myself to God for his service forever. "May the Lord give me a heart of compassion and concern for the sufferings of people. May the Lord give me zeal that I shall never grow weary in saving others."

My work began with university students. In a short time, we organized the Lutheran International Student Association, whose members were mostly from

Asian nations. At the same time, we opened a Chinese language school for Chinese children. On Sundays, many Asian students and Chinese people attended our worship services. Things were looking pretty good. The only problem was that the Oriental people, who were not used to the Lutheran liturgy and ritual, gradually lost interest in the church. Most of the Oriental people in Hawaii are well-to-do. They would rather go to the beach on Sundays than to church. Many of them are Buddhists who know nothing about Christianity. They have a lot of reservations about the church and its pastors, stemming from their experiences with Christian missionaries in China. To reach Oriental people with the Gospel of Christ, the Lutheran church must be flexible with regard to its liturgical practices.

My real ministry among the American people began in 1968, when I was unexpectedly called by the Red River Valley Synod of the LCA to serve a parish in Minnesota. I immediately sensed that this call was the will of God. The people in Minnesota didn't know me from Adam; yet they were willing to call me to be their pastor. They sure had great faith in me. Though we felt sentimental about Hawaii, we packed up and left the beautiful Aloha land and journeyed to Minnesota.

After a week of driving, we arrived in Kensington, Minnesota, at the end of August 1968. Many members of the congregation came out to welcome us. The people in this small community have very little contact with foreigners, and almost none with Chinese. A little girl who had heard that Chinese people are of the yellow race came to see me and exclaimed: "He isn't yellow; he is brown. Probably he spent too much

time on the beach." My wife's ancestry is partially Swedish, and the Swedes in the community took her in quickly. In fact, we all mingled with the Swedes in a short time. I often teased them: "I am an Oriental Swede. American Swedes drink milk, and Oriental Swedes drink tea. That's why our skin color is different." American people like humor, and they appreciated the jokes I often used in my sermons. It wasn't long before they took me in as one of them. Even the people from the neighboring towns heard about me and came to our worship services and listened to my preaching and stories. Twice we were interviewed on a local television station. The work of the church was growing; membership increased, and the spiritual life of the members was strengthened. The church underwent an extensive remodeling program, and a new narthex was built within a few years.

All this was the work of God. The love of the people, their spirit of cooperation, and their curiosity about me had all contributed to my successful ministry among them. They were proud of me as a foreigner converted by the missionaries and now serving them as their pastor, repaying the Gospel debt. Having me as their pastor made world missions close to home for them. There was a sense of newness in my ministry among them. My style of preaching was somewhat different. Instead of exegetical, I was more proclaiming. I proclaimed the Good News of salvation for all men, regardless of race or color.

In the past few decades, the American churches have gone downhill. The work is stagnant, membership is declining and the spiritual life of the people is near zero. Many pastors themselves do not know or don't believe in the salvation of souls. The church

has become the captive of denominationalism and thus has become secular. What the people get from sermons is the so-called social gospel, or ethical teachings, which have no impact on their spiritual life. So the people's heart is growing cold. They have no assurance of salvation. Going to church is a "customary thing"; worship is going through the motions. There is no desire for prayer or Bible reading. Though deep in their hearts, the people are hungry for the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, they don't know where to find them. Missionaries took the pure Gospel of salvation to foreign countries, but the pastors here have neglected the salvation of their own people. What a pity!

My ministry among Americans was all arranged by God. My burning desire was to pass on to Americans what I had received from the missionaries—namely, the salvation of our souls—that they, too, would enjoy the heavenly feast with us. Therefore, the emphasis of my ministry was to preach sermons based on the Bible and to conduct Bible study and prayer meetings every week. Sometimes we even held special revival meetings in order to rekindle faith and love for God. Within five years of my ministry in Minnesota, the people I worked with at least learned to understand the importance of salvation. Though some members might have regarded me as being "too spiritual," they knew that my motivation was my love for their souls. There was very little complaint about my ministry. Even if there was a little controversy, it was resolved quickly in the spirit of God's love. I truly experienced that, in Christ, there are no racial differences. For God is the God of all people.

In the summer of 1973, we received a call from St. John's Lutheran Church in Dravosburg, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Pittsburgh. The former pastor there had died in April. Some members of the congregation had read about me and my ministry in Minnesota in *The Lutheran* magazine and felt that I might be able to help revive the work of their church, which had been stagnant for a few years because of the pastor's illness. After living in a small town for five years we began to miss big-city living, so we decided to accept the call. It meant moving to a different battlefield to fight the good fight for the Lord. When we said good-bye on the last Sunday in Minnesota we couldn't help shedding a few tears, feeling bad about leaving the members whom we had shared good fellowship with for five years.

The move to Pennsylvania wasn't completely easy. Some Americans still have a degree of racial prejudice. When the congregation voted to call me, there were fifteen "no" votes. Among these fifteen was a couple who had just lost their son in Vietnam and felt resentful toward all Oriental people. Shortly after we arrived here that family left the church. But the others who voted "no" remained, and after a few weeks of fellowship together, the racial prejudice and misunderstanding gradually disappeared.

Pittsburgh, the center of America's steel industry, is also the center of the current Charismatic Movement. For a while we didn't quite understand why God had arranged for us to come to this city of air pollution, but later, as we experienced the power of the Holy Spirit at the Pittsburgh Charismatic Conference, we began to understand the good will of God.

Though I had had the experience of rebirth and conversion before, and clearly understood God's calling for me, I had never experienced the power of the Holy Spirit. During the last few years of my ministry at St. John's, we have witnessed the work of the Holy Spirit in the church. Not only have my personal spiritual life and ministry gone through a great change; God has also rekindled the love of many people, converting the unbelievers and strengthening the believers, which I had never dreamed of. Before I always planned my work with my own wisdom and strength, and all I received was leaves but no fruit. Now I truly realize that the church needs the work of the Holy Spirit. We are only instruments working for his harvest.

We have been with St. John's for six years now. Though I am weak, God's grace is sufficient and rich. He wants me to depend on him and his supply of power every day. Through prayer and witness we are carrying out his will for us. Besides the worship services on Sundays, we have a regular Bible study and prayer meeting every week. Though attendance has not been great, I believe that God will use this small group to revive the work of the whole church.

Why did I choose to be a pastor of the American church? Really, I did not choose this, but God chose me and arranged all the opportunities for me. Through my ministry among Americans, he has increased the understanding between the peoples of America and China and shortened the distance between any racial differences. The members of St. John's Lutheran Church have begun to feel the nearness of the missionary work abroad, realizing that God is the God of all peoples.■

Out of the Mouths of BABES

Mr. Dawson is a freelance contributor.

I went to church on a Thursday evening to hear about the love of God, which was the theme of the spring program at the Christian school my son attends. He had to be there twenty minutes early for those last-second instructions—"Behave," "Don't giggle," "Sit still"—that elementary school children seem always to need. Ten minutes before the scheduled beginning, the room was almost full with parents, grandparents, and siblings of the cast. We had gathered in a large modern sanctuary with carpeted floor; natural wood, cushioned pews; tall, narrow, plain glass windows; and a wooden beam roof painted white. A large metal cross hung on the wall facing the congregation. The pulpit, which ordinarily occupied the center of the rostrum, had been removed for the occasion. The evening was warm, and the air conditioning had been turned up just enough to let us know it existed but not enough to make us comfortable. There was a good deal of desultory coughing, clearing of throats and whispering. Several of the younger members of the congregation began some preliminary whimpering. Like their older brothers and sisters backstage, they were getting ready for the program.

I began to wonder why we were there. Had we really come to learn about the love of God? We came, most of us, out of social compulsion and had left our minds at home, in the workshop, on the patio or, even less defensibly, in front of the television. The children were the draftees of this particular army of the Lord. They had drilled for weeks, and although most came willingly (with only a few complaints about tight collars and unaccustomed ties), in fact they had no choice. The teachers' official position was that such programs

were delightful, but I had noticed on previous occasions that they seemed to smile more at the end of the evening than before or during it. These reveries, inappropriately cynical under the circumstances, were interrupted when an expectant father in front of me glanced over his shoulder, spotted the children assembling in the rear, and began fumbling anxiously with his camera.

The music started and the rear doors opened. The processional, each class led by its teacher, marched to the front down the two aisles separating the central block of pews from those on the sides. My son's class passed down the aisle close to where we were sitting, and my younger son tried to get his attention. He swept by us, somewhat grimly I thought, without a sideward glance. Perhaps he had remembered an earlier warning about gawking.

His teacher had gotten well ahead of the class when she stopped at the proper pew and turned to face her approaching scholars. The class leader got confused. He became irresolute, took halting steps, and kept turning his head from side to side as if looking for help from the congregation. The teacher, seeing a crisis developing, stiffened. She widened her eyes and bared her teeth, creating an expression that hovered uncertainly between a smile and a grimace. At this, the leader pulled himself together and resumed his pace. At length, and perhaps after several other nearly invisible crises had been surmounted, the processional ended. The children were safely in their seats.

The tension in the room perceptibly increased during the brief lull before the program began. Teachers were anxious about the performance of their classes. Parents moodily considered unpleasant possibilities for their

children—a violent sneeze, a fall off the rostrum, a lapse of memory. And some of the older children, in whom the artlessness of childhood was giving way to the self-consciousness of adolescence, were fidgeting in their seats. A sixth-grade girl arose and, with a noticeable quaver, opened the program by reading a poem of her own composition about the width of God's mercy. The printed program, which conveniently doubled as a fan, announced a series of presentations by the classes, each including a poem, a passage of Scripture, and a song or two. It seemed unpromising, and I settled back for an hour of uninterrupted sentimentality.

The nursery school children, small and wide-eyed, sang too softly to be heard beyond the first few pews. Their parents were invited forward to sit with them during the rest of the program. As the presentations continued, the children got bigger and the voices louder. Cameras flashed as parents and grandparents recorded scenes for posterity. Younger brothers and sisters continued to protest. Some had to be removed for a change of diapers and some for a change of attitude. It was hardly a dramatic event. Indeed, on the surface, banality seemed supreme, and yet we sometimes hear astonishing things in church even when we are bemused or half asleep.

No biblical theme is more subject to idolatrous distortions than that of the love of God. Throughout Christian history God's love, that wildfire which consumes our dross and leaves us chastened, purified and liberated unto obedience, has been described by some as a tame little fireside glow only warm enough to keep us and our kind as comfortable as cats in a chimney corner. Whenever the subject is announced, some of us congenital cynics wonder if the Lord is again going to be depicted as a celestial

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chamber of commerce booster touting the glories of that portion of his creation lying within a short radius of the pulpit. His love is hedged about with mincing little qualifications. He loves us because we are of the right nationality, members of the proper denomination, and possessors of right doctrine. He loves us, in short, because we are lovable. We seldom say this, of course, or even think it, but we are often lulled into believing it all the same. Yet it occurred to me, as songs, Scriptures and poems continued, how frankly (even brutally) realistic is the biblical description of the love of God.

A girl read the Scriptural passage which states that God loved us while we were yet sinners. There was something poignant about a school child reading about sin to adults, who know so much more about it, but that did not make the statement any less true. Indeed, it is God's love for sinners that makes the Gospel the Gospel. The pallid evangelism which tells people that they are "already saved" can produce only despair or complacency, depending on the hearer's condition. Frenzied self-abnegation does more harm than good, just as hysteria makes the sick sicker and denying our illness prevents recovery.

The story is told of a New England Unitarian who, upon hearing that Episcopalians kneel and acknowledge themselves to be "miserable offenders," announced that she and her family would never get on their knees and say that. She was never more thoroughly a miserable offender than at that prideful moment.

The children reminded us in verse and song that because God loves us sinners, we are hopelessly in debt to him. Therefore we should love others as God has loved us. This apparently sentimental admonition to love one another

turns out, on closer inspection, to have the jagged edge of reality about it. The cloying Christmas card sweetness vanishes quickly when we get down to specific cases. We all know of at least one person whose presence on earth seems calculated to make it impossible for us to be obedient in this matter. It is the same with the international dimension. The children reminded us that "Red, yellow, black, and white / They are precious in His sight." This good-natured generality is difficult to remember when one is confronted by an indignant Iranian student calling for the Shah's head on a platter.

Love is costly. It cost God his son. It will cost us our pride, our self-sufficiency and, in the dark days which may lie ahead, perhaps a great deal more. Perhaps we sentimentalize love with hearts, flowers and Valentines because we are afraid of the relentless love of the Hound of Heaven. We know what it cost Him. We are uneasy about what it might cost us. And yet, in the last analysis, what else liberates, what else melts the frozen heart, what else endures the wreck of time?


Near the end of the program, when even the fondest parents were ready to call it a night, we heard again the familiar words: "Beloved, a new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another." We are *commanded* to love. Our age would be scandalized by these words, if it ever stopped to think of them, because it is addicted to the emotions. Feeling is supreme, so much so that we often use the word "feel" when we mean "think." (How can one "feel" that interest rates are going up, or that the Yankees will win the pennant?) Love is, essentially, a matter of the will, not of the emotions. God certainly does not love us because we are lovable, which indeed we were only when we were as young as the children

whose program was nearly over.

I wondered if the children really understood what they were saying and singing. I wondered if the assembled host understood. Then, not to leave anyone out, I wondered if I understood. We certainly understood only in part. Yet I prefer such holy mysteries to the comprehensible grotesqueries about the Perfect State and the Perfect Leader being taught children elsewhere, as well as to the dehumanized humanism being taught many here at home. If physical man is what he eats, surely spiritual man is what he thinks about God, himself and the world. Children taught about the love of God should grow up differently than those indoctrinated in the thought of some totalitarian gangster or those led to believe that feeling is the measure of all things.

The audience was growing impatient, and the program ended with gratifying dispatch. The processional had been tentative, uncertain, but the recessional was a model of decisiveness. The children were not headed for an unmarked pew. They were marching straight for punch and cookies in the church basement.

We did not look like revolutionaries when we all dispersed later, fortified with light refreshments. We were not shaggy nihilists sneaking away from a seminar on demolition. A policeman would not have given us a second glance. And yet beneath the facade of sentiment inevitably associated with children's programs lay explosive ideas awaiting detonation by the Spirit of God, revolutionary concepts that make the secular radicalisms seem reactionary by comparison. We were all in possession of dangerous truths. We were all threats to society. The present order survives at all only because we have not adequately kept the new commandment. ■



FACING THE HARSH REALITY

The worldwide energy situation may
get worse before it gets better.

BY CYRUS R. VANCE

These are excerpts from a statement the United States Secretary of State made on March 30, 1979. We reprint them from "Agenda," a publication of the Agency for International Development.

No issue we face today more clearly demonstrates interests we share with the people of the developing world than energy.

The commuter buying gasoline in Seattle and the peasant farmer buying kerosene near Khartoum both face the harsh reality of rising world petroleum prices. Governments in the richest countries and those in the poorest must deal with the impact of

higher energy costs and rising energy demand on their national economies.

Let me be frank: the worldwide energy situation, already serious, is likely to get worse before it gets better. For the foreseeable future, in the absence of substantial new efforts, worldwide growth in energy demand will continue to outpace worldwide growth in energy production.

We must do what is necessary in our own country to restrain consumption and increase domestic production. But we cannot solve the energy problem by what we do here alone. It is a global challenge.

Thus, we have a direct interest in helping developing countries devise their own effective energy policies—helping them identify their energy resources, determine their current and future energy demand, identify the technology they need, and obtain the necessary financing. Let me tell you what we are already doing in each of these areas.

- We are now helping several developing countries survey their national energy resources, define their future energy needs, and construct alternative energy strategies.

- With our strong support, the World Bank is significantly expanding its program to help developing countries finance further exploration and development of fossil fuels. The bank envisages loans amounting to as much as \$3 billion over the next five years.

- We are devoting substantial financial resources to research on renewable energy sources. In addition to private financing, the Department of Energy has budgeted over \$600 million this year to study, develop and demonstrate renewable energy technology. We have asked the Congress for more than \$700 million for these efforts next year. These programs can lead to technological developments that directly benefit the developing nations.

- The Agency for International Development has requested \$42 million in fiscal year 1980 for the actual application of renewable energy technologies in developing countries.

- We have accelerated our training and technical assistance programs for energy professionals

and institutions in the developing countries. We have proposed a new Institute for Scientific and Technological Cooperation, which would become an important element of our foreign assistance program. Energy will be a major focus of the work of the institute as it both helps strengthen scientific and technological capacities in developing countries and also identifies domestic American research relevant to development abroad.

- And we are providing substantial direct and indirect financial assistance to help developing countries acquire the energy technology they need. The Export-Import Bank authorized approximately \$2 billion in energy-related loans and guarantees to developing countries in fiscal 1978. This has produced more than \$3 billion for financing of conventional power projects. And the other development banks also are active in this area.

But we must and will do more.

- First, we will respond positively to additional requests from developing nations for help in evaluating their energy resources, needs and strategies.

- Second, we will encourage the regional development banks to expand their energy programs, and to consider new approaches to encourage further private capital flows into mineral and energy development in their regions.

- Third, President Carter and other heads of state at the Bonn Economic Summit in July 1978 pledged to increase assistance for harnessing the vast energy potential of the sun, the wind, the oceans and other renewable resources.

- Fourth, with strong United States backing, the United Nations will hold a World Conference on New and Renewable Energy in 1981. We intend to play an active role in that effort.

- Fifth, we will increase our support for research, development and training efforts of national and regional energy institutions in developing countries. We will encourage other nations to join us in this effort.

- Sixth, we will also work with other nations to determine whether it would be useful to supplement the work of such institutions. Together we will seek to identify gaps in current efforts, and ways to fill them, including the possible establishment of new institutions. For example, international research centers—which enjoy support from developed and developing countries, private organizations and multilateral institutions—have played a major role in addressing developing country agricultural problems. If, as a result of discussions with our colleagues in developed and developing countries there is agreement that this approach would be appropriate in the field of energy, the United States would support such international energy centers.

- Finally, we must assure that as new renewable energy technology becomes relatively less expensive, adequate financing is available for the developing countries to acquire it. We will ask the World Bank to undertake a thorough review of this question.

These steps, and others we will be discussing with developed and developing countries in the months ahead, can help assure that high energy costs do not undermine economic growth and a steadily improving way of life for those who live in the developing world.

Our future economic well-being and theirs carry an inescapable imperative: we must work together to expand the availability of energy for developed and developing countries alike; there is no promise for any of us in an intensifying competition for limited energy supplies. ■

EASTER HOUSEPLANTS

Easter lilies and palms are used in our churches and as gifts at Easter time, as are spring flowering plants from our florists. There are also some interesting houseplants that make appropriate plants to display or give at this holiday season.

One of these is a striking plant called "crown of thorns" (*Euphorbia splendens*). Its woody stems grow two to three feet tall and are covered with long, narrow thorns. Its leaves are small and sparse, and it produces small, red flowers at the tips of its branches. Though this plant looks very different from the poinsettia, it is of the same genus. It's an impressive symbol of Christ's suffering.



Passionflower (*Passiflora*) is another tall plant with large leaves and ten-petaled, fragrant flowers almost four inches across. The flowers are purple, pink and white and bear a white Maltese cross in the center. A purple "crown of thorns" surrounds the cross. Some people see the ten petals as the

apostles who were present at the crucifixion, and the tendrils and vines as the whips used on Christ before the crucifixion.

Because it grows on a vine with tendrils, this plant is pretty trained around a window or up a trellis. It can be started from seeds and should be grown in a sunny location. The passionflower blooms in spring and summer.



An easy-to-grow houseplant called "passion plant" or "velvet plant" (*Gynura*), has purple-veined, velvety foliage that is quite effective used in arrangements as a contrast to white Easter flowers such as lilies or gardenias. I once used it in a milk glass container with a purple candle in the center as an Easter centerpiece.

The passion plant is also a vine, but it does not need to be staked. It makes a good hanging plant, and if pinched back, will branch and become full and large. It loves sun, but will grow in indirect light also. Its small orange, tuftlike flowers



make an unusual contrast with the purple leaves. Some people do not care for the unusual odor of the flowers, but they can be snipped off. Cuttings are easily rooted.

Another interesting Easter houseplant is the twelve apostles or apostle plant (*Neomarica*). It



grows to eighteen inches tall and looks like an iris plant, but the swordlike leaf blades grow in six V-shaped rows on either side of the center, suggesting the twelve apostles at the sides of Christ during the Last Supper.

This plant does not need direct sunlight and likes normal houseplant temperatures and wet soil. Its irislike flowers last only a

sunlight; it makes a good plant for a bathroom or kitchen. It will send up new plants and can be divided easily.

One variety of *Maranta* is called "fishbone plant" because of the bright red veins on its multishaded green leaves. It produces tiny pale lavender or white flowers. A darker green variety with spots is called "rabbit track plant." Still



day, but the plant flowers over a long period of time in winter. New plants are easy to start by removing the tops of flower stems and potting them.

The prayer plant (*Maranta*) is a common houseplant that is nice to give or use at Easter. It is named "prayer plant" because the leaves fold together like praying hands at night to protect themselves from the tropical dew of its original jungle home. Needless to say, the prayer plant likes warmth and humidity but needs no direct



another variety of this plant provides us with tapioca and arrowroot.


An Easter houseplant for a sunnier, drier spot in your home is the Easter lily cactus (*Echinopsis multiplex*). It can be started from seed and blooms in spring, producing fragrant pink or white trumpet-shaped flowers sometimes as large as six inches across. It produces small cacti at the base of the plant that can be cut off and started as gifts for friends. In another variety, golden Easter lily



cactus, the flowers are yellow.

We do so much with palms in decorating for Easter because they grow in the Holy Land and were used upon Jesus' entry into Jerusalem the week of the crucifixion. Another tree familiar to Jesus and mentioned a great deal in the Bible is the olive tree. The common olive tree (*Olea*) with its long, leatherlike leaves makes a very good houseplant. It can be kept small and does not seem to mind being restricted to a pot. It will grow in sunlight or indirect light. The soil should be allowed to become dry before watering. It produces fragrant white flowers, but these do not usually become olives indoors, where pollination is prevented. If the plant is moved outdoors onto a patio while blooming, it might reward you with olives.

By bringing beauty, variety and symbolism into our homes, houseplants can play a meaningful part in our observance of Easter. ■



a daughter of abraham

BY KATAKSHAMMA PAUL RAJ

This devotional based on Luke 13:10-17 was given at a Leadership Development Workshop in India in November 1979. The workshop was sponsored by the Lutheran World Federation.

Ms. Raj teaches at the Atzinger Girls' Industrial School in Nayudupet A. P., India.

The gospel of Luke is called by one scholar "the most beautiful book ever written." The thing I like about this gospel is that women are accorded a prominent place in it.

In this gospel, we have portraits of the Virgin Mary, Elizabeth and Anna, and stories of the widow at Nain, the penitent harlot, the ministering women from Galilee, Martha and Mary, the woman with a spirit of infirmity and the women mentioned in the parables of the lost coin and the unjust judge. The same author in the Book of Acts writes stories about Tabitha, Lydia, Priscilla and the four daughters of Philip, the evangelist.

Besides women, Luke shows interest in the social relationships of people and a deep concern for the outcasts of society, the so-called sinners and the hated Samaritans.

The passage chosen for our devotions this morning is found in Luke 13:10-17, where Jesus heals a woman in the synagogue on the Sabbath.


We know that the Jews allowed some work to be done on the Sabbath. For example, a man could lead his ox to water, but he could not lift the water in a vessel to the animal's mouth. But the healing of a person—and a woman at that—is here seen as a sin.

Since it was legal to help someone whose life was in danger on the Sabbath, Jesus did not break the general law regarding the observance of the day of rest. But he broke the illogical and unhelpful law that some people had created to reinforce the general law. We must note that Jesus went regularly to the synagogue and joyfully took part in the worship in the temple.

On a particular Sabbath, as Jesus was teaching at one of the synagogues, here was this woman. We do not know her name. She is described as having had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen long years. She was bent over and was unable to straighten herself fully. She was a crippled woman for all practical purposes.

Let us recall the position of a woman, even a healthy woman, in Jewish society. She had no place or recognition. And yet, precisely at such a time, Jesus saw this woman, called her and told her the seven most beautiful words she had ever heard, "Woman, you are free from your infirmity." Then he laid his hands upon her, "and immediately she was made straight" and praised God.

What a relief! What a joy! What a liberation! Maybe she leaped for joy! Maybe she shrieked with joy! Maybe she just looked at Jesus



and everyone there. But one thing is sure: she praised God for her marvelous cure.

Remember what her condition had been for eighteen years. She was bent over. That means that her eyes were on the ground for eighteen years and that she could only see the dull ground and could not look at anyone, not even Jesus. So she could not ask Jesus to heal her. Nobody seemed to have spoken on her behalf. In fact, the ruler of the synagogue, who probably had known about her condition for all these years, criticized her indirectly for getting healed on the Sabbath!

It is really amazing and overwhelming to learn that our Lord Jesus has such great compassion toward people like this crippled woman. If he had not noticed her, her condition probably would have been the same for another eighteen years or until her death. Let us also remember that this woman could not fully straighten herself. That means that she could not help herself. She definitely needed to be helped. If Jesus had not laid his hands upon her, she would probably have continued to be in that very helpless condition or even have become worse.

Almost every one of us sisters present here is fortunate to the extent that we have had the opportunities of an education, a job, a family and a place of service in the church and society. At the same time, we also know that vast numbers of our sisters do not have even the least of the opportunities we have. For example, only 18 percent of Indian women are literate.

But I am sure that every one of us can identify with the crippled woman whom Jesus healed. We have had times in our lives when we were crippled by the desires, dictates and opinions of our families, society, leaders and, surprisingly enough, other women, so that we were not able to raise our eyes from the ground—stifling times of criticism, failure, shame and scandal. Many times we have felt utterly helpless and unable to straighten out our problems of loneliness, emotional hurts, inhibitions, and so forth.

Praise God that Jesus sees us at such times, calls us, heals us and leaves us with a smile on our face, a song on our lips and a dance in our step.

These are days when the whole world is becoming aware of the potentialities of women. Let us not allow old traditions, customs and systems to cripple our lives so that

we are unable to serve God fully with the various gifts he has given us. Let our churches know that we belong to God as much as men do and that we are children of heaven just as they are.

Luke does not mention this, but I would like to think that the crippled woman had a determination and a hope to live and be healed. She used an opportunity to come into the presence of our Lord and hear him teach, ignoring the possible unfriendly, unsympathetic and taunting looks of the men and women in the synagogue and outside.

Her determination and hope and effort were amply rewarded. Besides healing her and elevating her head and giving her a new stature, Jesus referred to her as “a daughter of Abraham”—a great honor to her and an understandable shock to the “sons of Abraham.”

Yes, the same honor and joy, relief and liberation are ours. Please, please do not hold back just because you are a woman.

May the Holy Spirit guide each one of us so that in enjoying this honor and in experiencing this liberation, we continue to praise and glorify God in our families, societies and churches. ■

The Roommate

A SHORT STORY

BY CAROL ELROD

"Goodbye. Good luck," said Barbara, lying back against her pillow. She had managed to act nonchalant the whole time she'd watched her roommate's husband packing up the nightgowns, candy, crossword puzzle books, and baskets of withering pears done up in yellow cellophane, but now that the dark-haired girl was finally being wheeled out the door, Barbara's eyes filled with tears.

I need you, she thought. Don't you realize I'm scared? Don't you remember how it was the night before? How scared you were?

Changing her position in the electrically operated bed, Barbara winced. And when the terrible pain did not subside, she pressed her buzzer and waited for the nurse to bring a shot of codeine.

As she waited for the drug to take effect, Barbara tried to think pleasant thoughts and forget about the slipped disc her doctor was going to take out in the morning. But every time she closed her eyes, a technicolor horror scene flashed across her eyelids. It was the operating room to which she would be taken in the morning, an all-white room with huge, round spotlights overhead, stainless steel tools and vats and buckets, a narrow table with an assembly of cranks and straps, and stack upon stack of freshly boiled sheets. Most frightening of all, however, were the incredible piercing eyes of the nameless, faceless presences that hovered in the air somewhere above her defenseless body, sterile knives poised in their gloved hands.

I'm scared, Barbara whispered to herself again. I'm scared. Oh, God, please understand. Eyes still closed, she sensed that she was not alone. "Who's there?" she called.

"I come to change the other bed," a strange voice answered. When Barbara opened her eyes,

she saw a big black woman flipping soiled sheets into a pile on the floor.

"Am I getting another roommate? So soon?" Barbara immediately brightened. There was going to be a sympathetic ear after all, someone to joke with, someone with whom to pass away the time.

"I 'spect so," the woman said. "We never has an empty bed around here very long."

No sooner had the maid left when a practical nurse charged into the room followed closely by two uniformed maintenance men dragging metal gadgets that looked a little bit like ladders. Working deftly with their screwdrivers and wrenches, the men soon converted the newly made spare bed into an outsized baby crib.

"What's wrong with her?" Barbara asked, pointing to the rails.

"Broken hip," the practical nurse said. "An old break that's not mending right. She's scheduled for surgery in the morning."

"Oh," said Barbara. Her optimism was fast disappearing. "How old is she?"

The nurse consulted the clipboard she was holding. "Bertha Davidson . . . let's see . . . she's eighty-nine years old. Isn't that something?"

"It sure is," said Barbara. Tonight of all nights, she thought. Why did I have to get an ancient old lady that has to sleep in a bed with bars?

She heard a commotion far down the hall—footsteps and voices and wheels bumping over the tile floor. The noises grew louder and louder, stopping just outside her door. "Turn it this way. We'll have to move the other bed," said a male voice. An orderly strode in, shoved Barbara's bed laterally across the floor, then motioned for the others to bring the new

roommate in.

She was a tiny woman, wrinkled like an old apple; and her white hair formed a wispy halo around her pointed face. All the time she was being rolled in, Mrs. Davidson's mouth was opening and closing, opening and closing. A gaping, black hole it was without a single tooth. "Where am I?" the woman muttered.

"You're in the hospital," one of the nurses said. "You're here to get your hip fixed. Don't you remember?"

"In the hospital? I got to get out of here. Ohhhhh!" Barbara turned her head to see the woman better and immediately noticed that the hands with which her new roommate scratched at her restraining straps were so twisted from arthritis that they were frozen in a clutching position like the claws of a hawk or vulture. "Ohhhhhh. I got to get out of here," Mrs. Davidson repeated.

Me, too, thought Barbara, especially if you're going to moan like that all night and keep me up. I need rest. I might die or something. . . . Tears came to Barbara's eyes.

"Who's that?" the old woman croaked. Barbara was horrified to see one of the misshapen hands raised in her direction.

"That's Barbara Ryan," the practical nurse said. "She's your roommate. She's going to be your friend."

Just as Barbara was about to say, "Pleased to meet you," the cripple rolled her head from side to side. "Where am I?" she cried. "Where am I?" Abruptly, then, her mouth went slack, and the feverish questioning stopped.

For a little while after all the hospital personnel had left the room, Mrs. Davidson was quiet and seemed to be asleep. But then her black eyes fluttered open. "Who are you?" the crone shrieked, struggling to lift her head.

"I'm Barbara Ryan. I'm your roommate." And then she thought to herself, Why can't you go to sleep? I don't want to talk to you. You're not all there. You give me the creeps. I'm spooked enough without looking at those awful claws of yours and listening to you screech.

"I want a drink of water," the old woman said. "I want a cold drink of water."

"Hold on," said Barbara. "I'll call somebody."

But the nurse took one look at Mrs. Davidson's chart and shook her head. "I'm sorry, Honey," she said. "You can't have anything by mouth. You're scheduled for surgery. I know it's uncomfortable, but the rule is for your own protection."

Mrs. Davidson began moaning faintly. "Water, water, water, water, water."

"Tomorrow, Honey. After they fix your hip. Then you can have all the water you want."

"I want it now. I have to have it. Water, water, water, water, water."

"Please rest, Mrs. Davidson," the nurse said. "You'll wear yourself out." She lay her hand briefly on the old woman's knee; then, shrugging her shoulders, presumably for Barbara's benefit, she left the room.

"I have to have it. I have to have it," the crone chanted. "Just a teaspoonful. You don't know how bad it is." She began rattling her bed rails like a caged animal, and Barbara turned her head to the wall and squeezed her eyes shut to keep the tears dammed up inside.

"Tell me why they won't give it to me," Mrs. Davidson demanded. "Tell me why, why, why, why, why, why." With each word the cracking voice grew louder. "Why, why, why, why, why?" she yelled, and almost immediately two nurses came running. While one surveyed

the clipboard chart, the other jabbed a needle into the woman's skinny arm. And then they closed the curtains around her bed.

Once again Mrs. Davidson was quiet, but within a few minutes, Barbara realized that the faded blue curtains were moving ever so slightly. Mesmerized, she watched the folds being slowly plucked aside by the twisted hands. "Who are you?" Mrs. Davidson demanded as soon as she could see.

"I'm your roommate, Barbara Ryan. Don't you remember?"

"Where am I?"

"You're in the hospital."

"The hospital? I'm in the hospital?" The woman's eyes cut like razors.

"Yes," said Barbara. "The hospital." I can't stand this, she thought. I can't. Somebody, help me!

"Water," Mrs. Davidson said, deep down in her throat. "I want a cold drink of water. Water, water, water, water, water."

"You can't have any," Barbara told her. "You're having surgery in the morning."

Mrs. Davidson's head was thrashing on the pillow. "Tell me why they won't give it to me. Why, why, why, why, why?"

Tears ran uncontrolled down Barbara's cheeks. "Because you're getting your hip fixed. I've tried to tell you that. Please, Mrs. Davidson, be quiet and go to sleep. Please."

The room was silent then, blessedly silent, but only for a moment. When the eerie groan broke the stillness, Barbara clapped both hands over her ears. "Water, water," the woman croaked.

"Shut up," Barbara shouted.

"I'm having surgery in the morning, too. Have you no consideration?"

"What have I ever done to you?" screamed the old woman.

The unexpected question left Barbara momentarily stunned. Well, for starters, she thought,

you've, well, you've driven me half crazy . . . half crazy just like you. . . . She shook her head. That's not true. I'm not like you. I'm young. You're old. You can't help yourself. I can. I can. Maybe the question ought to be what have I done to you?

"Water, water, water, water," moaned the woman.

Barbara swallowed hard and closed her eyes. I've got to keep telling myself, she thought, that Mrs. Davidson is scared. Scared and lonely. She's just a scared and lonely old lady. . . . All of a sudden Barbara blurted out, "Everything's going to be all right, Mrs. Davidson. Everything's going to be all right." The sound of the words was strangely comforting—like a mother's gentle touch when the world caves in.

Why did I say that? Barbara thought. It might not be so—for either one of us.

"Ohhhhhh," said the cracked voice, not so strident as before.

"Everything's going to be all right. Everything's going to be all right," Barbara repeated. She heard the old woman yawn and realized that her roommate was no longer thrashing frantically, no longer scratching with her twisted hands. Barbara felt her own body going limp, relaxing in spite of all she'd been through and all that was to come. "Everything's going to be all right," she said again. "Everything's going to be all right."

Barbara pulled the sheet up underneath her chin and kept on whispering the sentence, over and over and over. "Everything's going to be all right. Everything's going to be all right. Everything's going to be all right." Long after Mrs. Davidson was sleeping peacefully, Barbara said the magic words, whispering in the night. And on toward morning, her morning, Barbara Ryan believed. ■

you make a difference...

Each year through Thankoffering and Gifts for Specific Ministries Lutheran Church Women becomes partners with women, men and children around the world. This year LCW gifts will make a difference in ministries close to home and far away.

LCA Specific Ministries

LCW will give to sixteen specific ministries of the Lutheran Church in America this year.

Affirmation of the Role of Women, \$11,000. This year the Division for Mission in North America plans two churchwide training events that relate to women's issues. LCW's gift will pay participant expenses for an event on justice and equality and for one on ministry of women and men laity.

Ministries for Human Justice, \$38,700. LCW's contribution in this area will meet human needs within four communities. Those ministries are:

- Churchpeople for Change and Reconciliation, Lima, Ohio
- Community Worker, southwest Virginia
- GRAIL, Reading, Pennsylvania
- Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry, Omaha, Nebraska

Ministry with Deaf Persons, \$12,250. This ministry with deaf people in the Columbia, South Carolina, area provides complete pastoral care. LCW's gift is half of the LCA's grant to this ministry.

Ministries with Families, \$51,300. LCW's gift will provide partial funding for eight programs that focus on families:

- Family Life Series, Lutheran

Community Services, New York City

- Lutheran Children and Family Services of Eastern Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
- Probation and Reality, Nashville, Tennessee
- St. Paul Lutheran Church, Saint Laurent, Montreal, Quebec
- Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Seattle, Washington
- Churchwide training event on aging and the older adult
- Churchwide training event on alcohol and other drug-related problems
- Faith and Life Institute for singles

Reading Programs for Minority Persons, \$11,750. LCW's gift provides partial support for ministries that enable good basic reading and writing skills:

- SPEAR, Grace Lutheran Church,

Spokane, Washington

- Bruce-Guadalupe Community School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- South Carolina Literacy Association
- Cristo Rey Lutheran Church, Carolina (Villa Fontana), Puerto Rico

Support for Lay Professionals, \$15,000. In recent years the Division for Professional Leadership has made great strides in supporting lay professionals such as directors of Christian education in their work within the church. LCW's gift will provide partial support for the continuation of this ministry.

- *Specialized Parish Ministries, \$65,000.* The LCW contribution



around the world

BY PAULA KADEL
LCW Coordinator for
Promotion and Interpretation



Community Development, La Faena,
Chile: A women's group meeting.

Ministries with Families: A baptism at St.
Paul's, St. Laurent, Montreal.



United Mission, Nepal: A man carries a woman from the hospital in a basket.

Family Center, Nagarjunasagar, India:
The day care center.



provides partial funding for programs of the Division for Parish Services that assist congregations in special circumstances or those that choose to meet special needs. They include urban ministry, ministry in small congregations, ministry with handicapped persons, and ministry with the aging.

Youth Ministries, \$20,000. This year the staff of the Division for Parish Services will plan and carry out CONVO 80, which will coincide with the 1980 LCA convention. In addition, DPS is training adults who work with youth and leaders in confirmation ministry. LCW's gift will provide partial funding for these and other churchwide ministries with youth.

Community Development, La Faena, Chile, \$7,000. Since 1973 the church has witnessed in this community through the Lutheran Center on La Faena's main street. LCW's gift will help sustain the congregation and the church school that meets at the center, as well as provide medical and educational services.

Literacy Training, Costa Rica,

\$16,000. Alfalit International is an ecumenical organization that works throughout Latin America to eliminate illiteracy and initiate community improvement projects. LCW's contribution will provide partial funding for this agency.

Family Center, Nagarjunasagar, India, \$2,500. This community center houses a health education program, day care center, library, and classes in English conversation, sewing and cooking. LCW's gift provides partial funding for this witness with both Christians and Hindus.

Agricultural Extension, Guyana, \$24,030. Through an agricultural extension program of the Lutheran Church in Guyana, the LCA is cooperating in food crop development along the Berbice River. The LCW gift will support this unique ministry.

Pioneer Evangelism, Hachioji, Japan, \$40,860. In Hachioji, near Tokyo, the Lutheran church is reaching out to those who have never heard the gospel. LCW's gift will assist in this effort.

United Mission, Nepal, \$30,040. The United Mission to Nepal is an ecumenical agency of about thirty-five different mission groups from fourteen countries. It provides medical, technical and community services. Through its gift LCW becomes a partner in this witness in Nepal.

Parish Education, Tanzania, \$34,770. LCW's gift supports the work of Allen Gottneid, an LCA missionary who directs a program of Christian nurture for the Lutheran church in Tanzania. It includes Sunday school, Christian education in public schools, confirmation ministry, adult education and youth work.

Skill Training for Women, Zambia, \$19,800. To prepare women for their role in the changing society of Zambia, Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation provides practical courses in mobile teaching units. LCW's gift provides the LCA's 1980 grant to this project.

LCW Specific Ministries

In addition to the LCA ministries, LCW highlights three of its own programs for Gifts for Specific



Skill Training For Women, Zambia: A cooking lesson with an interested husband as onlooker.

Ministries. The 1980 ministries are:

LCW Bible Study, \$7,160. Each year LCW produces a ten-session Bible study for use by its members and other adult study groups. Gifts to this ministry will provide funding for the development of the 1981-82 LCW Bible study.

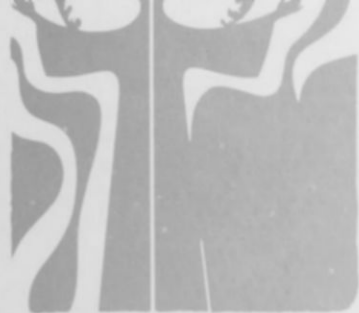
Family and Faith, \$14,664. This year LCW will be able to take the Family and Faith program right into its own congregations. A packet of Family and Faith resources will be available in April. Gifts to this ministry will support Family and Faith within congregations.

Volunteer Reading Aides, \$20,436. LCW's literacy program stresses teaching nonreading adults how to read and write and teaching refugee immigrants and migrants how to speak, read and write English. Gifts to this ministry will assist with tutor-training expenses.

For more complete information about any of the 1980 specific ministries, write Dr. Kathryn E. Kopf, Executive Director, Lutheran Church Women, 2900 Queen Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19129.■



Volunteer Reading Aides: Coordinator Martha Lane leads a tutor-training workshop.



BY PRAKAI NONTAWASEE

responsible freedom

World Day of Prayer is celebrated each year on the first Friday in March by women in 150 countries and islands throughout the world. In 1980 the celebration will take place on March 7.

The International Committee for World Day of Prayer has designated Church Women United as the official sponsor in the United States. Local groups who are interested in observing World Day of Prayer may contact the national office of CWU, Room 812, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10027. A packet of materials on World Day of Prayer is available from the Service Center, CWU, Box 37815, Cincinnati, OH 45237.

A short time before I attended the meeting of the International Committee for World Day of Prayer in Mexico City in 1974 a startling upheaval took place in my own country. On October 4, 1973, students and other concerned citizens drove three leaders out of Thailand.

Thai people rejoiced that they had gained true freedom. But chaos quickly followed the October uprising. Student clashes, killing, bombing and violence of all kinds raged among conflicting groups. The crowds shouted, "We have freedom." But there was no freedom.

Because this event was still burning in my memory when I reached Mexico City, I asked that Thai women be allowed to write the worship service and Bible study for the World Day of Prayer in 1980 on the theme, "Responsible Freedom." We received a commission from the international group to do this.

At the March 1975 National Christian Women's meeting in Bangkok, we selected "Responsible Freedom" as the theme for the Bible study group. Those present looked into the subject deeply and shared many ideas.

Four Thai people were asked to write the World Day of Prayer worship service: Moree Somana, a chaplain in a church-related school in the North; Warunee Swanson, a teacher at Chiang Mai Coeducational Center, who was responsible for writing the Bible study material; David Love, principal of Bangkok Institute of Theology; and I, Prakai Nontawasee, then president of Thailand Theological Seminary.

We had two meetings early in 1978, but some members were unable to attend for various reasons, and Jeanne Ballerjeau, director of the Women's Department of the Church of Christ in Thailand and a member of the



Prakai Nontawasee is known in the Christian community of Thailand as "Acharn Prakai." The Thai title, "Acharn," means "teacher," and teaching is Prakai Nontawasee's profession, and also what she enjoys doing most.

Prakai Nontawasee has served as chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Christian Education Literature Department; president of the Christian Women of the Church of Christ in Thailand; Thai representative on the East Asia Christian Conference Committee on Cooperation of Men and Women; and as a delegate to the Asian Church Women's Conference. In the World Council of Churches she serves on Unit 3, Education and Renewal. She is presently chairperson of the International Committee on the World Day of Prayer.

Executive Committee of the Christian Women's Organization, participated in some meetings and helped greatly with planning the service and using correct English wording.

The committee focused on the true meaning of freedom, trying to determine from various sources what freedom is. Again and again we came back to the question: Is the name of our country, *Thai*, which means *free*, enough to guarantee our freedom?

The mass media revealed that there are many new forms of slavery in our country today. For instance, many people are slaves to money, to gambling, to drugs.

A newspaper article quoted Police Major General Pow Sarasin, secretary-general of the Narcotics Control Board, who said that the number of drug addicts in Thailand is estimated at 500,000, and that roughly 60 percent of that number are young people between the ages of eight and twenty-four. Certainly those young people cannot say they are free when they are enslaved by a mind-controlling habit. Major General Pow Sarasin called for international cooperation to control the narcotics traffic.

One biblical example of freedom we considered is the Exodus account of the Israelites achieving freedom when they escaped from slavery in Egypt. God, who first commanded Moses to lead the children of Israel out from bondage to the Promised Land, was their source of freedom. He performed a further mighty act when his people stood between the waters of the Red Sea and Pharaoh's pursuing armies: he rolled back the waves of the Red Sea and allowed the people to pass on to freedom in the wilderness.

The significant fact is that the power for freedom is God. In the wilderness God taught the people to grow as a responsible community so that when they were ready for the next step toward freedom—life in the Promised Land—they were able not only to minister to their own needs but also to covenant with other peoples.

This idea of covenanting as a part of true freedom became a major principle that emerged from the committee meetings. God covenants with us, his people, and he expects us to covenant with all peoples. In a covenant relationship we are concerned for others; we love them and hence are

responsible.

But just saying "We are free" is not enough, as the Thai people learned in 1973. Rather we must rely on the power of Jesus Christ to enable us to understand what responsible freedom is. By sharing and worshiping together, we will grow in the ability to exercise responsible freedom.

On behalf of the writers of the 1980 World Day of Prayer worship service and the Christian Women's Organization of the Church of Christ in Thailand, I wish to express gratitude to the Christian women of Canada who wrote the 1978 worship service, which urged us to consider the significance of "Community Living." We are also thankful to our sisters in Africa for the 1979 service, which reminded us of our need for "Spiritual Growth."

We, the women of Thailand, encourage all women worldwide to continue to grow in the Spirit—that is, to love Christ more and to live closer to him. Out of a great love for him, we will feel closer to each other and will be able to covenant with others. To covenant with others means to love, to care, to be concerned, to be responsible.

Only then can we say that true freedom is covenant freedom—Responsible Freedom.■

this we believe

By Donna C. Paulson
LCW Secretary for Program
Resources

An Introduction to Materials for Prayer at Pentecost

On June 25, 1580, the German edition of the *Book of Concord* appeared officially for the first time in Dresden, Germany. Born out of the turmoil of religious and political conflict, the book laid the groundwork for order in the doctrinal position of what was to become the Lutheran Church.

In 1580, far from being members of a unified institutional church, "Lutherans" disagreed among themselves and often violently opposed the Roman Catholic Church. Princes of the small German states, many of whom had to defend their right to the new faith by force of arms, put pressure on the Lutheran theologians to gather together the writings that most clearly reflected the teachings of Scripture and the Lutheran Reformation.

For this reason the full title of the *Book of Concord* states that it includes "an appended declaration, firmly founded on the Word of God as the only norm, of several articles about which disputation and strife arose after the blessed death of Martin Luther. . . ."

Before it was presented to the public, the *Book of Concord* was signed by German electors, princes, counts, barons and cities, as well as by two bishops and about eight thousand clergy. It was, the book states, to be used by the signatories "for the instruction and admonition of their lands, churches, schools, and descendants."

The *Book of Concord* contains writings that were prepared over a period of years by several persons and groups, as well as three

traditional "ecumenical creeds"—the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian. It gathers in one place the Augsburg Confession of 1530 and its apology (or defense), Luther's Small and Large Catechisms, the Smalcald Articles, and the Formula of Concord.

Many of these documents are unknown to most Lutherans, and the doctrinal statements they contain are not viewed in the same way by all Lutherans. The *Book of Concord* probably gathers dust even in some clergy libraries!

Yet the Augsburg Confession, with its concise descriptions of Lutheran beliefs, is considered to be the distinctive Lutheran confession of faith. Both the confession, in its 450th year, and the *Book of Concord*, four hundred years old in 1980, are being studied and celebrated during this anniversary year. Creeds, confessions, doctrines of the church, come out of specific historical situations. But the faith they put into words is alive today. Lutherans "confess Christ today" in the world of the 1980s as they did in the German countryside of the sixteenth century.

As Lutherans today we move forward in faith and proclamation. But we also look backward with appreciation for a heritage of courageous, determined, faithful actions on the part of people who saw the need for, wrote and compiled the *Book of Concord*.

To expand this appreciation, Lutheran Church Women, in cooperation with women of the ALC and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, developed Prayer at Pentecost materials for 1980 around the theme, "This We

Believe." Prominent in the plan for the observance presented in the Celebration Guide is a simple drama, *Reconciled!* which helps participants learn about the contents and historical setting of the *Book of Concord*. The devotional folder that accompanies the guide includes six sets of thoughts and activities related to basic Lutheran beliefs.

It would be appropriate to use these materials near the time of the Festival of Pentecost—May 25 in 1980. Many LCW congregational organizations plan a special Pentecost celebration for the entire congregation, sending devotional folders to all families and emphasizing their use in the six days either before or after the Day of Pentecost.

This year, however, the materials would be appropriate also as a celebration of the 1980 anniversaries of the Augsburg Confession and the *Book of Concord*, and so could be used at any time.

The Celebration Guide, *This We Believe*, includes a program of prayer, music and readings centering on the drama. The drama can be presented with one rehearsal. Participants read their parts.

The Devotional Folder is especially good for use in family devotions, but it can also be a handout piece for visits to hospital patients and shut-ins.

This We Believe resources are available from Lutheran Church Women, Order Desk, 2900 Queen Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19129. Celebration guide, \$.35. Devotional Folder, \$.25 each; 12 for \$1.00; 100 for \$7.50. ■

CHANGING



Elna Stratton

ROLES

BY ELNA STRATTON

In the fall of 1978 Elna Stratton, an LCW leader at Holy Trinity, Irving, Texas, entered a "Dallas Times-Herald" essay contest on the family. Her entry was selected as one of the seven winning essays and was published in the newspaper on November 19, 1978. She received a \$100 cash award at a special dinner highlighting the twenty-fifth annual Times-Herald Forum. Jane Howard, author of "Families," made the keynote address at the dinner.

Elna Stratton, chairperson of her LCW's Christian Action Committee, is deeply interested in strengthening family life. LCW's emphasis on Family and Faith, and the 1978 Bible study of the Book of Ruth influenced her decision to enter the essay contest.

Nearly fifteen years ago, I was part of the vanguard of the movement within our society toward today's acceptance of many women in the triple role of Working Person/Married Person/Parent. Evolving from a working girl into a career woman, I was reluctant to

toss away that career when marriage and motherhood came along. Day care facilities were rare then, but my mother, a fulltime homemaker, was able and willing to care for our child during the day. My regular paychecks helped ease any ambivalent feelings I may have had about the arrangement.

My career soared. I earned several promotions and a healthy salary. There was even a time when my job brought home the more substantial income in our family. Happily, my husband's stature did not diminish accordingly in either my sight or his own.

Then an opportunity arose for my husband to further his career in a position offered to him out of state, necessitating my giving up my job. Together we made the decision to move, after much discussion and weighing of the facts. Though I could seek employment at the new city, one of the positive aspects of terminating my career at either location at that time was the opportunity it gave us to extend our family. I could now have another child and, indeed, soon did.

That was five years ago and, though I'm still a Married Person/

Parent, my Working Person is still on a sabbatical. Why? I'm not sure. Perhaps it's only because my mother's personal child care facility is no longer nearby. Perhaps I'm moving through one of Gail Sheehy's classic "Passages" and, now that I review the career of my twenties from my more mellow thirties, I recognize that the career goals of my forties must be different. There have been times when it would have been truly helpful to have the second income for our family group again—even more reasonable to do so in this two-income family society we now live in. Yet, my husband has supported my decision to remain at home at this time, perfecting my homemaking and parenting skills, or at least *using* them more frequently, and learning more about myself, too.

Many men would likely envy this extensive opportunity I've had for reexamination and reevaluation of my life goals. Realizing this, I'm more sympathetic to my husband's need to make readjustments from time to time, too. In fact, if I need the time to step aside awhile and review my situation in my world, perhaps everyone has that need. ■



living faithfully

STUDIES IN LUKE'S GOSPEL • By ELIZABETH ANN BETTENHAUSEN

This is the seventh session of the 1979-1980 official LCW Bible study. Only the study participant's material is printed in Lutheran Women; remarks addressed to Bible study leaders are available in a separate leader's guide. Both the participant's booklet, which contains all sessions of the study, and the leader's guide are available from any Fortress Church Supply Store, as well as from LCW, for ninety cents each plus postage. Study groups need at least one leader's guide.

SESSION 7. SHALL WE LOOK FOR ANOTHER?

(Luke 5:17-26, 31; 6:6-11; 7:11-23; 17:11-19)

—"My plane arrives at 4:36 in the afternoon. Let's meet at the gate." "How will I know you?" "I'll be wearing a black coat and carrying a blue suitcase."

—"If we stick to the speed limit, we should be there by late afternoon." "Great!" The house is on the west side of town, but there aren't any numbers yet. "How will we know which one?" "Oh, you can't miss it. It's the house with the purple doors, halfway down Winston Street."

—"I just can't believe I'm in New York! I never expected it to be like this!" "Why? What did you think it would be like?" "Oh, I don't know. It always sounds so dangerous and big and scary on the news. But people are friendly."

It is important to have definite signs to look for, something to recognize, when confronting

something or someone strange. If you do not know what you are looking for, you can walk right past it without even knowing it. If you have formed an image in your mind which does not match the real thing, the strangeness of the person or place will begin all over again, even though the real thing is right before you. We cannot deal with something or someone completely unknown. We need signs, points of familiarity, details to help us recognize and understand.

If you are looking forward to what promises to be a happy occasion—a promotion or the birth of the first grandchild—there is always just a bit of anxiety. Something could go wrong. If, however, you do not know exactly when the happy occasion will take place, the waiting is quite different. Just so, little children waiting for Christmas but not quite understanding the time divisions of weeks and months get impatient when Santa Claus appears right after Thanksgiving but Christmas is still "lots of days yet." The signs are right, but the reality does not appear.

We all have experienced the shock of realizing that we are now those people who seemed so grown-up and self-confident to us when we were children in grade school. In the fifth grade we looked to the future and expected that some clear signal would be given, some major change that would say, "You are grown-up." But instead we quietly eased into it

without any moment of sudden recognition.

A promise makes a claim about the future. It says, "The unknown is under control because this will happen. I promise." Those who hear the promise begin to build up expectations, to fill in the details. They fill the unknown with recognizable signs, with familiar qualities, in expectation. For centuries this had been happening among the descendants of Abraham and Sarah. The Messiah, the Savior, had been promised. But how would we know when the Messiah arrived? How do you recognize the Messiah? When?

Some said that the Messiah would be a powerful political leader who would free Israel from the Romans just as Moses had led the people out from Egypt. Some said the Messiah would be a military leader or would destroy the enemy with miraculous power. Others said that the Messiah was not even a person. To them all Israel would be the Messiah once every person lived righteously and in justice. Still others believed that the Messiah would be such a powerfully faithful person that all people would be compelled to confess that the God of Israel is the only God; there would be mass religious conversion. So everyone had an idea of who the Messiah would be. They would know when the Messiah appeared. But it would definitely be dramatic, clear-cut and self-evident.

From the start, the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth was a ministry of

healing. Luke records the healing of Simon Peter's mother-in-law (4:38-39) immediately after the first address in the synagogue. Next came the healing of the man with leprosy (5:12ff.) and of the paralyzed man lowered into the house from the roof (5:17ff.). The effect of these healings was immediate. "Great multitudes gathered to hear and to be healed of their infirmities" (5:15). Not only did Jesus heal the sick, but the dead were raised to life again. After the raising of the son of the widow of Nain, "Fear seized them all; and they glorified God, saying, 'A great prophet has arisen among us!' and, 'God has visited his people!'" (7:16). The word spread rapidly. People began to ask, "Is this the Messiah?"

In prison, John the Baptist asked the same question and sent his disciples to ask Jesus directly, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (7:18-20). Jesus does not answer the question with a yes or a no. Instead he points to the signs. "'Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense at me'" (7:22-23).

In the speech that follows, Jesus challenges the expectations of the people. They had thought that the Messiah would appear as a king, rich and powerful. They rejected John because he was too harsh and ascetic. They reject Jesus as "a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners" (7:34). Someone who does not eat cannot be the Messiah; someone who does eat cannot be the Messiah. The Messiah must be what we want the Messiah to be—so the religious leaders thought, and they were offended by Jesus.

But the acts of healing are the sign of the arrival of the Messiah. This is not because the Messiah comes simply to deal with physical

illness or death. The power that heals is the same power that forgives sin, and only faith can be open to healing and forgiveness. When the paralyzed man is lowered through the roof to Jesus, it is faith that moves Jesus to respond. "And when he saw their faith he said, 'Man, your sins are forgiven you'" (5:20). This sets up a critical decision for all. For those with no faith in Jesus as the Christ it is blasphemy, because only God can forgive sin (5:21). The healing of the man which follows is therefore a sign. The Messiah has come because sins are forgiven. The healing is the physical sign of the wholeness that is created in the forgiveness of sin.

Forgiveness and making well take priority over religious and cultural laws. Saving life on the Sabbath is more important than keeping to the letter of the law about the Sabbath (6:6-11). Healing and faith are not limited by definitions of the in-group and the outcast. Among the ten lepers who were healed, it was the foreigner, the Samaritan, who returned (17:11-19). All expectations that would limit and control the kingdom of God are overturned.

The Christ is not recognized by political power or by fulfilling the expectations of the religious community. Faith precedes all expected signs. It is only from the perspective of faith that healing is a sign, that eating with tax collectors and sinners is a sign. The confession of faith, "Jesus is the Christ," is simultaneously a confession of one's own brokenness and doubt, one's sinfulness, and a confession that in the Christ we are forgiven and made whole.

Faith was no more or less likely in the first century than it is today. There were many then who confronted Jesus and were highly offended by him. They would not admit that their lives were broken, that they needed healing. God does not heal people who deny they are sick. But those who have

no illusions of health and wholeness—the blind, the hungry, the outcasts, the oppressed—to these healing comes. Here there is no false pride to prevent the relationship of faith.

"Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well" (17:19). Today it may not be the healing services that clearly signal our faith in the Christ. The healing may be signaled in people who courageously rise and go their way made whole by the Christ. They are freed from the blindness of racial or sexual prejudice, freed from the bondage of self-doubt and hatred, freed from the oppression of having to prove themselves by society's standards. This forgiveness and healing is a sign of the Christ. But today there are still some people who become whole and well, and there are some who take offense.

Personal Preparation Worksheet

Read the Luke passages and the study material.

Recalling the study material for this session and for Session 2: What kind of Messiah did the people of Israel expect? _____

Read Luke 7:18-22. Why do you think John asked his question? _____

What signs does Jesus identify in answer to John's question? _____

What do these verses say about the Kingdom of God? _____

How do you know that Jesus is the Messiah? _____

Reread one of the passages for this session that tells of a healing. (Luke 5:17-26; 6:6-11; 7:11-17 or 17:11-19.) Answer these questions about the passage:

What healing takes place? _____

What other message does this passage convey? _____

(continued on page 29)



what's happening here

International Year of the Child

Focusing on the International Year of the Child, First United's LCW in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, planned its fall programs with the following objectives: to study the attitudes toward and the treatment of children and to bring new concepts of children's educational ministry to all members. The general meeting provided an occasion to affirm that the well-being of children deserves attention.

To allow mothers of young children to participate, the meeting was held in the morning and a baby- and child-sitting service was provided. A newspaper article invited members of the community to join the group.

The program featured a panel of three local persons who were not members of the congregation; they represented the Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Jewish faiths. Members of the panel spoke about parenting, family therapy, children having children and adoptions; they brought information about local programs that aid parents and children to live and learn together.

Displays in the meeting room included books for parents, information about local programs, comparisons of diets of children throughout the world, children's drawings of their hopes for oneness in the world, and baby clothing and layettes made by the Lutheran Social Service sewing group of the church.

As a follow-up the Bible study lessons at the circle meetings for October and November focused on

children. These studies concerned the concept of oneness with children in Christ through baptism. The booklet, "New Possibilities for Educational Ministry with Children," provided information as to how the continuing LCA philosophy of education makes us partners with our children in their education and challenges us to the task of ministry with children everywhere.

—Eleanor Forell

Centennial Observances

The old Jerusalem Church, built in 1767, on the banks of the Savannah River at Ebenezer, Georgia, the site of the early Salzburger colony, was the meeting place for the Ebenezer Area centennial celebration. Two hundred thirty-five women spent the day at the church and the

museum on the church grounds.

The history of the first Lutherans in Georgia was given by Mrs. Charles Lebey, museum curator. The background of hymns that were favorites during the hundred-year period was presented by Mrs. Reta Weitman, and these hymns were used in the service.

Mrs. Ruth Youngdahl Nelson from Minnesota, the guest speaker, discussed "Contemporary Situations."

Women of the area modeled clothing from the 1880s to the present while the centennial history of the area was given. Early wedding gowns, Sunday-best dresses, middie blouses with bloomers, a 1915 bathing suit—even the proper attire for attending a missionary meeting in the '30s—were worn.



A centennial offering was received.
—Miriam Hamer

Grace Church, dedicated August 16, 1942, are constructed completely of logs. —Phyllis Hands



Grace LCW, McGregor, Minnesota, celebrated the centennial of Lutheran women's work in September. Women from several surrounding areas were present.

The program was in three parts. First was a candle-lighting service entitled "We Remember Our Heritage" in which four women gave a brief history and told of the work of the four groups that merged in 1962. The second part was a tape recording telling of the beginnings of the local LCW in the words of the first president of the Grace women's group more than forty years ago; it included a summary of the work on the local level by one of the first secretary-treasurers. Four charter members were present. Rounding out the program was a challenge entitled, "We Look to the Future." A group of local women musicians, "The Harmonettes," added their talents to the occasion.

Several women wore dresses more than a hundred years old and many others had made "old-fashioned" costumes. A display of old portraits and ethnic mementos added to the festivities. Fall flowers and a fully decorated three-tier anniversary cake enhanced the Fellowship Hall.

The sanctuary and furnishings of

In honor of the centennial observance of Lutheran women's work, the Shepherd of the Hills LCW, North Little Rock, Arkansas, led the worship service on September 30 at 10:30 a.m.

Two highlights of their observance were: (1) the recognition of Helen O'Neal for forty-two, and of Mary Bard for twenty-six, years of service; and (2) the presentation of Mary Bard's original composition, "One Hundred Years."

Centennial bookmarks were given to each woman attending the service, and a special centennial offering was sent to the synodical unit treasurer.

—Nancy B. Bendigo

St. Mark's LCW, Emigsville, Pennsylvania, conducted the 9:30 a.m. worship service on September 9 to commemorate the centennial observance of Lutheran women's work. Dorothy Ziegler, auxiliary president, delivered the meditation and presented commendations for service to twenty women. The three women with the longest records of service are: Margaret Rohler, fifty years; Mary Kindig, forty-five years, and Florence Hively, forty years.

During a fellowship after the service, the women distributed their devotional booklet, "We Join Hands." —Arlene M. Krout

On October 2, members and guests of St. John's LCW, Nazareth, Pennsylvania, gathered for a centennial observance of Lutheran women's work.

The organization's history dates back to November 20, 1906, when a Woman's Home and Foreign Missionary Society was organized. Miss Pearl Schnerr has the distinction of having the longest membership—a total of sixty-three years.

The evening began at six o'clock with a dinner catered by the Von Bora Society. A program was presented on the theme of the women of the Bible for whom St. John's five LCW circles are named: Rebekah, Lydia, Sarah, Mary and Ruth.

All past presidents were recognized and given corsages. Members for twenty-five years or longer received certificates. All members were honored with a membership card and a handmade red rose.

A special guest was Joyce Saeger, president of Northeast Pennsylvania LCW.

The evening concluded with the sharing of a special anniversary cake.

—C. M. Heckman

The Dansville, New York, LCW had a centennial observance on October 9. The organization traces its roots back to 1857, when the first German Verein was organized. Minutes of the first meetings were read, as was the first constitution, written in 1900. One of its fifteen articles stated that each member must bring her own napkin to the meetings.

Each circle participated and many accomplishments as well as humorous happenings were reviewed. A social hour concluded the meeting. —Laura B. Mader ■

current books

80

CARING FOR THE WORLD. J. Edward Carothers. New York: Friendship Press, 1978. 135 pages. \$4.55, paper.

The theme of this book is the Christian's responsibility to care for the physical world and to work for the well-being of all people, but it is not the helpful guide it could have been. The author uses many qualifying statements when a firm stance is needed. He refers to "justice, mercy and good faith" without defining them. The history of the Department of the Church and Economic Life of the old Federal Council of Churches is much too long and repetitious. The space could have been better used to study the meaning of obedience in the Scriptures.

At one point the author speaks of the important role of Charles Taft in preparing certain documents for the Department of the Church and Economic Life: "His lawyer's mind and habit did not tolerate fuzzy language or fatted metaphors of doubtful meanings." It is too bad Taft wasn't around to edit this book.

—Edna W. Wagschal

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH. Paul D. Opsahl, Editor. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1978. 287 pages. \$8.95, paper. Eight biblical scholars undertook a systematic chronological study of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in preparation for four conferences conducted by the Lutheran Council in the USA from 1974 to 1976.

The editor's Preface and a more

complete "Preface to the Conference Report" (Appendix A) are distinct aids. With the theses of the individual contributors identified and the overall theme of the text established, the progression is more easily followed.

The first chapter takes us back to the doctrine of the Spirit of Yahweh as it is presented in the Old Testament. The writings of Paul and John, dealt with in Chapter II, extend the role of the Holy Spirit more closely to our own understanding of it.

From the medieval period to the sixteenth century, intellectual speculation gave a new impetus to the analysis of spiritual phenomena. It led to Pietism, Rationalism, Montanism, and all manner of conflicting tenets before culminating in the Protestant Reformation. The chapters that brings us up to our own time direct our thinking to the Lutheran belief in the Incarnation, the efficacy of One Baptism, the Father-Son-Spirit relationship in the Trinity, and the ongoing redemptive power of Jesus Christ.

Because of the growth of interest in the Charismatic Movement and in Pentecostalism, special consideration is given to these topics. The book concludes with summaries of pastoral perspectives representing the views of the three major Lutheran churches in North America—the ALC, the LCA, and the LCMS.

The writers have furnished us with a profound and enlightening

study that ends on a positive, forward-looking note: "Signs point to an era in which Christians will understand the divine action in terms of the Holy Spirit, who is present here and now, active in all realizations of freedom, integrity, compassion, competence, justice, brotherhood, reconciliation, and joy. . . . Our time may well see a truer balance in Christian faith than has ever been seen before." —Amanda Langemo

COME HOLY SPIRIT. Karl Barth and Eduard Thurneysen. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978. 287 pages. \$4.95, paper.

Karl Barth (1886-1968), one of the greatest Christian thinkers of all time, was keenly aware that "a universal need covers the whole earth." According to his biographer, Eberhard Busch, Barth achieved the insight that "God is not an opiate for men, but their limit; he does not restore their equilibrium but upsets them, confronts them with crisis." The tasks of theology and preaching are closely connected, and Barth never forgot this.

Come Holy Spirit, by Barth and Thurneysen, gives us (at least those of us who may never digest Barth's voluminous theological writings) a taste of Barth's theology. It is the first volume of sermons from the Barthian school to appear in English, although four editions have been published in German. The aim of the sermons is to give God's answer to man's primary needs, which must be satisfied before any other needs can be fulfilled. The

sermons do not soothe and flatter; in fact, the reader may despair at his own unacceptableness before God. But the preachers patiently offer an optimism based upon the abounding grace of God in Jesus Christ.

The sermons in this collection were prepared from 1920 to 1924. Pastor Thurneysen, a colleague of Barth's at the time, has selected them and arranged them according to the themes Promise, Christ, Christian Living. Written for regular Sunday morning services, the sermons were heard by men and women of small Swiss and German villages, who were engaged in the struggle for life, waiting and searching for God. They are welcome guides for men and women in our day as well.

Karl Barth insisted that a Christian preacher "not speak in the way of a clever conversationalist who wants only to be listened to, or as a teacher who claims only attention, or an agitator who seeks only agreement, or as a person of importance who desires only acquiescence." No, Barth insisted, the preacher is a bringer of the Divine Word, calling for faith, repentance and obedience, and proclaiming the Gospel of reconciliation and love. His sermons illustrate this precept.

—Norma Shirck

NO GREATER LOVE. Mildred Tengbom. St. Louis: Concordia, 1978. 159 pages. \$2.95, paper.

A collector of U.S. postage stamps may have a 1976 commemorative bearing the picture of a young nurse and the caption, "Clara Maass—She Gave Her Life."

Clara Maass is the subject of *No Greater Love*, the latest addition to the *Greatness with Faith* collection of biographies. Most readers, but especially the young person thinking about a career in nursing, will find this book readable, informative and deeply moving.

As a young child, Clara cherished a desire to "be someone

and do something worthwhile." At seventeen, she became a student nurse and found the career in which she would give a lifetime of courageous and loving service.

Mildred Tengbom has done extensive and careful research into the life and times of Clara Maass, particularly the period of the Spanish-American War and its accompanying yellow fever epidemic. We are introduced to the horrors of yellow fever when the young student nurse reads a book describing an 1878 epidemic in Tennessee.

A reader looking for frequent expression by Clara of her religious beliefs may be disappointed. It was not Clara's way to put these into words. Instead, her whole life was a statement of faith, reliance on God for strength and overwhelming love for all his children.

A few words of caution. If any reader should desire to visit the Clara Maass Memorial Hospital, it is not in Bellevue, New York, as the caption under its photograph reads, but in Belleville, New Jersey. Incidentally, the book is a slightly fictionalized account of Maass' life.

—Dorothy Vanderlippe

CHINA: SEARCH FOR COMMUNITY. Raymond L. and Thea M. Whitehead. New York: Friendship Press, 1978. 67 pages. \$2.75, paper.

SEARCHING FOR THE REAL CHINA: A GUIDE FOR CHRISTIANS. David Ng. New York: Friendship Press, 1978. 45 pages. \$2.25, paper.

One of the most intriguing political events in the past few years has been the gradual opening of China to outside visitors. In our fascination with this little-known country we eagerly read every firsthand account we see. But because China is such a huge country and its past and present history are so complex, we find ourselves still foundering in myths, misconceptions and fears, and

wondering how to evaluate what we read. These two books help us to look at China from within the framework of our Christian faith.

The authors of *China: Search for Community* have wisely chosen to focus their observations around an aspect of life common to all people. They begin with a short history of China and how its search for community has evolved. They consider the impact of the Christian community during the political changes of the past hundred years and ask what value there is for a Christian mission to China in the present. This little book helps us get beyond our myths and fears so we can look at the Chinese and at ourselves more clearly as children of the same God.

Searching for the Real China is a study/action guide to be used with the first book. The author suggests a variety of methods by which we can make this search, a search that can be exciting and full of the joy of discovery for those willing to venture out on it with open minds and hearts. —Edna W. Wagschal■

BIBLE STUDY continued from page 25

What does this message say to me today and to others with whom I join in ministry? _____

Does healing involve more than physical healing? Explain. _____

List situations within your neighborhood, community, world in which the healing of forgiveness, reconciliation, or helping persons to be "whole" is needed. _____

How can you as an individual or the community of the church carry out a ministry of healing in these situations? _____ ■



prayer calendar

We invite you to include the following petitions in your daily prayers this month:

1 Help us to be constant in faith.

2 We thank you for opportunities to know Christians of different cultures and ethnic backgrounds.

3 Help us to understand others' views and evaluate them justly.

4 We thank you for children, who sometimes make us aware of your truths.

5 Help us to keep your Son's new commandment.

6 Help us to transcend our differences, our discord, and love one another.

7 Grant us the wisdom, on this World Day of Prayer, to exercise our freedom responsibly.

8 Help us to respond to the reality of the worldwide energy situation.

9 Inspire developed and developing countries to work together to combat the energy shortage.

10 Thank you for the green things of earth; grant us the grace to exercise wise stewardship of them.

11 Guide the LCW Board of Directors to act wisely in its deliberations.

12 Let us celebrate the festivals of the Christian year by giving gifts.

13 Help us to see that what keeps woman "in her place" keeps man in his—and both from realizing God-given gifts.

14 Thank you for the wholeness and health of those of us who enjoy these gifts.

15 For those who suffer ill health, grant us the patience to understand and the compassion to care.

16 Sustain our courage and faith when illness makes us fear or doubt.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to "make a difference" in LCA/LCW specific ministries throughout the globe.

18 Let us be generous givers, both to your work and to those we love.

19 Help us to grow in covenant with others, that a Oneness in Spirit may one day prevail.

20 Thank you for the rebirth of spring.

21 Thank you for the Augsburg Confession and the promise of unity it represents to Lutherans.

22 We rejoice in the cooperation among Lutheran women that makes possible the Prayer at Pentecost materials.

23 Thank you for opportunities to reevaluate our life goals.

24 Guide mothers who must make difficult decisions regarding careers and families, and also personal fulfillment.

25 Guide synodical unit boards that are meeting this month.

26 Let students and teachers use spring vacations for renewal of energies and interests.

27 Help people participating in leadership-training events to find useful information.

28 Help us to find ways of getting aid to the hungry and oppressed.

29 Strengthen the United Nations' ability to discourage aggression.

30 Grant that we may share in Christ's obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection.

31 Plant Christ's cross in our hearts, so that in its power and love we may come at last to joy and glory.

An Invitation to Atlanta



Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau

The Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic District on Auburn Avenue, Atlanta, is a two-block area that includes the restored frame house of King's birth, the Ebenezer Baptist Church, and the outdoor crypt where King is buried. The district is about one mile east of downtown Atlanta, and is accessible by taxi, public bus and organized sightseeing excursion.

A Christmas card this year asked, "Has Atlanta become the center of the universe, or does it just seem that way?" In August many Lutheran Church Women will be asking the same question. The 1980 Triennial Convention will be held at the Atlanta Hilton from August 11 to 15. For those few days the center of our thoughts and prayers will indeed be in Atlanta.

"Believe . . . Rejoice . . . Proclaim"—three words expressing the Christian faith—is our theme. Come join with us as Lutheran Church Women become a community of believers.

Atlanta is the new-old capital of the South. There are beautiful places to visit: Peachtree Center; Colony Square; the Omni; large innercity office-shopping-hotel complexes; the world's tallest hotel; the home of Martin Luther King, Jr., and of a monument to him; historic Swan House and Tully Smith House; Stone Mountain with its sculpted monument to Civil War heroes; the amusement park, Six Flags over Georgia; elegant shopping in Lenox Square and Phipps Plaza. Atlanta, the education center of the Southeast, has twenty-seven degree-granting institutions. Atlanta, the medical center of the Southeast, has fine hospitals and medical schools as well as the Center for Disease Control. Sports are also an important part of the life of the city.

The State of Georgia has beautiful vacation spots for you and your family. Savannah offers a glimpse of our early history. The Golden Isles (Jekyll, Cumberland and Sea Island) provide vacation spots on the Atlantic Ocean. Dahlonega in the North Georgia Mountains gives a picture of the old gold rush days. Calloway Gardens is a family resort with beautiful gardens, tennis courts and a golf course. And, of course, there is Plains.

The members of the Southeastern Lutheran Church Women Synodical Unit are delighted to have you with us for this week. We hope that it will be a time of sharing, loving, and growing in faith for all of us.

*Barbara Lembcke, President
Southeastern LCW Synodical Unit*

LCW Offers Human Development Grants for 1980

Grants from a Fund for Human Development are offered for the seventh time in 1980 by the Board of Directors of Lutheran Church Women. Income from investments from four bequests will provide approximately \$6,500 for the grants this year. Three of the bequests were received from Mrs. Ada L. Swihart, Nevada, Iowa; Mrs. Edna Sardeson Gaylor, Coral Gables, Florida, and Miss Helen Longsdorf, Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. To these the board added the remainder of a matured annuity issued to Miss Mathilde Peper, Montclair, New Jersey.

From the income LCW offers grants to individuals or groups who "will enhance the development of human resources, especially among women overseas, in the United States and in Canada." The board considers that it can strengthen human resources by meeting the spiritual, social, emotional, educational or physical needs of persons. Moneys will be granted to either individuals or groups for whom such a grant will have an expanding or multiplier effect. Thus grants might supplement available resources, make possible initiation of a new project or, supplemented by additional funds, provide seed money to initiate a project or meet an emergency. Because income from the fund is limited, requests involving rental or purchase of land or buildings, or support of ongoing programs, will be refused.

The plan for the program or project should be one in which Lutheran Church Women can properly be involved. Priority will be given to projects involving minority persons or to those related to poverty situations or to urban or rural crises anywhere in the world.

Recipients who received grants at an earlier date may reapply. However, no individuals or groups will be eligible for more than three grants in a ten-year period. Applications are due May 1. Lutheran Church Women will determine recipients no later than June 1.

To apply for a grant, request a form from Dr. Kathryn E. Kopf, Executive Director, Lutheran Church Women, 2900 Queen Lane, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19129.

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