

The Lutheran Standard®

February 15, 1977

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It was all wrong

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Guide to the Holy Land



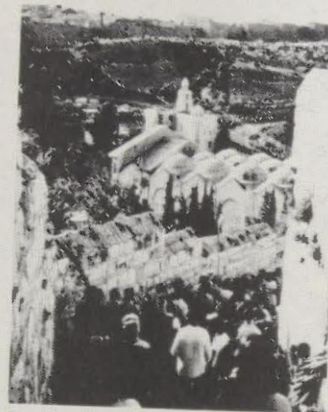
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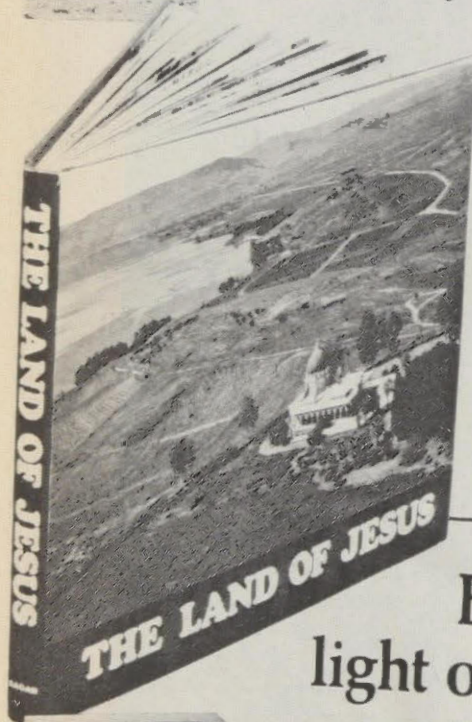
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Cover: The season of Lent—a time when we turn the church rivet our attention on the cross of Christ—begins on February 23. See "It Was All Wrong" by Alvin N. Rogness on page 6 and "The Cross and Religion As You Like It" by George H. Muedeking on page 11.

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Locate and link

'LAMP' FINDS NEW WAY FOR STUDENT MINISTRY IN L.A.

Ministry to students has never been easy for the church. One pattern emerged when members started their own colleges, beginning with Harvard University and continuing to our own most recent creation, California Lutheran College.

Ministry on the public campus has remained a despairing challenge, however, ever since the Middle Ages. But during the past year and a half,

by **George H. Muedeking**

250 Lutheran congregations in the greater Los Angeles area have developed a radically different ministry to college students—another form of their Evangelical Outreach.

Until April 1975, a full-time campus pastor was located at each of four of the best-known campuses. A handful of "contact pastors," serving congregations adjacent to certain other colleges, were available for distressed students—if the students knew about them.

Now these congregations—with the help of the American Lutheran Church (ALC) Division for



The Los Angeles campus of the University of Southern California is one on which congregations are ministering through LAMP.

The life-style of a commuter involves entering a steel cocoon twice a day for a freeway trip that almost defies comprehension.

College and University Services and Division for Service and Mission in America, plus the National Lutheran Campus Ministry—have formed “a unified strategy . . . [for post-secondary educational] mission in metropolitan Los Angeles,” as their statement of goals puts it.

They are faced with the responsibility for ministry to as many college students as the total population of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minn. These students are located in the 87 cities of the Los Angeles area and study at 50 public and 15 independent institutions of higher learning.

Serving many students

To serve this large number of students, the congregations have created the Los Angeles Metropolitan Project (LAMP) under the direction of an ALC pastor, the Rev. William Jeffs.

An “Angeleno” and former campus pastor at Central Washington College, Jeffs recognized that his first task was to reshape the traditional conceptions of student ministry. Goals had to include two prior-

ities: (1) develop programs which would increase coverage of the schools, and (2) develop a resource bank of persons who wanted to engage in student ministry—voluntary or paid, professional or lay.

Out of the LAMP effort—directed by an inter-synodical board—four levels of missions to higher education have emerged.

First, student work is shared ecumenically in the numerous community colleges (grades 13-14) through “stipend students” who make contacts on the campuses where they study. This is essentially a work-study program whose effectiveness must be measured in terms of the huge target audience.

Orange Coast College, for example, is the largest community college in the United States. It has 37,000 enrollees. In the same county, only 20 miles away at Fullerton, is the oldest community college in the country. Its enrollment is 30,000. Such a bulging student population is the norm—not the exception—in southern California.

The second level implemented by LAMP involves the training of interested laity whose membership is in congregations near a campus.

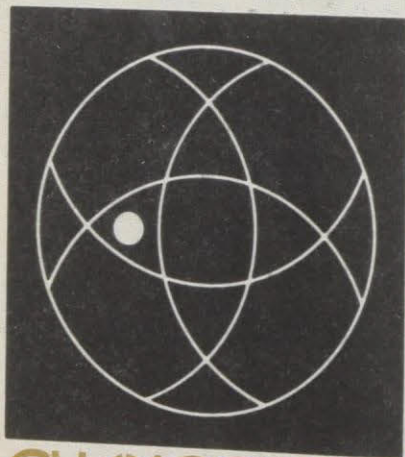
The third level is the supervision and strengthening of the full-time campus pastors.

The fourth level is the most exciting and innovative. Pastor Jeffs brings together agencies and a network of people who discuss needs, and then form consortia to deal with them through special projects.

Specific ministries

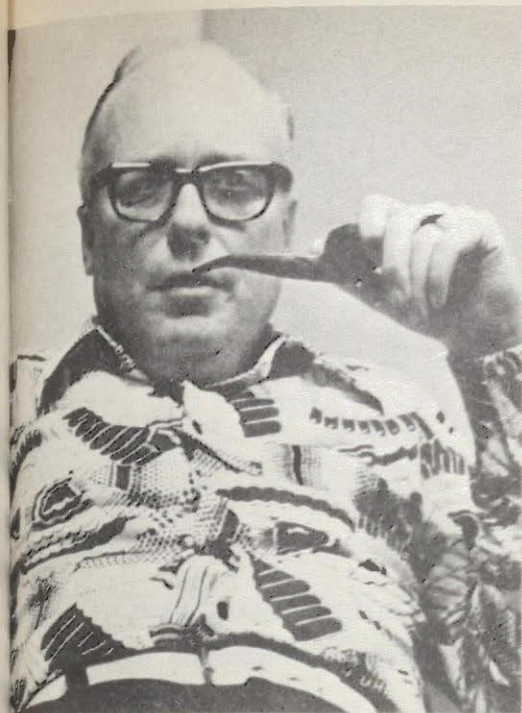
Most recent, for example, is the “East Los Angeles Hispanic Concerns Project.” Forty-five persons have been enrolled in this project. It provides ministry to the dominantly Hispanic students in east Los Angeles County. The project employs a UCLA political science graduate, Eugene Hernandez, whose training equips him to enter the community itself in order to call out unknown governmental and political resources available to assist minority students.

Another concern around which LAMP has built a consortium is “Hill House” in Pasadena, a halfway house for students who are finding their way out of



EVANGELICAL
OUTREACH

One in a series of articles



William Jeffs, LAMP's director, sought people who wanted to share in student ministry. Fran Burnford was one.

the drug culture. Its principal agency support comes from Lutheran Social Services.

LAMP recently organized a "commuter life-style conference" because the great majority of California's higher-education students are commuters. In fact, almost the entire working population commutes.

Commuter life-style

By definition of its total membership needs, therefore, the congregation must be concerned about this life-style. That style puts a person inside a steel cocoon twice a day for a freeway trip that almost defies comprehension. One student at the conference reported that she travels 150 miles a day to her class and back.

"Southern California may be the only place on earth where a person can step into a vehicle, roar across the city on a concrete track at 70 miles an hour, and at the end of the hour still be in the same city," notes the Rev. Raymond Vance of the Lutheran Church of the Master in La Habra.

Most of the institutions of higher education have been structured for residential students, however. As a result, commuter students face discrimination. A leader at the conference, Prof. Mark Hardwick of the University of Maryland, observed that at his own institution residential students account for only one-third of the enrollment. Yet they get \$48,000 from the student affairs budget, while the commuter students receive but \$2000. LAMP may well be the first church group in the country to have addressed the problems of the life-style imposed on the commuter.

After the conference shared its findings, the results were sent on to its planning board. The planners will

bring together support groups composed of people whom Jeffs humorously characterizes as having a "Mafia connection." That is, they know people who know people who can get something done in our bureaucratized social order.

They are people like Fran Burnford, for instance. As worldwide consultant for human-care delivery services for the secretary of the army, Burnford is able to call upon the resources available through the University of Southern California where she is director of the Human Services and Design Center, in charge of relating community needs and the university.

Her previous contribution to the ALC was to play two hymns in the primary department of the Santa Monica congregation where she holds membership. LAMP's discovery of her possible contributions to the mission of the ALC in a metropolis is a striking instance of its goal of developing "a resource bank of persons who wish to engage in ministry."

An enabling process

LAMP, says Jeffs, "is an enabling process, not a doing agency." Its purpose "can best be described as locating and linking"—locating persons with a common concern and specific talents to bring to bear on the concern, plus a linking which pools their contributions.

LAMP is to self-destruct in July. Its experimental gains should not be lost to the church. Its operational style can be replicated in many parts of the church where lay persons with vast and untapped abilities wait only for some creative leader who will "locate and link" them around recognized targets for mission.

It was all wrong

by Alvin N. Rogness

Common sense tells us we would have done a better job planning Jesus' visit to our world. But in the season of Lent, we reflect on his path and discover again how he captures us by love, not by power.

By every standard on earth and by all the rules of common sense, what happened to Jesus was all wrong. It started wrong at his birth, and it kept on being wrong through the crucifixion. Even after he was raised from the dead, there was no big party for him. And he slipped back to heaven on an unannounced flight, with no trumpets blowing.

We certainly would have done a better job in planning his visit to our planet. We would not have chosen a stable in a small village. Bethlehem, least of the cities of Judah, was certainly no place to welcome the King of kings. Of the town where Jesus lived quietly for 30 years, Nathaniel said, perhaps with a sneer, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" And the little country itself had been dwarfed by the impressive empires that surrounded it or trampled upon it—Assyria, Babylonia, Greece, Rome. Why, of all places, choose Israel?

But it was God himself who had written the score, the God who reminds us, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways."

An extraordinary plot

There were a few who paused in wonder, aware that something extraordinary was afoot. The angelic hosts knew. And the shepherds could not forget the strange glory of that night. Even Herod, after the Wise Men's curious errand, felt it in his bones. And of course Mary, ever since the angel had come to her with the announcement, "...you will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus... of his kingdom there shall be no end." But watching him die

on a cross she must have wondered if the angel's appearance 33 years earlier had been but a dream.

Jesus himself didn't help matters. He immobilized the legions of angels at his command and wandered about as a mendicant preacher, at best (in the eyes of the world) a good storyteller and curious magician. Crowds followed him, to be sure, but crowds are fickle and hardly an entourage for a king. After the abortive enthusiasm of Palm Sunday, their vague hopes that he might still pull off a coup, throw off his disguise, blaze forth with messianic power, and scatter the Roman soldiers to the four winds—these hopes were utterly gone with his feeble cry on the cross, "It is finished." The farce was over.

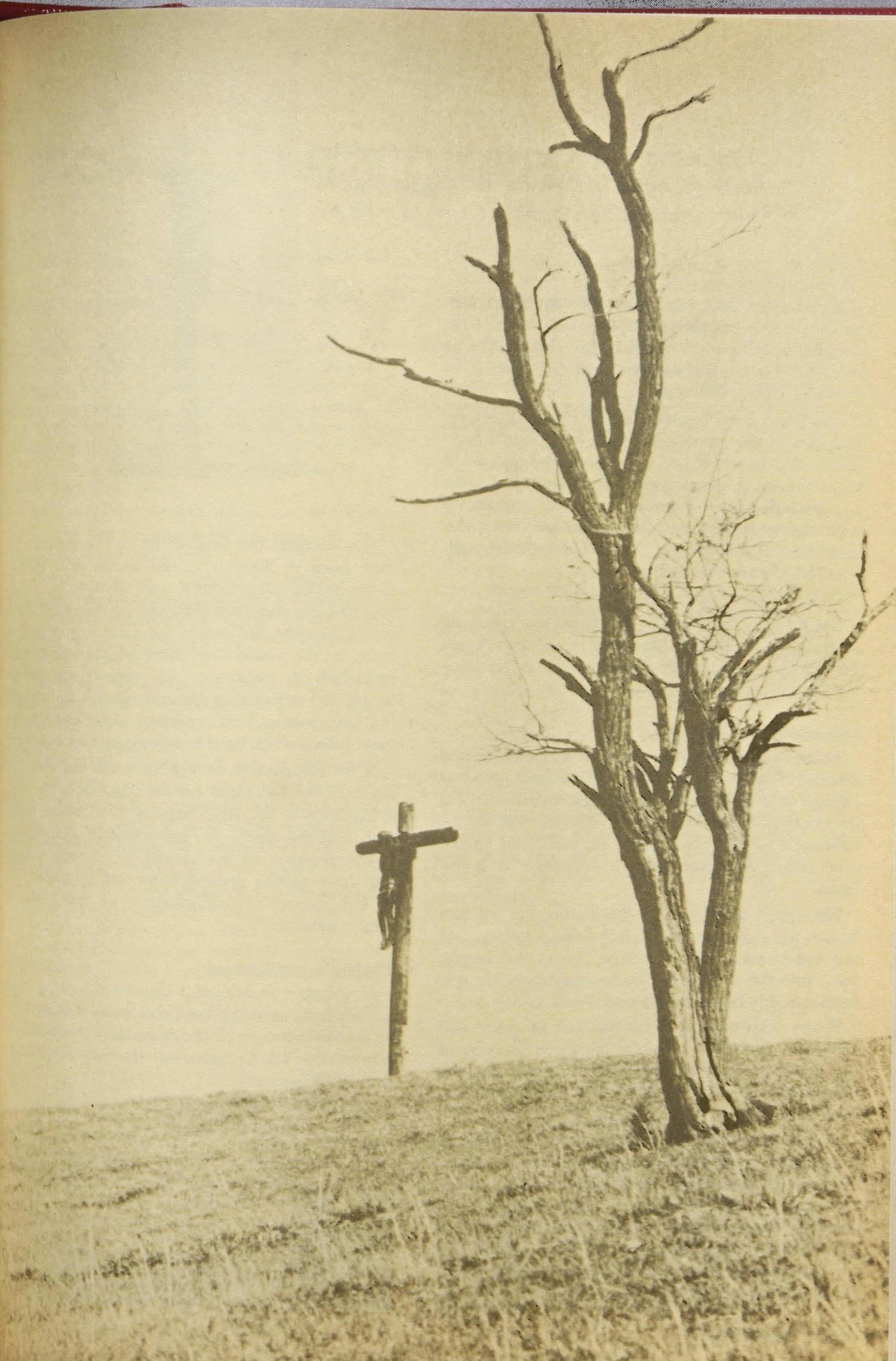
Strange visit

Pentecost came, and the epilog of the King's strange visit to the earth began to unfold. The few followers, now convinced by the Spirit that the cryptic claims of their leader were the revelation of God, began to fan out into the Mediterranean world. Before the century was over, the movement was rolling to carry the message of the King to the uttermost parts of the world.

This chorography of God as the suffering servant, so utterly wrong by human standards for honoring a king, in retrospect has been the key for understanding the ways of God with man.

For God's conquest of man was to be by love, not by power.

He needed no new display of power. Anyone who believed in God at all could see his power, in the



This action of God as suffering servant—so utterly wrong by human standards—is the key for our understanding his ways with us.

sun and moon and stars, and today in the galaxies and the atom. But for him to tell us of his love demanded a disclosure so different that man would ever after rub his incredulous eyes and cry, "Can it be true that God is like that?"

Israel had been forewarned. In Isaiah's great description of the coming Messiah, they should have known that he would be "... despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ... wounded for our transgressions ... numbered with the transgressors ... by oppression and judgment he was taken away..." But they had forgotten. They looked for a conqueror.

And conqueror he has been!

But he has conquered by becoming one of us, by emptying himself and becoming a servant of all, going to his death in some strange way as "an offering for sin."

Life-and-death struggle

Behind the scenes there was an unseen, gigantic display of power. The Son of God had come to engage in a life-and-death struggle with Satan for the souls of men. The destiny of man was in the balance. The war raged to its climactic end on the cross when, as victor, Jesus announced, "It is finished."

The world could not see this battle. We see him as a man, a commoner, a plain human being. And this was no mask, no camouflage. He entered deeply, fully, into the stuff of our human existence. He was incarnate. He became flesh and dwelt among us.

When John adds that he was full of grace and truth and that "... we beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father," he was expressing the unbelievable spectacle of love which now had been given to the world.

It has never been easy for us to keep Christ in focus as the weak one, the oppressed one, the suffering one. It seems more correct to see him in his triumphalism—his resurrection, his ascension, his reign at the right hand of God, and his return in glory to judge both the quick and the dead. We put his humanity behind us and elevate him "high and lifted up," as indeed he is.



But we must not lose Christ as the suffering servant, born in Bethlehem and crucified at Calvary. If we do, the church itself may cease to be the servant church, suffering with and for the weak of the world. Despite the power the church may seem to have in the world—by virtue of its numbers, its cathedrals, its institutions, its property and budgets, its art and scholarship—its real mission to the world has always been best expressed in terms of the servant. It follows its Lord in service, not yet in triumph.

If his resurrection makes the cross but a memory for us, if his ascension removes him from the earth, if his reign at the right hand of God makes Bethlehem and the stable an embarrassing memory, and if the prospect of his return in triumph removes him from earth's present tears and injustices, then in our premature triumphalism we have crucified him afresh.

The suffering Servant

If we, the church, find ourselves basking in the victor's hall, we must leave the banquet table to find again the footsteps of the suffering Servant and join him on the Via Dolorosa—all the way from Bethlehem to Golgotha.

This is the script written for the King, and it is the script written for us. ■



Dr. Rogness is writer-in-residence for Augsburg Publishing House in Minneapolis and president emeritus of Luther Seminary in St. Paul.

'I shall go to my grave . . .'

by Paul S. Rees

I am not ill . . . not morbid . . . not despondent. To the best of my knowledge, I am not suffering from what some psychiatrists would call a "death wish."

On the other hand, I am not young. The 20th century and I have kept close company for many years. Last June Mrs. Rees and I celebrated our golden wedding anniversary. I have outlived all those senior men of God who helped to mold and mature me when I was a youthful preacher-in-the-making. More than that, I have outlived many of my peers, respected and much-loved contemporaries.

So I speak in a mood neither callow nor melancholy.

Let me try to ring some bells that resonate with my strong and persistent convictions:

1. *I shall go to my grave affirming that Jesus Christ is what I mean by absolute reality. Not the church, which is less than eternal; not the Bible, which is instrumental rather than ultimate; but Jesus Christ, the Lord God revealed.*

2. *I shall go to my grave convinced that the church—the visible community of Christian faith and fellowship—needs to exhibit a unity that is perilously contradicted by the exclusive, self-defensive, and often warring divisions into which we have fractured and factioned ourselves. With time's passing I am less and less impressed by our attempts to justify this rabbit-warren proliferation of our sects and subdivisions. Concurrently, I am increasingly struck by the flimsiness and self-serving of our arguments for going on as we are.*

3. *I shall go to my grave declaring that the human condition of estrangement from God is so profound that it can never be put right except as God in mercy takes the initiative, as he has in Christ. At the cross, the place of reconciliation has been found and founded, once for all and for all who will kneel to accept.*

4. *I shall go to my grave persuaded that rules and regulations for Christians, if used as means by which we pigeonhole our Christian comrades into "true" or "false," are legalistic devices for producing "cult" or "culture" Christianity instead of the "beloved community" of the New Testament.*

5. *I shall go to my grave firm in the feeling that one of the most frequent undetected sins of Christians is idolatry. Customs, tradition, forms, ideologies, organizations, institutions (including the state), precedents, structures, titles, clichés—in every one of them there is a potential idol. They arose, it well may be, out of historical necessity. We cling to them, or bow low to them, or somehow perpetuate them out of lethargy, or bigotry, or stupidity, or vanity.*

6. *I shall go to my grave believing that the long years of controversial "pulling and hauling" over the personal gospel vs. the social gospel was a poignant miscalculation. There was myopia on both sides. Now, thank God, the signs point to clearer understanding.*

7. *I shall go to my grave with the conviction that theological "tunnel vision" has kept multitudes of Christians, both clergy and laity, from discovering the wealth of Christlikeness that is open to them on the pages of the New Testament. A holiness of motivating love, offered both as gift and as growth, has been missed by masses of Christians. . . . We are wrong, I am persuaded, to set limits to what the grace of God can do in redeeming and refashioning the believing person.*

8. *I shall go to my grave asserting that nine-tenths of our either/or's are abstractions of the mind rather than reflections of reality. There are absolutes and there is truth in situation ethics. There is subordination in family and other community life and there is sexual equality. We do have a trustworthy Bible and we do have a Bible whose authority is not derailed by a misspelled word, or an erroneously translated term, or an incorrect date.*

9. *I shall go to my grave believing that, side by side with my ardent expectation of the Second Advent, most of our "signs of the times" sermons and books are based on opportunism and a mistaken understanding of what the apocalyptic portions of Scripture are meant to teach us. These hot sermonic and literary outpourings tend, in the cases of many Christians, to distract from the . . . mandate for missions and social responsibility.*

10. *I shall go to my grave unshakable in the faith-confession that, all appearances to the contrary, "Jesus is Lord."*

Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in thee I find;
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick and lead the blind.
Thou of life the fountain art,
Freely let me take of thee,
Spring thou up within my heart,
Rise to all eternity. ■



Dr. Rees, author of 14 books and former pastor of First Covenant Church in Minneapolis, is vice-president at large of World Vision International. This article is reprinted from World Vision magazine, copyright 1976 by World Vision, Inc. Used by permission.

Mr. Editor

a page of
reader response

Satan and Judas

Prof. Juan Cortes ("No Satan Possession in the Bible," L.S., Jan. 4, p. 21) has totally ignored two very significant texts in the Gospels that speak of a satanic possession in the case of Judas Iscariot: "Then Satan entered into Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve (Luke 22:3, NEB); "As soon as Judas had received it Satan entered him (John 13:27a, NEB). A crime so heinous as the betrayal of Christ could only have been motivated by some form of satanic possession.

Certainly it is morbid and unhealthy to be preoccupied with the occult and the satanic. But to ignore the reality of a satanic means of possession is incredibly naive. Dietrich Bonhoeffer noted in *The Cost of Discipleship* that "The disciples know the devil's power well enough, although it is his cleverest trick to deny his power and to pretend that he does not exist. It is just this supreme cunning of his that must be countered; he must be brought to light, and overcome through the power of Christ" (*The Cost of Discipleship*, p. 226, Macmillan paperback edition).

Spencer D. Brien, pastor
Bowdle, S.D.

Not for gain

Some very heartwarming responses have been received to the article "Good Samaritanism by the Truckload" (L.S., Nov. 2, p. 22). One Ohio pastor offered, in behalf of the farmers of his congregation, to give a semi-load of shelled corn or hay to Minnesota farmers. Two other Ohio farmers agreed to give 5000 bales of hay. Their offer was prompted "as a Christian service and not for gain."

Unfortunately, it is not economically feasible for Minnesota farmers to transport hay or grain from Ohio. Nevertheless, they deeply appreciate the concern of other Christians.

The need still exists in Minnesota and offers of hay from farmers closer at hand would be gratefully accepted.

Russell B. Helgesen
414 Becker Ave. W.
Willmar, Minn. 56201

The real message of Christmas

Yes, some children only have Santa Claus to believe in (L.S., Dec. 21, p. 6), and the reality of finding that he is only a character can be shattering, but that does not say that we have to proclaim him dead. It means that the church needs to work harder in the secular community to portray the real message of Christmas—the celebrating of the birth of Christ and the preparation for his second coming.

Beverly Buddrius
Spokane, Wash.

Goodness and joy

Many, many decades ago a hard-boiled newspaperman wrote a piece entitled, "Yes, Virginia, There Is a Santa Claus." This article, unlike Mrs. Mortenson's (L.S., Dec. 21, p. 6), is a classic statement of faith in goodness and joy. It still puts tears in my eyes even though I have read it annually for many years.

Richard P. Fox
Los Angeles, Calif.

Forgiven 'failures'

Re: a quote which appeared on page 25 of your Dec. 7 issue: "Man's greatest moment of happiness is to be tested beyond the breaking point and not fail."

To seek to avoid failure is common enough, but to laud such "stiff upper lips" as being a great achievement is to perhaps deny our humanness. When we "break bread" together we participate in the brokenness of Jesus Christ for us. When we "break down" with each other, and cease to be always the strong ones in control, we begin to participate on deeper levels with our sisters and brothers.

My prayer is that we may be led to recognize our failures, to grow in faith through them, and to live rejoicing in the communion of saints, the fellowship of forgiven "failures."

Jeanne Lowe
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Well done!

There have been many times recently when I have felt like writing, "Well done!" or "Great!" after reading a copy of *THE LUTHERAN STANDARD*, but I don't seem to get it done. Last night, however, I sat down to read your Dec. 7 issue and felt that even with the busyness of Christmas, I couldn't pass it up. I've appreciated your entire series on the Lord's Prayer, and now especially Dr. Rogness' finale and Pastor Johnson's everyday suggestions for application.

Lois Walfrid Johnson
Minneapolis, Minn.



"Your sermon today was so relevant that I doubt if any of the congregation will ever come back!"

Need for guidance

Your editorial, "Stars Shine, Witnesses Speak" (L.S., Dec. 7, p. 11), prompts me to disagree with you somewhat. In our terminology, "stars" do speak, act, play, and shine. Some witnesses, unfortunately, do not shine in their speaking. I agree we need guidance, training, teaching, if you will, in the art of telling the good news. It has been my conviction, born out of experience, that we should provide guidance for anything and everything we ask our people to do.

Paul Moeller, interim pastor
Memphis, Tenn.

Miracle worker

I can witness to the love of God shown to me by his healing me of all traces of polio which afflicted me as a youth. God does perform miracles today—some by lengthy process, some by faster methods, some using modern medicine.

But to those whom God tests with affliction, the power of God may flow through them to heal many people of spiritual emptiness. Edith Reuss (L.S., Nov. 16, p. 13) is a beautiful witness to God's love.

Robert Gottschalk
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Death conditioning?

Hospices for the dying (L.S., Jan. 4, p. 16) recall Park Lane Hospital for the Dying in Aldous Huxley's novel "Brave New World." The hospital was a 60-story building in London. All was functional and pleasant there. Since Park Lane provided all the needs of the dying, visitors were a rarity. "... a convoy of gaily colored aerial hearses..." flew from the roof of Park Lane to Slough Crematorium where tall chimneys recovered 98% of the phosphorous emitted from the furnaces.

Dying has been going on for a long time. But now we are being told we need help to die from trained experts who will rid us of our dying complex. The question is: Who solves the complexes, including the dying complex, of those who would solve the complexes of others?

All Ye, Enter Here Without Hoping—fitting words chiseled in stone above the portal of a hospice for the dying. Unless one has a strong will to live.

God knows which of our nonsense is right and which is wrong.

E. G. Lindstrand
Coeur D'Alene, Idaho

More than 'lip service'

This comment is in support of Pastor Thompson's article on church outreach (L.S., Dec. 7, p. 36). I am excited about the possibilities for the Evangelical Outreach program the ALC is embracing for 1977, but I too am concerned that this not be another case of ecclesiastical "lip service."

The evidence clearly indicates that we need to identify our message in the world and decide whether the message is of any value to the people within and without the church.

Tim Brueckner
Seattle, Wash.

Let's talk it over

a page of editorial opinion

The cross and religion as you like it

Whatever else real Christianity is, it is not "religion as you like it." For in the middle of it all is the cross, which Paul called a scandal to the Jews and silliness to the Gentiles. It is the heart of Christianity. "I determined to know nothing among you but Christ crucified," he told the Corinthians. That is religion as you *don't* like it.

The offense is basically that it cost so much to rescue us. Really, God ought to be thankful that I listen to him and try to do his will, particularly with so many self-centered people around. To hear, then, that my sins are so heinous that nothing but the death of the Son of God could rescue me, is quite intolerable.

What makes it worse is that we could as well enter into a chewing match with God about the seriousness of our sins. They aren't anywhere near all that bad, especially when you compare them with the sins of a lot of other people we know. But what makes it all so insufferably offensive is that the Scripture insists I am not a sinner because I sin, but that I sin *because* I am a sinner (see L.S., Feb. 1, p. 10). That is, I originate in this world as a person bent to my own desires rather than to the divine will. This orientation away from God is called "original sin" and it makes the cross of Jesus Christ completely necessary for my rescue. There are no alternatives.

Lenten proclamation

In an absolute way, then, the cross of Jesus Christ by which this sinfulness was overcome is victory for us. This we proclaim in the Lenten season now upon us. The witness of the cross is a cosmic hope, as well as an assurance of God's personal intervention to overcome the evil that possesses our hearts. Andrew Greeley, well-known Roman Catholic priest and sociologist, describes that witness like this: In Jesus there is "a vision in which good and evil are inextricably mixed, with good finally edging out evil by suffering all that evil can do to it and still surviving and living again in God's power" (*New York Times Book Review*, 12/29/76).

Greeley is responding to Hans Küng, the famous theologian who wrote in his book, *On Being a Chris-*

tian: "The cross then is not only an example and model, but ground, strength, and norm of the Christian faith: the great distinctive reality which distinguishes this faith and its Lord in the world market from the religious and irreligious ideologies, from other competing religions and utopias and their lords. . . . The cross separates the Christian faith from unbelief and superstition. The cross certainly in the light of the resurrection, but also the resurrection in the shadow of the cross."

We cannot have Christ in our lives without his cross. This is the emphasis of the Lenten season. The cross, however, will not be impressed upon us by talking in Lent about all the exemplary activities we might carry on as Christians. But when we stand beneath the cross of Jesus and look full in his wonderful face, the spiritual renewal for which we all yearn will occur.

The old, old story

If you discover that your congregation's worship in Lent has veered away from the centrality of the cross, even to so noble a concern as to know better the meaning of the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, or the commitments Christians should make for social justice, there is surely one thing you can do. You can tell your congregation's worship committee that you need refreshing at the fount of living waters. You need to hear again and again, and especially in this time which the holy Christian church itself has set aside for this encounter, that old old story of Jesus and his love. For faith comes by hearing, as the Scripture makes so plain.

If you do not speak, who will? Our worship hours are planned for the spiritual needs that are apparent to the worship committee. Those to whom the cross is the ultimate offense—as it must be to everyone who has not personally knelt in wondering humility beneath that cross and pondered the surpassing love of God revealed there—will exert pressure that the worship hour deal with other matters. If you do not ask instead for the hours of spiritual renewing that can be captured by the Lenten walk with Jesus to his cross, will there be anyone else who will?

Remember, however, for what you are asking—the proclamation that we cannot, by anything we do or leave undone, rescue ourselves for the eternity God has planned for us. Remember also you are asking for the recognition that no amount of social force and pressure—whether it be laws on capital punishment, legislation for relieving social injustices, or wars against any target enemy—can ever bring us one step closer to the reconciliation of human beings and God. That was accomplished on the cross by Jesus. It is ours to embrace.

GHM

COMBATING THE CULTS

by Arthur J. L. Meether

How can parents help their children avoid falling captive to cults? Here are some suggestions:

Cults are making captives of many people, especially youth. And concerned parents are asking, "What can we do?"

Nothing can guarantee that no member of your family will ever fall into one of the 5000 or more cults that are active in our land. But some things can be done to reduce the risk.

Prevention is the key to counteracting the cults because recovery is a very difficult and sometimes futile process.

1. Recognize that it can happen in your family.

All types of young people from all kinds of backgrounds have been lured into the cults. They include children of clergy and children from religiously indifferent homes; children from wealthy homes and children who lived in poverty; honor students and school dropouts. And there is such a variety of cults that one or more will likely appeal to almost any type and taste.

2. Keep communication open with your children.

Be sure this communication goes both ways. This isn't easy, and many parents fail here.

Guidance and discipline are essential for children. But discipline without love, or discipline where love is

not visible, is more likely to alienate than to correct.

Overparenting, however, must be avoided. Children should be encouraged to begin to make their own decisions at an early age. Thus, they must be given freedom and trust. Failure to train children in this way will tend to condition them to seek an authoritarian cult leader who gives them security and shelter from having to make decisions themselves.

Invite communication with your children on difficult and even embarrassing subjects. Keep calm and always give straightforward, honest answers. Don't respond with bitterness to any question your children may ask, even if the question shocks or disturbs you.

Never worry too much over the things about which your children talk. Worry instead over those things about which they are afraid to talk in front of you.

3. Live your faith.

There are a lot of apathetic, "lukewarm" Christians. This indifference contrasts sharply with the devotion, enthusiasm, and sincerity of many cult members. And these qualities attract many young people.

Too many parents send their children for religious instruction. They may even support the church financially and worship occasionally. But by what we parents do, we may be teaching our children that God and the gospel are not very important aspects of our life.

4. Do not support the cults financially.

Few people do this intentionally, but contributions to unfamiliar chari-

ties or religious organizations may be subsidizing the campaign of a cult to gain our children.

Cults frequently use "fronts" to conceal their identity when seeking money. Don't contribute. Don't buy the products cult members are trying to sell. Give only to agencies you know are legitimate and responsible.

5. Be informed.

Though the teachings of the cults differ radically, techniques of proselytizing are quite similar. Be aware of these and train your children to guard against them. Here are some examples:

—Cults appeal to prospective converts with accepted truth—with what a person finds familiar and appealing. To the prospective convert, cult members seem like a group of dedicated disciples working for the spread of the gospel and the well-being of the nation and world.

—Cults seek to isolate prospects from family and church. If possible, cult members will try to convince prospective candidates that their parents, teachers, and pastors have deceived them.

Cults also exploit the widespread ignorance among Christians about the Bible and the doctrines of the faith. Young people must not simply be taught Bible stories. They must be shown how to read the Bible in the light of Christ and the gospel which comes through him. We must not only teach them to "test all things and hold fast to what is good," but we must equip them to do this (1 Thess. 5:21).

—Cults use proven sales techniques. Prospects are showered with love and affection or whatever they happen to seek. Instructions given to

COMBATING THE CULTS

members of one cult for dealing with prospects include: Begin with a radiant smile. Show the person you love him. See the person every day. Be interested in his interests. Be appreciative of his questions and answer those you understand well. But do not try to explain things you do not understand. Stay enthusiastic. Be self-assured. Don't budge if challenged.

That's an interesting list of instructions. Sadly it is put to such demonic purposes.

6. Educate yourself. Teach the youth.

We who are parents can provide

the most effective education because our children know they can trust us. But we sometimes forfeit the effectiveness of our guidance by not keeping up to date. We all must continue to be learners as well as teachers. Here are some suggestions:

—Use the theological training of your pastor. And encourage your pastor to take time for continuing education.

—Never knowingly teach young people something they will have to unlearn later.

—Don't ignore old cults. Some of these—Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, World-Wide Church of God, and others—are growing fast.

—Be cautious of the material used concerning cults. Some of the anti-cult material uses the Bible in the same "out of context," "unhistorical" way the cults do.

7. Pray

Pray for the victims of cults. And pray that we will remain faithful to our Lord. ■



Dr. Meether is pastor of the Tower City—Buffalo (N.D.) Lutheran Parish. Another article by him, "Moonism," was published in the June 15, 1976, issue of The Lutheran Standard.

How can youth avoid being trapped by cults?

You can guard against being lured into non-Christian and anti-Christian cults. Here are some ways:

1. *Prepare yourself.* Know what you believe and why you believe it. When questions or doubts come, visit with your pastor or college chaplain. Talk the matter over with your parents and with friends you know you can trust.

2. *Be wary of casual acquaintances or strangers who try to get you to attend their lectures, courses, fellowships, or retreats.* Find out what's really going to happen before you go. If words like "non-sectarian" and "ecumenical" are used, be especially cautious. Genuine ecumenical events will be announced through your own church. More often than not, that

which proclaims most loudly it is "nonsectarian" is really the most sectarian.

Teen Scene

3. *Avoid any group that is engaged in communal living, shows antagonism toward parents and churches, or whose members do not appear to be regularly employed or are not full-time students.* Give anyone wide berth who suggests some individual or leader "really" understands God and "really" comprehends the Bible better than anyone else because of private divine guidance. Stay away from groups that seem to make fund-

raising their primary concern or that expect members to donate all their property to the group.

4. *Don't be swayed by personal enthusiasm.* Refuse to make any commitments under emotional pressure. Insist on deferring decisions about religious matters until you can research the issue independently and think it through yourself.

5. *Be wary of deceptive methods and clever tricks.* Familiar words are often used with a special meaning by a sect. Thus the word means one thing to you but quite another thing to the sect's members. Assume any "signs and wonders" you are shown are fraudulent unless proved to be real under scientific standards.

Arthur J. L. Meether

Newsfront



Dr. Trentham greets Carters at church door.

First Baptists

President and Mrs. Carter and other members of the nation's "first family" presented themselves for membership in Washington's First Baptist Church Jan. 23, three days after the inauguration. By a show of hands, the members accepted them—the traditional Baptist practice.

The Carter's nine-year-old daughter, Amy, who has not been a member of the Plains (Ga.) Baptist Church because she had not reached the "age of accountability," went forward with the family and expressed her desire to join First Baptist by a "profession of faith in Christ" and to be baptized (which will be scheduled later).

"What an historic moment this is," commented Dr. Charles A. Trentham, the church's senior minister. "It is said, 'A little child shall lead them.' May I present the first citizen of Washington, Amy Carter, who comes confessing the Lord Jesus Christ as her Savior."

The following Thursday, the president told 3700 national leaders and others attending the 25th National Prayer Breakfast that the nation and its leaders can be strong only if they go to the "ultimate source of goodness, kindness, humility, and love," namely God. . . .

"If we as leaders of our nation can search out and proclaim a new spirit, derived not from the accumulated goodness or badness of people . . . but from God, then we can indeed be good leaders and servants, strong and sure enough to admit our sinfulness and our mistakes; we can indeed be constantly searching for ways to rectify our errors and let our nation exemplify what we as individuals ought to be in the eyes of God."

Pardon reaction mixed

Reaction to the pardoning of draft evaders by President Carter continues to be generally favorable among religious leaders, but many also urge he take similar action in the cases of deserters and others.

"American people have great difficulty with reconciliation," said Roman Catholic Bishop Carroll Dozier of Memphis, Tenn. "Forgiveness is a very difficult word for many Americans to understand and accept. Yet we are the ones who ask God for forgiveness."

Officials of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a pacifist organization based in Nyack, N.Y., offered "commendation and full support" for the Carter action, "squarely in the biblical tradition—'You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people' (Lev. 19:18)."

President Robert Marshall of the Lutheran Church in America said he was "disappointed the president did not go further. The people who are upset would not be more aroused by how many were pardoned, because the same principles apply."

Healing, not killing

The resumption of the use of capital punishment in the United States is "neither just nor prudent," Dr. William H. Lazareth, director of the Lutheran Church in America's Department for Church and Society, said at a religious service held outside the gates of the Utah State Prison Jan. 16, the night before the execution of Gary Gilmore.

"We know there is no clear evidence that capital punishment serves to deter crimes such as that for which Mr. Gilmore has been convicted," he said.

"While the Lutheran theological tradition has never questioned the legitimate power of civil government over life and death in emergency situations, that tradition has always contended that such power be used sparingly, as a very last resort.

"After a decade without an execution in the United States, the motive for revenge on the part of a frustrated body politic must be condemned as a morally illegitimate basis for the restoration of the death penalty," Dr. Lazareth said.

Referring to Gilmore's expressed desire to have his life ended, Dr. Lazareth said that "the state cannot legitimately become a willing accomplice to the sick person's suicide," and added that "killing may be what Mr. Gilmore wants, but healing is what he needs."

The music of Bach

The Joy of Bach, a film for television about Johann Sebastian Bach, is scheduled for production this year by Lutheran Film Associates (LFA).

"Even though Bach wrote much of his music as a Lutheran church musician, he belongs to the world at large," said Robert E. A. Lee, LFA executive secretary, who will be the film's executive producer. "We are not doing a traditional biography. Instead we plan to let Bach's music sing for itself and reveal the man in the process."

The film will "celebrate the contemporary phenomenon of the amazing popularity of Bach's music as it is discovered by growing audiences in many nations," Lee said. He added, "Bach's music



Lee

lends itself ideally to jazz and rock adaptations and this will be included in our film."

Two of the LFA partners, the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America, are supplying initial funds for the Bach film venture. A matching grant toward the production is being provided by Lutheran Brotherhood. A third LFA partner, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, is not participating in this project.

Named as producer of the Bach film was Lothar Wolff, who earlier produced *Martin Luther* and *Question 7*, which LFA had commissioned from Louis de Rochemont Associates. LFA also was the producer of *A Time for Burning*.



Protest death penalty—Wearing hearts with crosses on their chests, symbolizing the target placed over Gary Gilmore's heart, church leaders maintained an all-night vigil outside Utah State Prison prior to Gilmore's execution by firing squad Jan. 17. (See adjoining page for comment by Dr. William Lazareth.)

A quick look

New York State officials have threatened legal action if tax exemptions are granted for the more than half of the Hardenburgh, N.Y., taxpayers who have claimed to be "ordained" ministers of the Universal Life Church. Town officials have indicated they will likely grant the exemptions in May to create a test case for the California-based church which grants "mail-order ordinations."

A sixth president of a district of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has resigned. President Paul Jacobs of the (northern) California and Nevada District charged that "an overriding drive to control [by the synod president] is destroying the synod and making it more and more impossible for congregations, pastors, and teachers to continue their mission and ministry with joy." In 1976, five other district presidents announced their resignations for similar reasons.

The rising price of coffee has caused the Salvation Army in Memphis, Tenn., to drop the popular brew from its canteen menu. Clients will instead be offered a nice hot cup of tea for five cents.

The Soviet government has convicted and jailed at least 90 dissidents since signing the Helsinki Accords in 1975, according to Amnesty International. The organization has maintained that hundreds of dissidents are languishing in Soviet prisons, while thousands more are being penalized or harassed because "they exercised their constitutional right of freedom of opinion."

Martin Luther, by modern standards, was "an oppressor of women," but nevertheless "even today provides a model of tenderness and affection toward one's spouse," Dr. Susan Karant-Nunn of Portland State University told a meeting of the American Society of Church History in Washington, D.C. She said what set Luther apart from the other major reformers in and out of Germany was the openness of his expressions of his devotion to his wife, Katherine von Bora, a former nun whom he married in 1525.

"Joy," the radio program produced by the Rev. Alvin Rueter, of Bethlehem Lutheran-in-the-Midway, St. Paul, Minn., has been accepted for broadcast on the Armed Forces overseas network of 600 stations and 500 ships at sea. The 30-minute program of recorded church music, chosen to correlate with the Scriptures for the day, also is broadcast on 260 stations, mostly in the United States.

Thirty-eight "public citizens groups" (16 of them religiously affiliated) have asked for a public meeting with President Jimmy Carter to discuss the controversial B-1 bomber before he decides on whether its production should go forward. They wrote a letter to the president saying: "We represent millions of Americans (affected by) unemployment, inflation, poor housing and health care, decaying cities and deteriorating environment, (and) the B-1 bomber proves that exorbitant, unnecessary military spending aggravates all these problems."

Prisoners taste freedom in ALC ministry

When I was a child, I often traveled with my family past the South Dakota state penitentiary, better known now as the correctional institution, on the north edge of Sioux Falls. We were going to visit relatives a few miles away.

Each time we rode by that large building, my sister, brother, and I would press our noses against the car windows to catch a glimpse of the "animals in the zoo" who were caged in their rooms behind barred windows.

Soul-stirring experience

As I grew older, I learned to think of them as people, but surely not as God's people!

Then I was asked to attend a retreat for men who are in prison in the state of Wisconsin. It was one of the most soul-stirring experiences of my life.

Robert Goelz of the American Lutheran Church Division for Life and Mission in the Congregation and several other persons from various denominations have been conducting these retreats twice a year for the past 12 years.

The retreats are held at Camp Indian Sands, a Bible camp on a small lake in the heart of Wisconsin. No guards are present and there are no guns, no bars, no locked doors. Only two men have tried to escape in all those years.

For the first time in the history of these retreats, four women were invited to attend. There also were 35 men who are in prison, along with approximately 35 "outsiders," persons from the midwest representing a variety of denominations.

I immediately noticed it was nearly impossible to tell which men were "insiders" and which men were "outsiders." Everyone was dressed in casual blue jeans and shirts. What had I expected—that I could tell a murderer or a rapist by the way he looked?

Our retreat leader arranged us in groups of four. We were to stay in these groups for the entire weekend. On the second day we were to pair off with one other person so that the sharing became more intimate.

I was invited to go for a walk with a man whom I knew had murdered four people 10 years ago. As we walked and talked for two hours, he shared with me the frustrations that had led him to the point where he picked up a loaded gun and killed his wife, father-in-law, sister-in-law, and a girl who was babysitting at the time.

About a year after he was put in prison, this man—through the love of a chaplain and other committed Christians, and the prompting of the Holy Spirit—accepted Christ as his own Savior. He experienced God's grace and forgiveness, but he said the hardest part was to forgive himself.

Leading men to Christ

Now he is leading others to Christ and working as a physician's assistant within the walls of the prison.

Then there was John. At 21, John was a hardened criminal. After he was sent to prison, he was kept in solitary confinement for three years. But he developed a lump in his stomach and was unable to eat.

The prison officials knew he would die unless he received treatment. He weighed 90 pounds. Even though he was in that weakened condition, they chained him and put four guards on him to move him to sick bay.

The next day he experienced something very real to him. He felt the presence of God in his cell. He began asking the guards for a Bible and they laughed at him. They finally noticed a change in his behavior and gave him a Bible. Soon afterward he prayed for God to heal him and the lump in his stomach disappeared.

When he finished reading the Bible from Genesis through Revelation, he read it again and again. Then he made notes on the entire Bible and from that manuscript, he wrote a Bible study.

Permission was granted to him to begin a Bible study for his fellow prisoners. The first night he had four men. Now he has 120 men three times a week. He has been allowed to begin Bible studies in prisons throughout Wisconsin. The program is named "Sky Pilot." He hopes to be out of prison soon and has several job offers waiting for him.

There are many other stories such as these, of men who have found freedom and a reason for living while behind bars.

A unique ministry

This ministry in which our American Lutheran Church is involved is unique. Most rehabilitation programs are conducted behind bars. We know of no other program where large



Marian Nickelson with other retreat participants.

numbers of prisoners are brought outside the prison walls.

At these retreats, time is allowed for recreation such as fishing, swimming, games of all sorts, and singing around the piano. The main emphasis, however, is on the study and discussion of God's Word.

Of the 35 prisoners at this retreat, about one-third had attended before and two-thirds were new participants. A few have been allowed to come year after year. They look forward all year to these weekends. Several stay up all night fishing, even in the rain, or visiting.

This experience has heightened my awareness of the injustices in our society. These men talk about the crimes that are "tolerable" and the crimes that are "intolerable." Too often the "tolerable" crimes are associated with wealth and power, and the "intolerable" crimes with poverty or color of skin. We need to listen to them and learn from them before we can be of any help.

God's grace and forgiveness

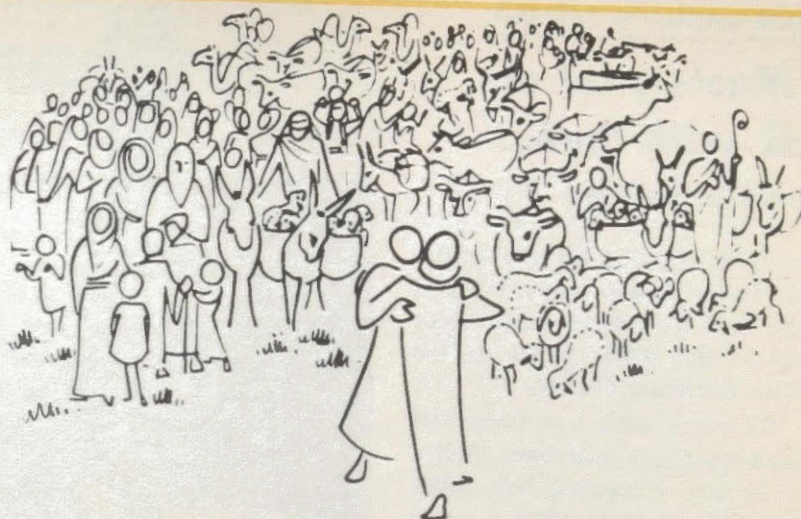
The weekend concluded with a worship service. Picnic tables for pews. An old piano in need of tuning. A wooden barn of a building. Yet no worship service held in the greatest cathedral could be more inspirational. As we celebrated Holy Communion and formed an unbroken circle, we were bound together by God's grace and forgiveness.

More people are needed to carry on this valuable work. Interested persons may contact Robert Goelz of the American Lutheran Church Division for Life and Mission in the Congregation (422 S. Fifth St., Minneapolis, Minn. 55415). Before "outsiders" may participate in the Fox Lake Retreat, they must receive clearance from Goelz who works with prison administrators in arranging the retreats.

Since the retreat, I have found it a little easier to read Matthew 25:36, "I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me."

I thank God for showing me that these people are not "animals in the zoo" but fellow heirs of his kingdom.

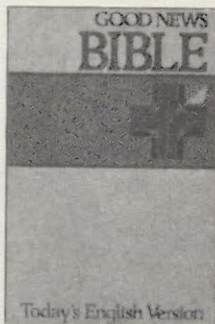
Marian Nickelson
member of the board for the
Division for Life and Mission
in the Congregation



Esau . . . threw his arms around him (33:4)

Augsburg offers edition of ABS 'Good News Bible'

What began as an attempt to provide a more readable Bible for English-speaking people has mushroomed into a major distribution effort by the American Bible Society (ABS) with the publication of the *Good News Bible*.



Augsburg Publishing House now offers a special edition of the *Good News Bible* with a full-color jacket design. The Augsburg edition contains

all the aids to understanding found in the ABS edition.

These helps include a word list identifying important Bible names and terms, a chronological chart of Old and New Testament history, footnotes explaining alternative translations and readings, cross-references identifying other relevant passages, maps of the Bible lands, and an index of subjects.

Officials of the American Bible Society expect the *Good News Bible* (the Bible in Today's English Version) to break previous records in the publishing industry. Expectations are running high because of the overwhelming response to the New Testament portion of the new Bible, published

separately by the ABS in 1966. It has sold more than 50 million copies in the last 10 years.

Never before has the American Bible Society produced a translation of the whole Bible in the English language. Instead it has always circulated the classic English translations such as the King James Version, the American Standard Version, and the Revised Standard Version and will continue to do so.

"The *Good News Bible* is not intended to take the place of these revered older translations," says Dr. Laton E. Holmgren, the Bible society's senior general secretary. "It is designed to attract people to Bible reading who have found these standard translations difficult or obscure in places."

The new translation avoids both slang and ecclesiastical jargon, aiming instead at a level of written English readily understood by the 600 million English-speaking people in the world today. But the loose wording found in some paraphrases is absent from the *Good News Bible*.

The text is enriched by nearly 500 line drawings by Annie Valotton, the Swiss artist who illustrated *Good News for Modern Man*. Her drawings have won a widespread reputation for their emotional expressiveness while using a minimum of lines (see above).

Oldest pastor's refrain:

'O Master, let me walk with thee..'

by Russell B. Helgesen

"I feel so lonely. All my pastor friends have passed away." That's how the Rev. N. J. Njus describes his feelings as the oldest pastor in the American Lutheran Church.

At 101 years, with frail body and halting voice, Njus confesses, "I live mostly in my memories, but thank God for Bible passages which I memorized and freely recall."

What a rich past his has been. "When I was young I was considered to be a nice boy. My mother told me when I entered the boat to America that if she heard that I turned out wrong, she wished she could have buried me home in Norway!"

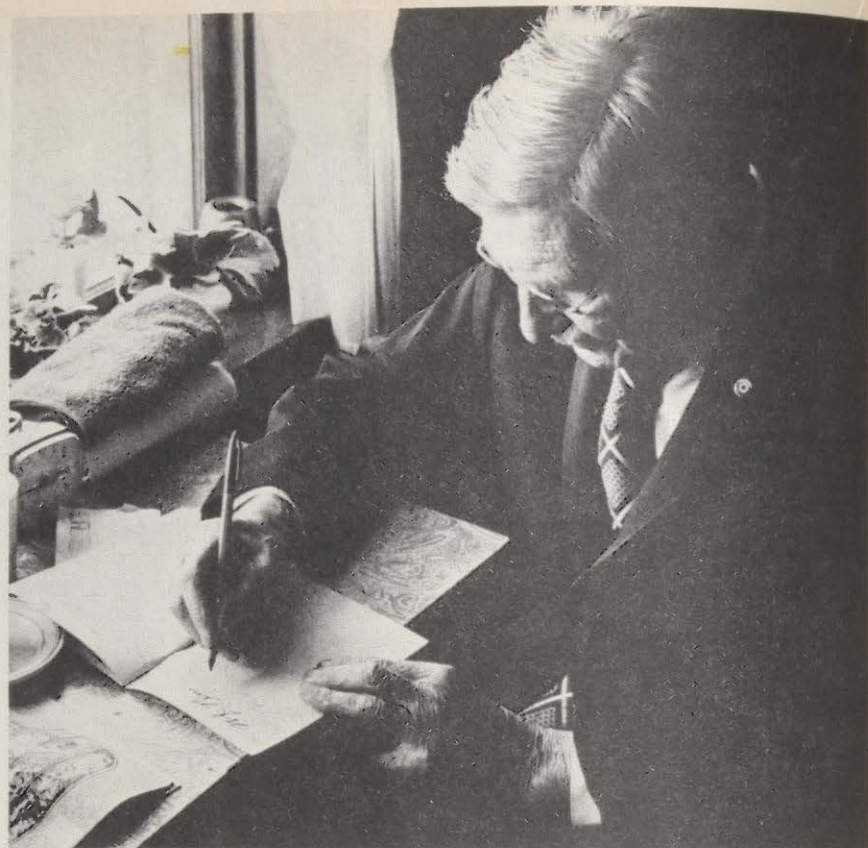
After ordination in 1903, he was informed by the Home Mission Board that four small congregations far up in Roseau County in northern Minnesota had called him to serve as pastor. Each family in the parish had promised \$3 a year. This, plus a mission subsidy of \$12 a month, would make a total annual salary of \$400, but often the families could not pay. Five years later he was serving eight congregations. One cold winter, after a neighboring pastor had left, the number of congregations grew to 12.

Rich and painful memories

The week following Christmas that year he preached twice each day, traveled hours on end, slept poorly at night, and nearly lost his life in the bitter cold. Both rich and painful memories are mixed in the mind of this pioneer pastor who willingly paid a high price that the church might be planted. (Pastor Njus' recollections of his ministry in Roseau County are recorded in "Pioneer Pastor," by his son, the Rev. Joel M. Njus, available from Augsburg Publishing House, \$2.50, paperback.)

With deep feeling he recalls that today, "Big farms have killed some of these small congregations."

For 40 years he served the Norway Lake parish near New London, Minn.



Pastor N. J. Njus, 101, now lives mostly in his memories.

His last call was received at age 86, and final retirement came at 92. He now lives at Bethesda Country Home at Willmar, Minn. His wife, Ellen, died two years ago.

"I was considered to be kind of an able preacher," he added. "My last sermon was preached at the 100th anniversary of Our Redeemer Church in Benson, Minn., when I was 95. My text was John 12:21. I spoke words I had stored up in my memory. My sermon was 'I Desire to See Jesus.' That's the way it was with the pioneers too, and as Jesus revealed himself to them in Word and sacrament, the first thing they did was to form congregations."

"I remember the day I knelt on the pulpit steps of Norway Lake and asked God to help me glorify Christ. That was the object of every sermon I preached." Njus is awed by the phenomenon that the Holy Spirit uses "such poor material as sinful people," but he rejects the possibility of God's using angels for that ministry. "They would never do," he concludes. "It takes sinners who are convinced of sin and of the love of Christ to preach the gospel. We must glorify Christ from the pulpit and in our daily lives,

but not least in confirmation classes where our object is to help young people to live their lives as Christians."

Much of Njus' time is spent living in a clear and keen memory. Nevertheless he is in touch with the realities of today. "Young people are young people at all times," he believes. "They are bright and sincere but often act thoughtlessly. Death and eternity don't mean much to them, for they have so many years ahead. Every day is a day of grace. In old age you are ready each day to open the door when the Master knocks."

Ministry still goes on

Of the church he says, "You can always find fault; but remember the church is people." He holds young pastors in high esteem and believes "they minister out of love for the church," and then adds, with his persisting sense of humor, "despite their good salaries"—obviously recalling his own meager salary which had to support and educate a family of eight children.

Though he has retired several times, his ministry still goes on. "I believe in prayer; I believe God hears me. Every night I pray for our con-

People



Graham



Elliott

Billy Graham says that "because of the devastating problem that alcohol has become in America, it is better for Christians to be teetotalers except for medicinal purposes." While noting he does not believe the Bible teaches teetotalism, the evangelist, in a 2000-word statement on "The Abuse of Alcohol," went on to say that "the Bible is not silent about any force which threatens the souls of men. It lashes out against any and all of Satan's tricks and devices, and it is very clear in its denunciation of drunkenness."

Mrs. Robert Granrud, a member of Immanuel Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minn., has been elected president of the St. Paul Area Council of Churches.

"To will to do God's will involves body, mind, and spirit, and not just spirit alone. Bringing the body under obedience means going to bed at a sensible hour, watching your weight, cutting out the junk food, grooming yourself carefully—for the sake of others."

So said missionary-author Elisabeth Elliott at the triennial mission conference of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, Urbana, Ill., which drew a registered attendance of more than 17,000 persons. Some 5000 others were turned away for lack of space.

Ms. Elliott related that in preparing to write about the guidance of God, "I read through the whole Bible to find out how God guided people in those days. I found out that in the overwhelming majority of cases it was not through what we'd call 'supernatural means'—voices, visions, angels, or miracles—but by natural means . . . in the course of everyday circumstances when a man was simply doing what he was supposed to be doing, taking care of sheep, or fighting a battle, or mending fish nets."

gregations and for our pastors, that they may be a blessing to their congregations."

"Forgiveness! It seems so impossible that through Christ's death every big sinner gets forgiveness!"

"But surely at your age and in the quiet prayer life of your little room," we asked, "you don't suffer great temptations?"

"My great temptation," he responded, "is doubt, unbelief. When I review my long life I wonder whether if I had done differently, things would have turned out better for my congregations."

"Heaven. We don't know much about it," he puzzled. "But its great joy will be that we won't be sinners anymore! This is beyond comprehension!" Then, through an old Norwegian hymn, he expressed the joy of looking forward to being with Jesus.

With a far-off look, he spoke his parting thoughts, "It's hard to thank God for each day when I'd rather be with him!"

As we slowly closed the door, leaving him alone with his memories, we could hear, through labored breath, "O Master, let me walk with thee. . . ."

Pastor Helgesen is administrative assistant and counselor for rural ministries in the ALC's Southwestern Minnesota District.

Review: 'We don't have to prove God to believe in him'

The movie, *In Search of Noah's Ark*, represents an effort to prove that the Bible is true. And if Noah's ark could be found, it certainly would cause a revolutionary upset in present-day understanding of science, history, and religion. It also would reassure some Christians that the Bible is resting solidly on historical fact.

But would our faith in Jesus Christ and our salvation be more sure if we found Noah's ark? One of the disturbing things about this movie is the closing statement that the story of Noah is the greatest story ever told, that our faith rests upon the historical accuracy of it, and that finding the ark is the most important factor for our salvation. It implies that the atheistic Russians are all that hold us back from getting to the ark and proving our faith.

Our faith does not rest upon finding Noah's ark, but upon Jesus Christ. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important story ever told. Our faith is made real in us through the Holy Spirit living in us. We know we are Christians now and we have never found Noah's ark. We know we are Christians and we have never found the cross of Jesus or even his tomb, with any certainty. It is lucky we don't find these things, lest we worship a boat or a cross or a grave. We worship Jesus Christ and we know him without these material souvenirs.

We don't have to prove the Bible or prove God in order to believe in him. Until the Lord returns, we live by faith and not by proof. He is real to us through faith and his Spirit. Knowing this, we don't have to be

afraid of careful study of the Bible or new discoveries in our world.

A study of history shows us that there has been a great variety of ways to interpret the Scriptures, and the faith has survived. We can laugh now about some interpretations used in the past, but at the time they fit the need. A hundred years from now, Christians will look back upon us and wonder why we worried about Noah's ark. By then it either will be found or never will. But they'll have their own problems, trying to interpret God's Word to their age.

Let your faith in Jesus Christ be your number one concern and it will overcome your fear that someone will be able to destroy the Word of God.

Marvin L. Holje
pastor of First Lutheran Church
Harvey, N.D.

'Now they are our friends'

by Eloise Ogden

They came to the United States knowing they might never see their families and friends again.

Should they ever return home, it could mean death at the hands of the Iraqi government.

The 400 refugees are Kurds who, dispossessed of their homes, arrived for resettlement last summer. Others of their countrymen dispersed to Holland, Sweden, and other countries.

The refugees are products of a 1975 uprising stemming from conclusion of a border treaty between Iran and Iraq. The treaty stipulated an immediate end to Iranian support of the Kurds and closing of the Kurdish border with Iran.

In the face of an all-out offensive by the Iraqi military, the Kurdish separatist movement collapsed.

A rugged people

The Kurds, a rugged people of Islamic faith, are inhabitants of the region of Kurdistan in western Asia. Five nations have Kurds among their population: Iran (in the northwest), Iraq (northeast—the country's major oil-producing area), Syria (northeast), Turkey (east), and the border area of the Soviet Union. (Lutheran Orient Mission does work among the Kurds in Iraq.)

Of the 400 Kurdish refugees admitted to the United States, 80 were assigned to Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service of the Lutheran Council in the USA.

The agency chose to place the refugees in North Dakota because of the large number of potential sponsors—there are more than 700 Lutheran congregations in the state—and because the climate there is similar to Kurdistan. It also was assumed the Kurds would find it easier to settle in smaller communities.

At present there are 78 Kurds—half of them single men—living in Minot, Bismarck, Crosby, Valley City, Kindred-Norman, Northwood, Grand Forks, Fargo, and West Fargo, N.D., and Moorhead, Minn. Twenty-three



Lutheran congregations (plus First Presbyterian Church, Crosby) serve as sponsors. In Bismarck, the U.S. Catholic Conference sponsors 12 Kurds.

Among the sponsoring Lutheran churches is Bethany of Minot. "One of the finest blessings that could have happened to our ALC congregations in Minot," said Bethany's pastor, the Rev. Arland O. Fiske, "was to be asked to do something for someone who needed us badly, but whose language we couldn't speak, whose names sounded strange, and whose official religion was not Christian.

All self-sufficient

"These freedom fighters, who have been dispossessed of their homes and their oil-rich lands, came to us with only the shirts on their backs," Fiske continued. "After six months they are all self-sufficient. No longer are they 'refugees.' Now they are our friends. We have had them as guests in our homes. They attend our churches and show great respect for the name of Jesus Christ."

He reported that one of Bethany's Kurdish families is Assyrian and Christian who proudly trace the origins of their faith back to the apostles and still speak the Aramaic language of Jesus.

Most of the adults are enrolled in evening English classes. During the day they work at a variety of jobs—as construction and shop workers, as meat cutters and building custodians, as maids and cooks, and in other occupations.

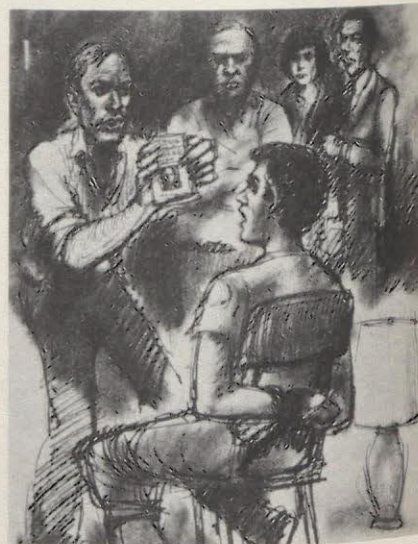
"The Kurds are still very much concerned about the situation in their own country and take any opportunity to tell about the plight of Kurdistan," said Virginia Ehart of Fargo, coordinator of the resettlement program for Lutheran Social Service of North Dakota. "The dream is always there that their land will be free and they can return. But realistically, at this point, it does not seem possible."

Congress urged to probe 'deprogramming'

An ad hoc group called the Alliance for the Preservation of Religious Liberty, based in New York, has urged Congress to investigate the practice of "deprogramming."

In a 100-page document entitled "The Anti-Religious Movement: An Abstract of Contemporary Terrorism, Kidnapping, and Violation of Religious and Civil Liberties in America," the group declares that "today, freedom of religion faces a new foe, one that hides under the guise of reuniting young people with their parents."

The document asserts that "in America today there is a network of groups and individuals attempting to eliminate freedom of religion through propaganda and the practice of religious terrorism. Aimed at 'cult religions,' these groups and individuals are illegally abducting young people away from religions they have freely chosen and 'brainwashing' them into returning to 'normal' life."



This drawing is artist Peter Green's depiction of a deprogramming of a young adult, based, he says, on the sworn testimony of those who have been deprogrammed.

Who's news?

Dr. and Mrs. Erwin Goldenstein, members of American Lutheran Church, Lincoln, Neb., have been named "Layman Family of the Year" by the Lincoln Kiwanis Club. They were cited as "an outstanding Christian couple... who live their faith." For a number of years Dr. Goldenstein served as an editorial consultant for THE LUTHERAN STANDARD.

The Rev. Gloria Weber, a clergy member of the American Lutheran Church who serves as assistant pastor at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Creve Coeur, Mo. (LCA), was one of 10 St. Louis area women chosen for Women of Achievement recognition by the St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*.

The Rev. Glen H. Gronlund, a staff member with the American Lutheran Church for the past eight years, has been named director of human resources for the ALC-affiliated Ebenezer Society of Minneapolis. Ebenezer provides residential care and a broad range of community services for elderly persons.

Since 1974, Gronlund has been director of leadership and personnel development in the ALC's Division for Service and Mission in America.

Give us the strength to struggle beyond pain, to reach out our hands to the alienated and to the poor:

Where suffering and weak voices cry out, may we be present to nourish;
Where injustice speaks, may we have the courage to change it;
Where proper dissent is present, may we have ears to listen.

Watch over the leaders of this earth:
Give them hearts for compassion and the fire of freedom;
Give them the courage to speak out and to listen quietly;
Give them the humility of sincere faith and the vision of future good.

Especially... we ask you to watch over our new leaders, set them upon the right way.

For you are the Lord in whom we trust.
You are the God of our faith. To you be praise and glory forever and ever.

Excerpt from prayer by
Archbishop John R. Roach
at the inauguration of
President Jimmy Carter and
Vice-President Walter R. Mondale

Support urged by women clergy

Women clergy and women awaiting pastoral calls and ordination want district presidents of the American Lutheran Church to be "aggressive advocates" for female pastoral candidates when working with congregations in the process of calling pastors.

They also want greater visibility for women clergy, the use of inclusive language in worship and communication, and district funding of task forces to support women clergy.

They shared their "joys and frustrations, expectations and realities" with the bishops during two overlapping events in Minneapolis last month—a regular meeting of the ALC Council of (District) Presidents and a retreat for female pastors and certified pastoral candidates.

"Be willing to take a few risks," commented the Rev. Barbara Andrews of Detroit, who is confined to a wheelchair by cerebral palsy.

The Rev. Mary Rowe, associate pastor at Central Lutheran Church, Anchorage, Alaska, and one of the retreat planners, said the event helped them to recognize their diversity.

During the discussion several of the women said acceptance by male clergy is their biggest problem. "It takes a special man to work with a

woman in a team situation," commented the Rev. Gloria Weber of Creve Coeur, Mo.

The Rev. Sandra Orsen, co-pastor with her husband Dennis at Our Saviour's Church, East Boston, said a male/female pastoral team is able to reach many people who would not respond to either pastor singly.

From their perspective, district presidents discussed the fear of failure, concern over decisions which affect people's lives, the isolation of the office, the struggle to continue in ministry and not become a functionary, and the problem of pastoral morale.

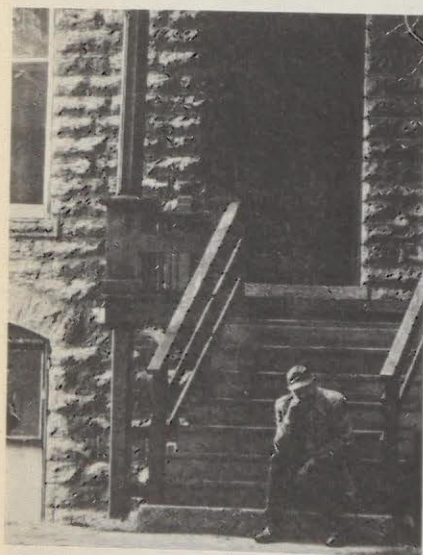
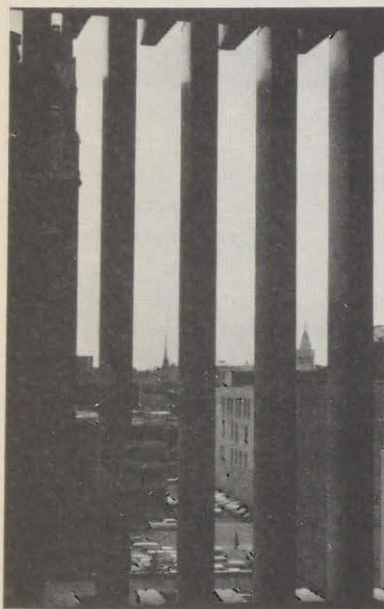
There were joys, too: "fascinating lay people," excitement that comes because "the gospel is exciting," helping congregations become more effective in mission, and continuing a "people-centered" ministry.

Nineteen women have been graduated and certified for ordination by ALC seminaries since 1970. All are ordained except one, who is taking additional study in a clinical pastoral education program. Thirteen of the 18 ordained women are serving congregations either as the only pastor or as part of a team ministry. Three are institutional chaplains, one a military chaplain, and one a campus pastor.



Land claims—Thomas Tureen, right, a lawyer with the Native American Rights Fund, discusses land claims made by two Indian tribes in Maine, during sessions of the Eastern Regional Conference of the National Indian Lutheran Board in New York in mid-January. At left is Raymond Moore, lieutenant governor of the Passama-

quoddy tribe, and at center is Eugene Crawford, executive director of NILB. The Eastern Regional group also discussed the welfare of reservation and urban American Indians and the role which the church could play to improve it. Crawford said that in 1976 the board distributed \$234,000 in grants to Indian organizations across the nation.



Lutheran churches have a vital interest and involvement in the major cities of America.

An analysis

Will America's cities survive?

by Albert E. Erickson

Los Angeles, New York, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Boston, Washington, D.C.—places of work for millions of people; great centers of culture and entertainment; home for thousands and thousands of families, the elderly, single parents, singles, minorities, and transients; places of ministry for over 600 Lutheran congregations.

All these cities—plus others—are in a period of great crisis. Their problems include:

—An ever-decreasing tax base as businesses leave the city and move to suburban communities or states with more favorable tax policies;

—Deterioration and outright abandonment of housing and neighborhoods;

—Large numbers of unemployed and unemployable, resulting in staggering welfare costs;

—Drastic cutbacks in the necessary services of police and fire protection, health care, street maintenance, and sanitation;

—Decline in quality of basic education opportunities because of financial crunch.

What about the people?

The list reads like a litany to be recited before a "wailing wall." With one burden heaped upon another, all the cities can hope for is just to be able to survive, and the remaining institutions, including more than 600 Lutheran congregations, hope they can survive too.

What about the people? Their hope is also to survive, for where can they go? The city is their home! The suburbs either can't or won't accommodate them, especially those with low incomes. They can't move to the peaceful villages and small towns, many of which are also just trying to survive.

Some families could relocate in the South, which is experiencing a rebirth as business and industry move in. But for every family that can relocate, scores must remain. They will either be the survivors or be numbered

among the casualties of a "great society" that failed to hear or respond to the "cry of the cities."

At a one-day conference on "The Crisis in American Cities" called by the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress, President Robert Wood of the University of Massachusetts said the rebuilding of functioning, effective human institutions in urban centers should be a priority item on the national agenda. He proposed a seven-point plan for meeting the city crisis which calls for shifting much of the burden of the federal courts to legislative and executive initiative at the federal and state levels; the start of an urban development bank, "Urbanbank," to assure sufficient capital for municipal finance; rebuilding neighborhoods; improving city governments with young, committed, professional staffs; emphasizing the metropolitan government concept rather than city versus county; reviving civil rights with fair housing as a priority; and finally, the start of a genuine land-use policy to make sure that land values created by public investment are returned to the public.

Wood concluded his remarks with a reference to the danger noted by the late Robert Kennedy the day after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.: "For there is another kind of violence, slower but just as deadly, destructive as the shot or bomb in the night. This is the violence of institutions: indifference and inaction and slow decay. This is the violence that afflicts the poor, that poisons relations between men because their skin has different colors. This is a slow destruction of a child by hunger, and schools without books and homes without heat in the winter."

Lutherans care

Lutheran churches have a vital interest and involvement in the major cities of America. Every day, at each of the 600 Lutheran congregations, many people—the poor, the elderly, teenagers in trouble, derelicts, alcoholics, working parishioners with spe-



cial problems and needs—come to seek comfort, spiritual guidance, and help with financial problems. The congregations, their pastors and people, agonize over the limited resources they have to respond to those in need, especially when it takes so much time and energy just to keep the church doors open.

Defining neighborhood needs

Somehow, as Lutherans nationally, we need to find ways to help these struggling inner-city churches survive and to say to the city that Lutherans care and are here to stay. Lutherans nationally and in the cities can respond particularly to two points in Woods' seven-point agenda for meeting the crisis in our cities: rebuilding neighborhoods and reviving civil rights with fair housing as a priority.

Congregations in declining neighborhoods may need to play a key role in developing neighborhood government and to become more involved with groups interested in the political aspects of such government.

The Housing and Community Development Acts of 1974 required that as communities establish their development needs for three-year periods, they are to consult with the residents to determine priorities for allocating funds. Those funds are for housing rehabilitation, public construction projects, senior centers, recreation facilities, and such public services as employment, child care, health, drug abuse, and education. Such neighborhood participation is where churches can be active participants in defining neighborhood needs.

The national church bodies also can assist in the process. Since local congregations have limited resources in staffing and funding, the national bodies could assist by providing sabbaticals for political science professionals from Lutheran colleges to be resource persons to city congregations.

Such persons could help organize the residents to provide more effective input into the block grant process.

The concern for civil rights and fair housing opportunities in the '60s has given way to the feeling, "Let's not push for any more federal laws on civil rights and fair housing. Rather, let's acknowledge that we have made noticeable progress in the area and leave it up to the local communities and states to implement any further efforts to integrate schools, neighborhoods, etc." As a result some communities have decided not to take block grants if, as a part of the process, they have to provide low-income housing. One state, through its courts, has determined that a community has the right to vote for or against the use of state money for low-income housing in the community.

The major cities have long maintained that they were required to carry the load of low-income housing, while the adjoining suburbs were able to zone it out of their planning. With every survey seeming to support this view, congregations in the city as well as the suburbs should attempt to bring about a change in attitude. One plan would link a church in suburbia with a struggling congregation in the core city. The suburban church would provide supplemental funding for the city ministry and work to bring civil rights and fair housing back on to the agenda at all levels of government.

Here to stay

Will the cities survive? Of course they will. But I shudder to think what they will be like if nothing is done. James E. Peterson of the National Council for Urban Economic Development puts the situation in a frightening context: "If nothing is done to help the cities recover, if present trends continue, the cities will be reservations for dependent people. They won't die; they won't go away. The federal programs already in place will see to that. They will just fester."



Erickson is director of the Lutheran Housing Coalition. This article is excerpted from Focus on Governmental Affairs, a publication of the Lutheran Council in the USA.

Look ahead

A preview of the next issue, intended especially to aid discussion groups.

Are we as willing to recommend our religion to others as we are to influence people about some of our other values? Albert Stauderman, editor of *The Lutheran*, tells of the need for the current Evangelical Outreach emphasis in "In Search of Holy Boldness."

Vacation church school can be a very effective means for reaching children and families in your area. In "Within Reach," Larry Reyelts recalls several incidents in which the summer experience of vacation school was a turning point in children's lives. This year's curriculum, "Reach Out," can help congregations to minister to the many children who are within reach.

Paul Christian Lucky, who was killed in a plane crash recently, wrote an article shortly before his death about the inevitable loss of family members. In "God Bless Grandpa Hall," he ponders how brief life seems to be but how certain God's promises are.

"Femininity and the Future" by Ted Peters can spark a lively discussion. Women in particular may have strong feelings about some of his statements and may question some of his assumptions.

"A Ladder or a Rock" is a reminder that we, like Jacob, do not climb up to God but he comes to us to reassure us that he will do what he has promised.

Lent is a time for remembering. E. Gordon Jorgensen offers thoughts on the lessons for the second and third Sundays in Lent which call to mind God's patience and mercy and his people's slowness.

Irene Getz

Division for Life and Mission of the American Lutheran Church

Review

Archeology of the Bible: Book by Book by Gaalyah Cornfeld and David Noel Freedman, Harper and Row, 1976, 334 pp. plus index, \$16.95.

This is a useful text for a non-specialist's overview of sacred history. It works with majority scholars' surmises about biblical history and authorship. It is elaborately illustrated in black and white photos of archeological ruins and artifacts. By reporting these excavations, the authors attempt "to throw a direct or indirect light upon the events related in the Bible and upon the background of the ancient Hebrews."

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We've grown a great deal in 60 years. We're now a Society with over 800,000 members — with 4,000 local branches across America. Join in our celebration. We'll welcome you, because we're people sharing brotherhood.



Deaths in the ALC

The Rev. Frithjof W. Eide, 74, of St. Paul, Minn., died Jan. 2. A graduate of St. Olaf College and Luther Seminary, he served parishes in Ostrander, Minn.; Westminister, B.C.; Milwaukie, Ore.; and Poolsbo, Wash. He also served as a chaplain in the U.S. Army during World War II, as a Bible camp leader in the Pacific Northwest, and as editor of *Norsk Kingdom*. After retiring in 1967 he served a number of interim and visitation pastorate. His widow, Margaret Wall Eide, is well known as a former national Lutheran League leader.

The Rev. Forrest R. Stoneburner, 74, died Jan. 11 in Dayton, Ohio, where he served as executive director of Lutheran Social Service of Miami Valley from 1940 until he retired in 1970. A graduate of Capital University and Lutheran Theological Seminary in Columbus, he also served parishes in Weirton, W.Va.; Niagara Falls, N.Y.; and Toledo, Ohio, and as chaplain of Lutheran Welfare Society in Toledo.

Sister Clara Hass, 92, died Dec. 23 in Milwaukee, Wis., where she had lived at the Lutheran Deaconess Motherhouse since her retirement in 1959 as an administrator at Lutheran Hospital. A graduate of the Milwaukee Hospital School of Nursing, she was consecrated as a deaconess in 1923 and devoted her entire service to the maternity division of Lutheran Hospital except for two years when she was administrator of Lutheran Hospital in Saginaw, Mich.

Mrs. Ragna N. Olson, 79, died July 23 in Minneapolis. She was the widow of the Rev. Melvin J. Olson, a pastor of the former Lutheran Free Church, who died in 1956 in Lamberton, Minn.

The Rev. Konrad A. Bodin, 91, died Jan. 15 in Williston, N.D., where he was living in retirement. A native of Norway and a graduate of Red Wing Seminary, he had served parishes in Savage and Dry Creek, Mont.; Cartwright and Minot, N.D.; Troy, Ida.; and Brooten, Minn. His active ministry covered a span of 53 years.

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MARK D. HOUGLUM, 19030 Eighth Ave. S., Seattle WA 98148 (assoc., Prince of Peace).
STEPHEN H. KIMPEL, 163 W. Center St., West Jefferson OH 43162 (Zion).
CONNIE KLEINGARTNER, Dundee IA 52038 (St. John, St. Peter).
MICHAEL J. LANGUM, Grace Lutheran Church, S. Chestnut St., Huntingburg IN 47542.
DARRELL D. MORTON, Box 64, Laporte MN 56461 (Aardahl, Malvik, Trinity).
BART R. MULLER, Pembina ND 58271 (Pembina).
RORY T. SCOTT, St. Thomas ND 58276 (St. John).
ARMIN L. STEEGE, 649 N. Travis St., Elsa TX 78543 (assoc., Good Shepherd, St. John).
HOLT WALKER III, Warwick ND 58381 (American, Warwick).

Pastors' changes of address

CHARLES E. AASE, Independence MO, to Box 25, Barnesville MN 56514 (Our Savior).
ARLIN H. ADAMS, Ripon, to R.2, Box 57, Neshkoro WI 54960 (ret.; p-t asst., Grace).
CARL H. AMELUNG, 2533 White Oak Ave., Fort Wayne IN 46805 (ret.).
EDWARD R. ANDERSEN, 2670 Taylor St., Eugene OR 97405 (ret.).
DENNIS C. ASP, Orlando FL, to Capital University, Columbus OH 43209 (dir., church relations).
JOSEPH A. BELGUM, Hayward, to 1101 O'Farrell St., San Francisco CA 94109 (LSS).
ARTHUR L. BERVIG, Osseo, to 304 W. Lake St., Park Rapids MN 56470.
ALBERT T. BJERKESTRAND, Ellensburg, to Box 579, Waterville WA 98858.
GREGORY T. BJORNSTAD, Mpls. MN, to 9420 Portage Rd., Portage MI 49081 (Lord of Life).
JERALD R. BORGIE, Compton, to 11143 Socorro Ct., San Diego CA 92129 (Luth. Church of the Covenant).
HARALD DORDAL, 1020 Tenth Ave. S., Moorhead MN 56560 (ret.).
ALEXANDER J. EISNER, St. Paul MN, to 10540 Apache Trail, Sp. 38, Apache Junction AZ 85220.
GERALD M. FLATHMAN, Kansas City MO, to South Star Route, Rushville NE 69360 (Immanuel, St. Peter-LCA).
GAYLEN GILBERTSON, Papua New Guinea, to 1550 Eustis St., Apt. K, St. Paul MN 55108.
JAMES A. GORDON, Cumberland, to Box 386, Spring Valley WI 54767 (Gilman, Spring Lake).
ALLEN L. GUNDERSON, LaMoure ND, to Adams MN 55909 (Little Cedar, Marshall).
JOHN O. GUTHREY, St. Thomas, to 402 30th Ave. N., Apt. 5, Fargo ND 58102.
DALE A. HALVORSON, Fargo, to 5 Lind Blvd., North Acres, Harwood ND 58042.
ROBERT L. HARTENFELD, Toledo OH, to 327 Woods Mill Rd., Manchester MO 63011 (St. Luke).
ROGER A. HERFINDAHL, Portage MI, to 1303 11th Ave. N.E., Rochester MN 55901 (CPE, Meth. Hosp.).
MYRON D. HETLAND, San Diego, to Box 2880, Escondido CA 92025.
ROGER K. HOFFMAN, Wilson KS, to R.1, Box 129, Humboldt NE 68376 (St. James).
WINSTON C. HOLD, Deanville, to Box 756, Dickinson TX 77539 (Faith).
WILLIE W. HUNT, San Antonio, to Amigos de las Americas, 5618 Star Ln., Houston TX 77057 (training coord.).
CARL L. JECH, Whitewater WI, to 227 Sanchez, No. 7, San Francisco CA 94114 (p-t, faculty, Foothills Coll.).
ROBERT C. KAISER, Toledo, to 345 Shoop, Wauseon OH 43567 (Trinity).
TIMOTHY P. KELLGREN, Palatine IL, to 220 Stanley St., Petaluma CA 94952 (Elim).
OLAF R. LIDUMS, Fargo ND, to 134 Lindsay Ct., Whitewater WI 53190.
DOUGLAS H. MA GINN, Westerville OH, to R.1, Versailles IN 47042 (St. Paul).
DWIGHT A. MC ELREE, Pembina ND, to 1906 Des Moines St., Webster City IA 50595 (study).
ROBERT L. MICHELFELDER, Ashville, to R.2, Danville OH 43014 (Zion).
ROBERT N. NELSON, Adams ND, to Deronda WI 54008 (Deronda, Little Falls).

JOEL M. NJUS, Madison WI, to R.3, Box 12N, Hayden Lake ID, 83835 (assoc. adm., Coeur d'Alene Homes).
DAVID E. PAULSON, Box 93, Kainantu, E.H.P., Papua New Guinea.
FERNANDO S. PEREZ, Houston, to Canlen House Apts., D-241, 8600 N. Lamar Blvd., Austin TX 78753.
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ALLEN J. SATERBAK, LaCrosse, to 2317 Milton Ave., Janesville WI 53545.
C. F. SAVERIDE, Hillsboro, to 48 28th Ave. N.E., Fargo ND 58102 (ret.; interim, Our Savior-Hillsboro).
REX H. SCHNEIDER, Columbus OH, to 825 S. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach CA 92651.
VICTOR H. SCHROEDER, Colorado Springs CO, to 955 L'Enfant Plaza S.W., Suite 4300, North Bldg., Washington DC 20024 (staff, LCUSA).
CLAUDE E. TEJAN, 3200 Royal Palm Ct., Titusville FL 32780 (ret.; interim, Trinity).
L. O. TOLO, 1801 W. State Ave., Phoenix AZ 85021 (ret.).
NICHOLAS E. WAGNER, Carlos MN, to Office of the Center Chaplain, Fort Rucker AL 36362.
WALTER E. N. WAHL, Preston, to 4000 Quincy St. N.E., Mpls. MN 55421 (First).
LARRY G. WESTFIELD, Coon Valley, to Chaseburg WI 54621 (Middle and Lower Coon Valley).
PAUL D. WINTERS, Elk Rapids MI, to 314 E. Indiana, Perrysburg OH 43551 (assoc., Zoar).
WALDO R. WOLD, Mineral Point, to 3821 Alden Ct., Racine WI 53405.

What's coming on TV?

Feb. 15, "The New Indians," National Geographic story of the Sioux, PBS
Feb. 16, "My Mom's Having a Baby," Afterschool Special, ABC
Feb. 25, "To Expect to Die; A Film About Living," PBS

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DOSSIERS INVITED: PROF. OF PREACHING. Earned doctorate in Homiletics desirable; Communication Theory or Theology and Literature also considered. Contact Dean E. A. Schick, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, IA 52001.

DENMARK, SWEDEN, NORWAY, unique 21-day tour for 50 Christians, June 3-24. Several nights in Christian homes. \$1200 all-incl. from Chgo. A few seats avail. Dave & Barb Anderson, 7740 168th Ave. N.W., Anoka, MN 55303 (612) 421-9191.

Vatican says women cannot be ordained

A Vatican declaration approved by Pope Paul and released Jan. 27 definitively declares that the Catholic church is not authorized to admit women to the priestly ministry.

The 6000-word document, among other things, claims that because a priest "truly acts in the place of Christ" there should be a "natural resemblance" between Christ and his minister in keeping with the "sacramental sign" of Holy Orders.

Review

Towhead: Son of a Northman by Clifford B. Holand, Vantage Press, 1976, \$5.95, 238 pp.

This novel is anchored in Towhead's boyhood and early youth on the Mesabi Iron Range in northern Minnesota. The fictional threads into which Towhead's story is woven provide a tapestry of life among early settlers.

The book is not an account of a Norwegian immigrant among Norwegians; it is a story of Norwegian settlers taking their place in a community of Scandinavian, Finnish, Slavic, French, and Italian immigrants.

For those who can remember the day of hard-coal heaters, this book will be an exercise in wholesome nostalgia. For those who belong to later generations, the story will reveal a period in midwestern life that now belongs to history. I found the book to be fascinating reading.

Fredrik A. Schiøtz

TOWHEAD Son of a Northman



Clifford B. Holand's vibrant novel about Northern Minnesota a half century ago. \$5.95

Available at
AUGSBURG PUBLISHING HOUSE
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Purpose of section

This special public issues section on family life is provided by the American Lutheran Church (ALC) Office of Research and Analysis for individual study and group discussion. The purposes of this section are: (1) to help readers see how deep and complex is the issue; (2) to provide a

reliable fact-base on which discussion and judgments can be based; (3) to focus the light of the gospel and the resources of the Christian faith on the issue; and (4) to move Christ's people to become involved in responsible efforts to deal with the issue of family life.

Why do we need families? What are the functions which families fulfill?

Which trends in modern society do you consider most destructive of family life? Why? What can be done to counteract them?

What elements of contemporary society are on the side of strong families? How can they be supported or encouraged?

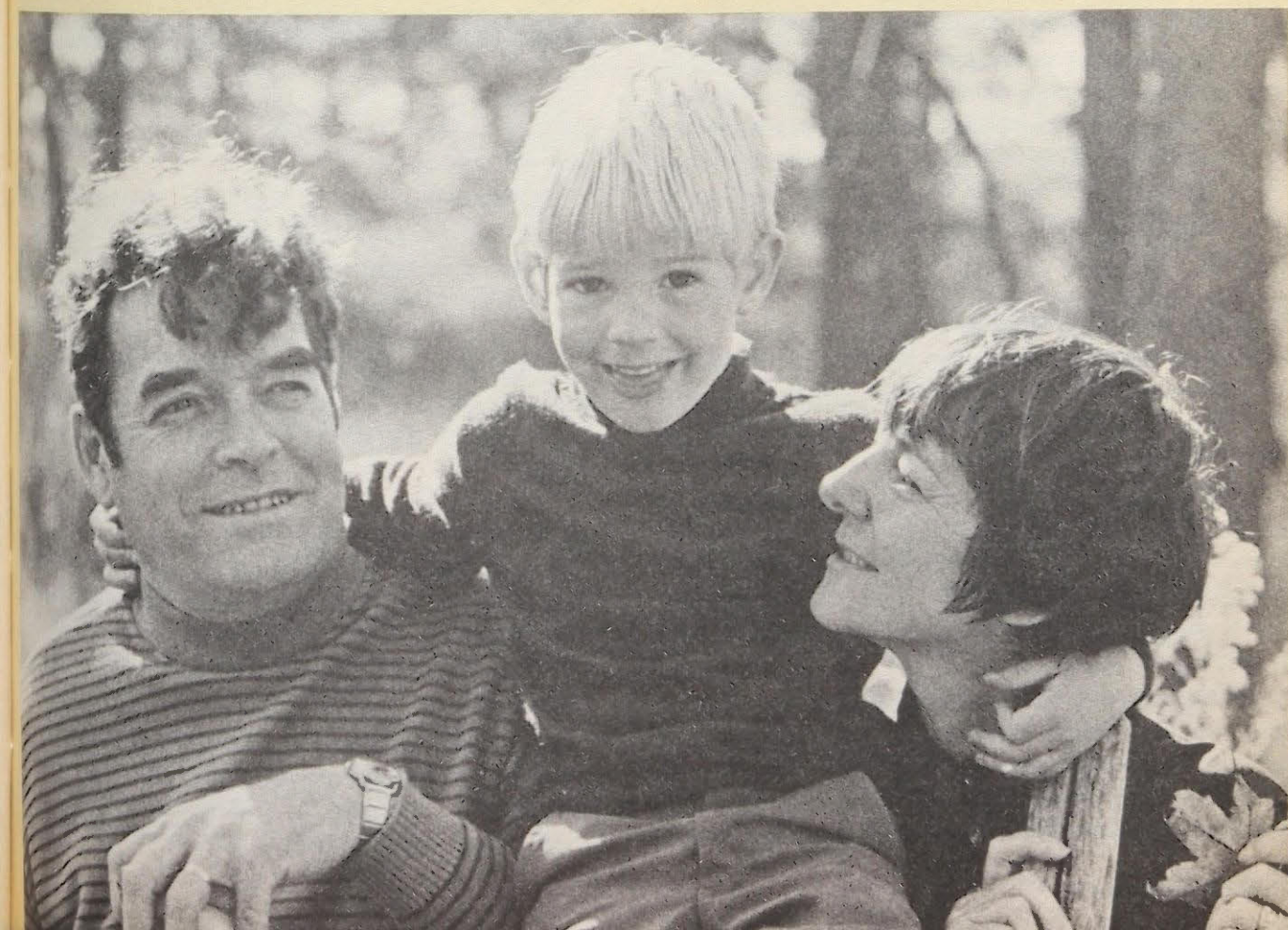
What are the most significant pressures on your family? What are you doing to cope with these pressures?

How do our ideals help to shape our family life? What basic ideals can be derived from our Christian faith?

How do you understand Christian liberty in relation to family living?

Consider one or two things your church is doing or could do to strengthen families. How can you help these things happen?

How can the church serve the needs of those outside of "families" as traditionally understood?



The family as caring community

by Carl F. Reuss

Family is a "heart" word. It speaks of kin, of home, of roots. It is a word with deep meaning, full of feeling, emotion, and sentiment. It carries memories—happy or sad, warm or cold. It recalls love or rejection, harmony or hostility. So much of us—who we see ourselves to be, how we look at life, what we say or do—stems from our experiences with our families. Something from father and mother, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, grandparents if we were privileged to know them, likely lives in us today in the ways we think and act.

Largely because the family is such a heartfelt experience, it is difficult to study objectively. We find it difficult to describe or define the family except in broad terms. Some years ago a graduate seminar group in a well-known university, after long discussion that tried to cover all probabilities, concluded that

"...the family is the more or less permanent union of one or more men and one or more women, together with the children of both, either, or neither, along with such peripheral persons as society may sanction."

Monogamy or polygamy...lifelong union or divorce and marriage to another spouse...shared parenthood, adoption, or artificial insemination...relatives by blood or marriage or close friends living as members of the family—these are some of the forms family life takes or has taken in human history.

Why do we need families?

More important than form, however, is function. Why do we need families? What are they to do? On what foundations? Looking at God's order of creation, we see certain factors:

God created us male and female. He expects us to exercise our procreative powers responsibly. We need order and predictability in the relations between men and women. The commandment "You shall not commit adultery" is central to the family.

As infants and young children, we are dependent on our elders. In sickness, handicap, or old age, we are dependent on others. The family bridges the generation gap, insuring care for those who may be dependent. The commandment "Hon-



or your father and mother" speaks to this fact of our dependency.

The human mind is imaginative and adaptable. It can learn many things, good or evil, from many sources. The family is the first teacher. The young learn what their elders think is right or wrong, good or evil, pleasing or displeasing. It is this family function of which Ephesians 6:4 speaks: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."

Foundations for family life

Foundations for family life, then, include our sexuality, our procreative possibilities, the strengths and the dependencies of the generations, and our need to learn what it means to be and to live as a human being.

It is the family which first teaches us the things needful to getting along with others—about authority, life and health, the sexes, property, good name, and dealing honorably in all things. If the

family teaches *all* that is needful, it teaches about the Lord of all, respect for the sacred and holy, and the honor and obedience due God. It becomes the laboratory/workshop where each member tests and perfects what it means to live in Christ.

The family, united by birth, marriage, or adoption, is a sharing, caring community in which each

member realizes identity, worth, respect, and responsibility.

No family is perfect. Families are bumped into and tugged at from all sides. The pressures on families are tremendous. The wonder is that so many are so faithful, so effective, so loving in doing that which our creatureliness calls families to do. ■

Family models reflect changing society

by Carla Beth Howerly

The family has not been exempt from the numerous and rapid changes occurring in our society. All around us we see new types of families. And within the traditional, nuclear, two-parent family, life-styles are changing, ranging from new parenting styles to new outlooks on retirement.

Examples of such change abound. One family in five has a single parent as head of the household. Senior citizens are increasingly entering communal living arrangements. More mothers keep children who are born out of wedlock. Joint custody arrangements have children of divorced parents spending half their time with each parent. These types of families are no longer rare.

New styles

Within the traditional two-parent family, some people are consciously adopting a new family life-style, such as mutual sharing of household duties. Some businesses now give men paternity leave to spend with their young children. "Househusband" is a word in our vocabulary and is becoming a legitimate job choice for men.

Such changes are being accompanied by a corresponding increase in the value of individualism and personal choice. We hear phrases like "finding myself" and "doing my own thing" which indicate considerable emphasis on individual decision. The belief that it is never too late to seek personal happiness and to set new goals is gaining strength. As a result of this emphasis on the individual's

choice, we have a challenge of personal freedom, with the corresponding challenge to avoid selfishness.

On the basis of our value systems as Christians, we are necessarily forced to respond to many kinds of change affecting families. Among the most significant trends in the American family are the following:

Ideas about families

There is an increasing belief in the importance of the marital bond itself, independent of the parent-child relationship. Marriage is not seen as automatically implying procreation. Reasons for marrying, then, are becoming more oriented toward companionship. With longer life spans, a married couple now will spend more years together *without* children in the home than with them there. Evidence of marital satisfaction of older mates shows these years to be very fulfilling

and happy ones. The current orientation to marriage views the relationship as continually growing across all the years of marriage. Seminars now are offered in church and public agencies on marital *enrichment* for the currently married couple. Each spouse in the marriage is viewed as having a separate and important *personal* identity and personal goals which strengthen the common relationship.

Work and school

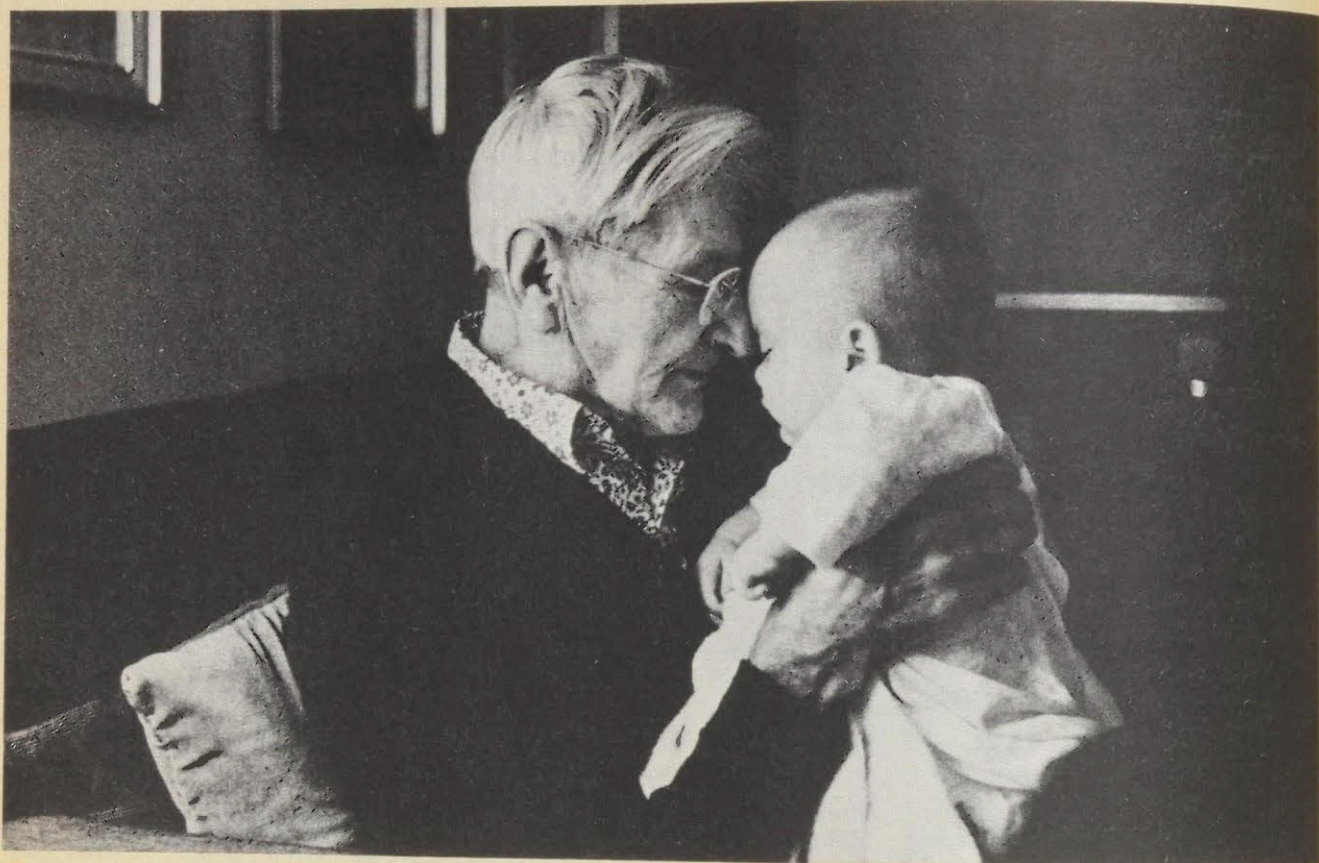
Since World War II, women have been entering the labor market in increasing numbers. Some economists predict that for a family to have a decent standard of living, both parents will have to be employed. At the present time, two of five workers are female; 37 million women are in the labor force. And three-fifths of all women workers are married and living with their husbands. More than 27 million children under age 18 have working mothers. This large female labor force is a pervasive factor of current family life, and it is a trend which will continue to grow. Families have to adapt to the dual-work arrangement. Household chores and family decisions are more likely to be shared by both spouses.

Schools are responding to these changes and increasing their role as socializers of children. Schools feed, nurse, and baby-sit children as well as educate them, providing ever-expanding programs of after-school and vacation day care to accommodate working parents.

While contacts with kin continue to be strong, especially among lower- and upper-class families, the high

Letters of response

Reactions to this section on family life, developed by the American Lutheran Church's Office of Research and Analysis, may be sent to the office at 422 S. Fifth St., Minneapolis, Minn. 55415, or to *The Lutheran Standard* at 426 S. Fifth St., Minneapolis, Minn. 55415, for possible use on the "Mr. Editor" page. Responses also may be sent to the authors if you wish to correspond directly with them.



mobility of families often cuts them off geographically from relatives. More and more babysitters are recruited from outside the family, thus exposing children to other adult figures but reducing one of the more typical kinds of contacts with relatives. Some churches have set up artificial extended families, where groups of individuals and families of different ages meet together regularly, maybe even live together, and act much like a three-generation family.

Friendships richer

Adult friendships are becoming more varied and richer for married and non-married persons. Spouses increasingly have separate as well as common friends. Women in particular now have more friends of the opposite sex; and while these friendships are not necessarily sexual, they are intimate and important to the individuals. There is a rise in the number of voluntary organizations and clubs to which people with common interests and hobbies belong to promote friendships.

The women's liberation movement has had a significant effect on most dating and marital relationships. In general, there is a trend toward more egalitarian decision making in families, more sharing of household chores, including child rearing. Traditional sex roles are tempered with the idea of individual liberation, allowing a person to be all he or she can be.

The so-called generation gap has been studied and seems to be overrated. The miscommunication which does exist between parents and children goes both ways. Parents may not be caught up in the latest fads. But children have little sense of what their parents like, what they think or value, and the types of sexual behavior they enjoy.

Fewer group activities

Families seem to engage in fewer activities as a group. Not only are there adult activities from which children are excluded, and specific entertainment for kids, but there are spe-

cial events for preteens, teens, young adults, couples, senior citizens, parents without partners, and others. The family sometimes becomes a three-ring circus, coordinating the schedules of all the members.

One unfortunate trend in family life seems to be an increase in violence in the home. Child abuse and marital beatings now are reported more frequently and may be occurring more often. On the other hand, families seem more able to recognize conflict and deal with it, more willing to seek help to reduce problems in their interpersonal relationships.

Types of families

While the "traditional" two-parent-plus-children type of family will predominate, the variety of family types also will increase. Some of the more notable of such family types are:

- single-parent families, who now constitute one in eight families (and one in three nonwhite families).

- composite families, consisting of remarriage for two persons with chil-

children from previous marriages. This type will increase as divorce increases, because remarriage rates in the United States are very high.

—homosexual marriage, homosexual cohabitation, bisexuality, and adoption of children by homosexuals. While one in ten adults in the United States reportedly has had a voluntary homosexual experience, the actual number of persons who choose a permanent homosexual life-style is quite low.

—communal living, which may be motivated by economic and/or social reasons. Communal arrangements vary considerably with respect to the similarity or variety in the ages of members, the amount of sexual contact between members, the similarity to extended families.

—child-free marriages, in which couples make a decision to have no children.

It appears safe to conclude that the most pervasive trend will be one of serial progression through a number of family types and life-style alternatives. People will have more than one arrangement, one after the other, throughout their lifetime. Responding to these changes responsibly will be a challenge for all persons, including Christians.

Tremendous stability

Moreover, in looking at all the possibly shocking evidence of change in the family, there is one dominant message which is often overlooked. Families have tremendous stability and adaptive skills. Families have handled death and grief, the insecurity of a father missing in war action, a child's rejection of its parents, premarital pregnancies, unemployment, and other crises. Families pull together and cope.

Americans have high hopes for their families. People in the United States still marry at the highest rate in the world, still think of marriage as a positive relationship, and still express desires to have children. This resilience of families is an important resource for handling all the social change around us. ■

Household of faith must remain open to all

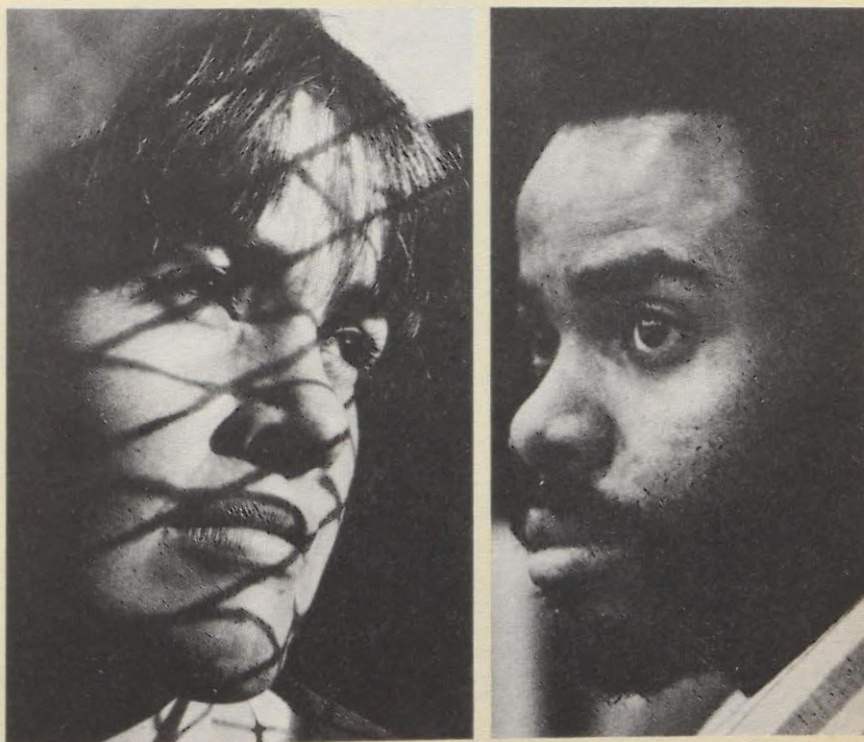
by Sue K. Hedahl

For many people, the word "family" no longer signifies the traditional understanding of parents and children sharing one household. The single life-style of many persons is a result of choice, divorce, or being widowed. There is an increasing number of single-parent families.

What do these changes mean for our relationships? And how do we structure the life and programs of the church meaningfully to meet the needs of Christians? Parishes find that the standard forms of family worship and programming must be reconsidered in some ways. What does it mean to a widower to hear an invitation to attend a "Family Night" potluck dinner? How does the single person react to an invitation from a church group calling itself "Pairs and Spares"? We need to develop new sensitivities to the variety of life-styles in our congregations. Family, in the traditional sense, must not be the sole criterion by which all other life-styles are measured.

St. Paul has an excellent phrase that can serve as a guide for congregational life: he calls the followers of Christ the "household of faith." This welcoming term does not exclude any members of the church who, by choice or circumstance, are not members of a traditionally defined family.

With imagination, tact, and love, we can share new community in Christ in many ways as we seek to learn what the "household of faith" means in our congregational life. ■



Family provides source of renewal

by Edward D. Schneider

There is often considerable distance between our ideals and our realities. This is true in our family relationships no less than in other dimensions of our lives. But we need a Christian perspective which takes account both of ideals and of realities. A perspective encompassing only ideals could be dismissed as utopian; a perspective encompassing only realities would offer no incentives for

improvement, no vision of what might be. "Without a vision, the people perish."

What vision of families and family life grows out of our Christian perspective? Significantly, the scriptural accounts of creation tell us that God created humankind as male and female. This sexual polarity is the natural basis for our understanding of human life in community; and it reminds us that the most fundamental natural community of which we are a

part is the family. God's design of creation reminds us that we grow and develop only in relation to others.

Ideally, the family provides the setting for such growth. In a pastoral letter, the U.S. Roman Catholic bishops have expressed this ideal: "Every human being has a need and right to be loved, to have a home where he or she can put down roots and grow. The family is the first and indispensable community in which this need is met. Today, when productivity, prestige, or even physical attractiveness is regarded as the gauge of personal worth, the family has a special vocation to serve as a place where people are loved not for what they do or what they have but simply because they are."

A basic structure

The family provides a basic structure within which human relationships are nourished and human needs fulfilled. Even where our realities intrude upon our ideals, the family is a framework in which people serve one another. While no parent is perfect, imperfect parents normally serve their children's basic needs because of the family structure. Likewise husbands and wives, even in less than ideal marriages, are encouraged through the family to serve one another.

In order for the family to be a genuinely caring community, it must be established on the foundation of a covenanted loyalty between husband and wife. The promise of faithfulness and commitment is a prerequisite for any enduring union that can withstand the difficulties which are part of the reality of any marriage and every family. Without the promise to love, comfort, honor, and keep each other so long as both shall live, there might be an "arrangement of convenience," but not a marriage upon which a caring community can be built.

To view the family as a caring



community is to call into question much of the contemporary emphasis on individualism and self-fulfillment. In recent years, Americans have placed much stress on the development of the self. Terms like "self-awareness," "self-fulfillment," "self-discovery," "self-determination," and "self-sufficiency" pervade our thinking.

For love and service

But an ethic of self-fulfillment and personal emancipation must also be subjected to Christian scrutiny. "Liberation" can be a blessing and is often presented as such in Scripture. But it can also be a snare if we fail to comprehend its essential Christian character as liberation for love and service. As T. S. Eliot put it: "One lives, not to be free, but to be freed. And to be freed from is meaningless unless one has some notion of what one is to be freed for."

The apostle Paul said: "You were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another." And the words of Jesus are pertinent: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

The family as a caring community cannot achieve its potential if family members proceed with an attitude which says "What's in it for me?" Yet in reality we know, from our experience of human sinfulness, that self-centeredness affects all our relationships, and often most profoundly those at the deepest level.

Source of renewal

It is at the point of discrepancy between ideals and realities that the Christian family has access to a unique source of renewal. The gospel declares God's forgiveness for our failures to love and care. In this liberation from our own sense of guilt and failure, the Holy Spirit empowers us to forgive and to love. Love and forgiveness belong together; together they prevent us from separating the ideals from the realities in a Christian perspective on family living. ■



How to strengthen families

by Dale Jamtgaard

The Christian congregation, because it involves all members of a family, has a unique opportunity to strengthen family life. Your congregation can be used by God to double the love, communication, and caring within families. Encourage your con-

gregation to form a task force of persons who can give careful thought and planning to the ways your congregation might serve the needs of families.

Perhaps the place to begin is by observing the ways in which your present congregational life is disruptive of family relationships, and suggest some changes. Does the schedule of meetings make it difficult for families to have evenings together? What model does your pastor offer if he is too involved in the church to have time left for his family? Find out if children feel left out of the worship service and look for ways to include them.

There are several areas in which congregations have been and can be effective in strengthening families, including:

Whole-family involvement

With our individualistic orientation to programming, we have found it difficult to involve the whole family at the same time. Shifting the goal from the sharing of ideas to helping people share how they are experiencing life can make it possible for all ages to express themselves.

Family clustering, where four or

Biographical citations

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Dale Jamtgaard, director, Special Programs Section, Lutheran Family Service of Oregon.

five families meet for a series of weekly meetings, can build relationships within the families. Facilitators, who usually have attended training workshops, can help with learning activities which give opportunity for sharing and discovery.

"Cocoons" is the name given by one congregation to ongoing groups comprised of families with and without children, as well as some single-parent and single-person families. Coming together to work on some joint activities, they discovered that ongoing learning and support groups become possible.

Family home evenings have long been stressed by the Mormon church. No meetings in the church are scheduled for that night. Trained people or experienced families are made available to help new families get started. Often two families will share this family night. A guidebook is provided with a variety of suggestions for both learning and enjoyable activities. A special treat usually concludes the family time.

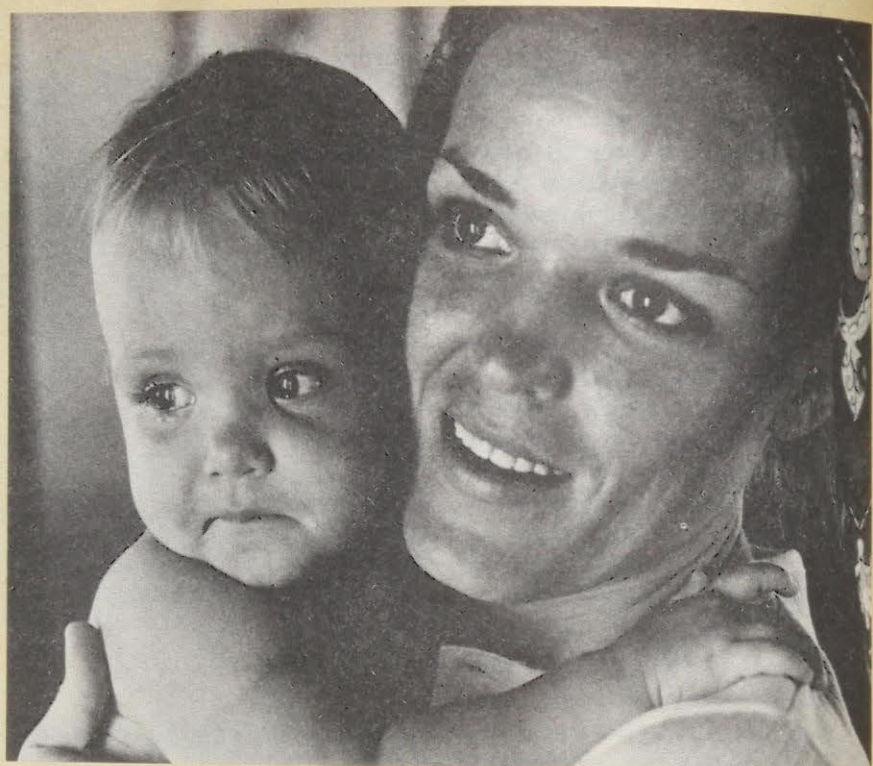
Church family nights should have a program design in which both adults and children can participate. Films dealing with family situations can be one way of giving each person something to talk about and learn from.

Marriage enrichment

Marriage courses and weekend programs give couples an opportunity to resolve some of the boredom and conflict that often develops in a marriage and to build a deeper relationship of trust, affection, and understanding, effected through honest communication skills. They involve couples in a process rather than just teach concepts about marriage. Your Lutheran Social Service or Family Service agency may have a course that could be offered not only to your congregation but also as a service to your community. Several formats for marriage encounter retreats have been developed by various church bodies.

Parent-child relationship

Parenting courses, such as Effectiveness Training for Lutherans, have



given many parents new skills. Programs which offer understanding and skill development give new hope to parents who want to fulfill their God-given role.

Parent-child programs, involving both parents and children, can both give information and foster dialog. Sex-education programs, for example, might involve both parents and children. Parts of confirmation in-

struction might be structured in this way.

Personal growth

More congregations are finding that with courses and small growth fellowship groups, they can be a resource for members as they work out their everyday problems. The most effective group experience includes careful listening, sharing of God's Word, the use of psychological understanding, prayer, and faith in God's promises.

Resources for such groups include packaged programs like *The Edge of Adventure*,* the *Art of Christian Relationships*,** books for study and discussion, and films on human relations. You might consult your Lutheran Social Service on the many new materials available in the field of growth education.

In congregations where members share their everyday problems and deepest concerns and where they find love, acceptance, and help, the excitement of the good news of God's love in Christ abounds. ■

For further reading:

General:

Elizabeth Achtemeier, *The Committed Marriage*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976.

Oscar E. Feucht (Editor), *Helping Families Through the Church*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971.

Textbook:

J. Richard Udry, *The Social Context of Marriage*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1966.

* *The Edge of Adventure* by Keith Miller and Bruce Larson. Creative Resources, A Division of Word, Inc., Box 1790, Waco, Texas 76703.
 ** *Art of Christian Relationships*. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn.

Question box

William A. Poovey

Does God create evil?

Please explain Isaiah 45:7 as translated in the King James Version: "I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things." Does God really create evil? E.P., Wis.

The word "evil" as it appears in some translations of the Bible can create confusion, for sometimes it means sinful and at other times it conveys the idea of something unpleasant or troublesome. Thus judgment can be considered evil if we are on the receiving end of the judgment. A tornado, for example, is evil but it isn't sinful.

God can never be thought of as the source of sin. As John reminds us, "God is light and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). A quick look at some other translations will show the true meaning of the passage in question. Moffat says "I bring bliss and calamity." The Revised Standard Version renders the key words as "I make weal and woe." The New American Bible Society version says, "I bring both blessing and disaster." A fine translation by conservative scholars, The New International Version, says, "I bring prosperity and create disaster." All these translations show that the writer has no intention of saying that God is the author of evil.

When you observe that this chapter is addressed to a heathen king, Cyrus, the meaning becomes even clearer. God's people were in captivity in an area that was under Persian control. God is pictured as urging Cyrus to allow the Jews to return to their native land.

But heathen people tended to populate the universe with many gods. One god brought blessings, another caused calamities. One ruled over storms, another controlled the sea. Under such circumstances Cyrus might easily figure that while the

God of Israel was urging him to let the Jews go, another god might make him suffer for his actions.

So the writer of Isaiah 45 pictures God as saying, "Don't believe any of that nonsense. I am the only real God. All things are under my control." Cyrus didn't need to have any fear that a rival god would punish him for his actions. For the only true God was ordering him to act, and everything was and is in his hands.

Two truths about Bible study are involved in this question. The one is that we are extremely fortunate today to have many fine translations of the Bible. At times this multiplicity of versions may seem confusing, but the various translations often help us to understand the meaning of God's Word. The other is that we always need to look at the context. A verse from the Bible can be very misleading unless we consider carefully the speaker and the circumstances.

NEW COLUMNIST

Dr. William A. Poovey, in this issue, becomes the "Question Box" columnist for *The Lutheran Standard*. Until his recent retirement, he served as professor of preaching at Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, for nearly 20 years. From 1939 to 1957, he was pastor of congregations in Monterey Park, Calif., San Antonio, Tex., and Memphis, Tenn. He is secretary of the American Lutheran Church Board of Pensions and previously served on the church's Commission on Research and Social Action.

He is author of a score of books, including the recently published volumes, *The Prayer He Taught* and *The Days Before Easter*.

The Editor

Why is it that while we in the Lutheran church are trying to update the language of the Service, we seem to be going backward to elaborate vestments that look like something out of the Middle Ages? An alive church should emphasize good preaching, good hymn singing, and a simple service that relates to 1977 rather than the 1500s. L.K., Ohio

The famous theologian, Helmut Thielicke, once wrote about clergy who neglect texts for textiles. You obviously agree with him. But no one would say liturgical vestments are necessary for the proper worship of God.

The church always has a twofold task. It must proclaim the gospel to the world of today. It also must witness to the unchangeable nature of that gospel through the ages. In worship these two tasks often seem to be in conflict. The updated liturgy speaks to the world of 1977. The form of the service, including the vestments, can remind us of our link to Christians from the past.

There is another side of the story as far as colorful vestments are concerned. We live in a multi-media world where color and costumes are part of life. Look what has happened to men's clothing these days. In such a world, worship must appeal to all the senses. Thus the use of colorful robes may not be a harking back to the Middle Ages at all. It is a part of the contemporary scene and even if we hadn't had an earlier tradition of more elaborate robes, we probably would introduce them anyway.

Christian worship should be joyful worship and the grand banners and colorful costumes used in the worship service are an effort to express this joy. If God has given us such a beautiful world outside, why should our worship of him be dull in church? ■

Outreach and you

You people in the parishes will determine whether there will be renewed evangelical outreach in the church. Church councils and conventions can pass resolutions and national offices can provide assistance, but the actual doing of evangelical outreach depends on the laity and clergy in the congregations.

Three things motivated the Church Council of the American Lutheran Church (ALC) to declare 1977 a year of special emphasis on evangelical outreach. One was the ever-present command of Christ that his people "Go, make disciples." A second was the obvious need for a renewed outreach effort from the congregations of the church. The third was the conviction that the people of the church were ready and asking for such a renewed effort.

Nobody is questioning the first two of those reasons. The day is at hand to make the third one stand up. That puts the responsibility on each of us. From here we—the men, women, and children of ALC congregations—will determine whether a renewed surge of evangelical strength will move through the church.

Abundant resources

There are resources. ALC national and district offices have been busy. The Division for Life and Mission in the Congregation (DLMC) has taken primary responsibility for developing resources for congregations. The Office of Communication and Mission Support (OCMS) has provided skills with various media. The Division for Theological Education and Ministry (DTEM) has given basic theological strength to the resources. Augsburg Publishing House has devoted major efforts to producing materials.

The district offices have recruited key people to give leadership and training to congregational efforts.

Just about all of the national and district staff have found some way to contribute to the support of the evangelical outreach effort.

As a result of all these efforts, Bible studies, books, and filmstrips are available for parish use. Various opportunities for training will be offered throughout the church. Evangelists are on call if special services are wanted. People will be available to assist congregations in various ways.

Front-line witnesses

All of these, however, are back-up efforts. They are support services for the front-line witnesses. They will amount to nothing unless the people in the congregations take up the outreach responsibilities. The truth of the matter is that you who read *THE LUTHERAN STANDARD*, you who are members of Trinity and Zion and Good Shepherd and Our Savior's and all those other congregations, will determine whether ALC congregations are captured by evangelical zeal.

Our Lord wants everyone to be involved in evangelical outreach. Some will work in many ways; others will offer particular service. Everybody can be involved, however, in making ALC congregations vigorous centers of Christian outreach.

All of us can be prayer evangelists. Evangelical Outreach needs to be undergirded with heartfelt prayer. You who are confined to home or room or bed can form a special prayer cadre. You can pray for the Evangelical Outreach effort, for the congregations of the church, for those who bear witness to Christ, and for those to whom the witness is borne.

Fervent prayer is indispensable to every strong movement of the Spirit. I ask you to pray that God will stir up the spirit of evangelical outreach among his people in the ALC.

Almost all of us can be friendship evangelists. We make friends at work, in our neighborhoods, in the many different ways in which human beings have contact with each other. It is natural and right for friends to share important elements of life together. We invite each other to meaningful occasions in our lives—birthdays, graduations, weddings, parties, dinners, or an evening of conversation. Friendships ought to lead us to share our Christian faith, to share our fellowship in the church.

Surveys indicate that the large majority of people brought into a congregation's faith and fellowship were invited originally by friends. Invitations to worship, to Bible studies, to adult classes, to church school, to youth meetings, to service projects may prove to be avenues to faith in Christ and life in his church. I ask you to invite your friends who are not active in a church to join you in the life of your congregation.

Most of us are able to be witness evangelists. That is, we are able to witness in direct ways to the power and love of Christ. We are able to tell others about the gospel. All of us can do this within the family circle. Most of us can reach out beyond the family and find occasions for direct witness to friends and acquaintances. Some have special gifts which make it possible to bear witness to Christ with just about anybody.

Overcome fears

Each of Christ's disciples is asked to find appropriate ways to tell others about the gospel. You may have to find your way by trial and error. The critical thing is that you make the effort. I ask you to rise above your natural fears and find ways to be a bold witness to God's grace in Christ.

God has prepared ALC congregations for a time of strength in evangelical outreach. You are the key to that strength. In the name of Christ our Lord, I ask you to stand strong in the grace of God and to make his American Lutheran Church zealous in evangelical outreach.

David W. Preus

At his table . . . and ours

by Wayne D. Walther

We give thanks at our Lord's table, but do we remember to do the same at our own table?

George Bernard Shaw, a great English playwright, once received a letter from a student who asked for one of his best words.

The student wrote, "My dear Mr. Shaw: I read today that you are a wealthy man because of your

writing. I understand that if one took the amount of your wealth and divided it by the number of words that you have written in your lifetime, it would come out to about a

shilling a word. I enclose one shilling. Please send me one of your best words."

He was surprised to receive in the mail an envelope with Shaw's return address on it. Inside the envelope, on a sheet of paper, was a single word: "Thanks."

Our attitude

If we as Christians had only one word to describe our attitude toward God, toward others, and toward all of life, this ought to be our word: Thanks.

"Have no anxiety about anything," said the apostle Paul, "but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Phil. 4:6).

From the Greek word for



The Lord's Supper gathers us at the table of thanksgiving. This is the way it should be at every table where Christians meet.

thanksgiving we get the English word, Eucharist, which is another name for Holy Communion. Eucharist means "thanksgiving" and the word itself points to part of the meaning of that meal. For in the Lord's Supper we give thanks to God for all that we are and for all that he has given us.

At all times

In our Service, the leader says, "Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God," and we respond, "It is meet and right so to do." Then we declare that we should give thanks "at all times, and in all places."

Later in the Words of Institution, the action of Jesus is proclaimed to us: "Our Lord . . . took bread; and, when he had given thanks, he brake it and gave it to his disciples. . . ." Likewise, "he took the cup . . . and, when he had given thanks, he gave it to them. . . ."

As we conclude the sacramental meal, we sing, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good," and we pray, "We give thanks to thee, Almighty God, that thou hast refreshed us. . . ."

Finally, we exclaim, "Bless we the Lord," and respond, "Thanks be to God."

So the Lord's Supper gathers us at the table of thanksgiving. We are there for the Eucharist and at each step in our worship we give thanks to God.

This is the way it should be, not only at the Lord's Table, but at every table where Christians gather.

Before we begin to eat, we bless our Lord in giving thanks. We teach our children, "God is great, God is good. Let us thank him for this food." This too is a "eucharistic" prayer. So are other children's prayers, including, "Thank you for the world so sweet; thank you for the food we eat."

Awesome truths

Christians cannot consider the world around them without being awed by his wonder. Christians cannot think of their dependence on God, who provides them with life and health and daily bread, without being struck with a sense of gratitude. Christians cannot receive the magnificent gifts of forgiveness and life in Christ without responding with thanks.

Thank you, God. We say it in the Eucharist at the table of our Lord. But we also say it every day at our own table and "at all times, and in all places." ■

Walther is pastor of the Warrenton-Waldeck Lutheran Parish, Warrenton, Tex.

It's later than you think

Only three minutes—not a long span of time. Just 180 seconds or one-twentieth of an hour. It is the time it takes for the sand to run through an egg timer or the time required to pick up the mail or to walk to the bus.

Within three minutes, military battles can be lost or won; athletic contests can be changed from defeat to victory; and decisions can be made in the parliaments of governments which affect the lives of millions of people.

A so-called act of God can cause a catastrophe or an errand of mercy can save thousands—all within three minutes.

Within three minutes, an accident may snatch a life of one while the giving of medication may save the life of another. Time is no respecter of persons or events.

If you knew that what you do in the next three minutes would be the groundwork for the rest of your life, what would you do and what kind of life would you have? For in three minutes, a person may be lost or won for Christ. That person may be you.

This meditation will take about three minutes to read. If you are motivated by what you read to forsake wrongful ways and to follow Christ; if another person is encouraged to forgive and to be forgiven; or if still another is led to take up a cross daily in service to our Lord, then these words will not have been written in vain.

"It is full time now for you to wake from sleep," wrote the apostle Paul to the Romans (13:11). In the language of our day, we might say: It's later than you think.

*The Rev. Louis F. Mertz
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Memorial Community Hospital,
San Diego, Calif.*

Like early crocuses in spring snow

by James A. Nestingen

The lessons for the Sunday of the Transfiguration of our Lord and the first Sunday in Lent are full of promise. They are like a pair of early crocuses sticking purple heads through spring snow. And the promise—given first to the people of Israel—is now, in Christ, given also to each of us.

Deuteronomy 34:1-12—the First Lesson for Transfiguration Sunday—is a eulogy to Moses, the great law-giver who led the Hebrew people on their exodus from slavery in Egypt. Like most eulogies, it passes over Moses' liabilities to concentrate on his assets.

A tribute to Moses

Moses' stammering impatience and his murder of an Egyptian taskmaster are ignored. He is portrayed as the greatest of the prophets, God's agent in Israel's deliverance, one so full of power that even at the ripe old age of 120 "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated" (v. 7). The pas-

Based on the First Lesson texts for the Transfiguration of Our Lord (Feb. 20), Deut. 34:1-12; and the First Sunday in Lent (Feb. 27), Deut. 26:5-10.

sage is a gladhearted and thankful tribute, full of the joy of remembrance.

Yet there is something tragic about Moses' story. After his fierce battles with the pharaoh, the great plagues, and his desperate attempts to keep the people faithful in their wilderness wanderings, Moses died with the promised land only in sight.

God took Moses up on Mount Nebo to let him view the land promised to provide a home for Israel. But after more than 40 years of tussling with the great and the not so great of both Egypt and his own people, Moses was denied what he had undoubtedly hoped for most—the chance to plant his feet in a land the people could call their own. His prophecy, his signs and wonders, his good eyes and strong back, could not postpone his death long enough so that he could see the fulfillment of his hope.

The promise is even clearer in the lesson for the first Sunday in Lent, Deuteronomy 26:5-10. It is a stewardship text for the people of Israel, a passage about the necessity of offering to God the first fruit of the harvest (v. 10). But verses five through nine are in all likelihood one of the most ancient creeds of Israel—the Old Testament equivalent of the church's Apostles' Creed.

Full of hope

Like the creed, these verses from Deuteronomy 26 are full of hope. They are a recital of God's mighty acts, recounting how he delivered his people: "Then we cried to the LORD, the God of our Fathers, and the LORD heard our voice, and saw our affliction, our toil and our oppression; and the LORD brought us out



God took Moses up on Mount Nebo and let him view the promised land.

**The Lenten season
(Feb. 23 to Apr. 8)**

Lent is the annual pilgrimage by the people of God. It takes place in a 40-day retreat marked by prayer and increased devotion to the Word of God, self-examination and repentance, and finally, meditation upon Jesus' passion and death. We die to sin and self through our crucified Lord.

of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this land, a land flowing with milk and honey" (vv. 7-9).

Hope-filled words

The people of Israel, however, had to repeat these hope-filled words in the face of all kinds of tragedy: in the death of Moses, in the midst of famine and drought, and in turmoil when Cyrus came like the grim reaper and Nebuchadnezzar came to carry them away from the land God had given them.

Why is the hope given in the promise so closely tied in with tragedy? Is God playing Ping-Pong with us, bouncing us back and forth be-

tween great promise and equally great suffering? Is it like the end of winter, when every warm wind seems to be followed by a blizzard so that crocuses, fooled into blooming early, have to sit in the snow?

Many surprises

It seems like it. God is so full of surprises, it is hard to know what to expect next. Israel found that out and so, in Christ, do we.

But one thing is certain—that God keeps his word and, as Paul says in the Second Lesson for the opening Sunday of Lent, that "word is near us." It breaks into our slavery and oppression, into the midst of our Egypts, to give certainty and comfort.

God does not sit on mountaintops arbitrarily mixing joy and suffering. He himself has come in Christ to take on our despair and break it. He did, he does, and he will. ■



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The growing concern that became a common concern



The year was 1902, and in Appleton, Wisconsin, Albert Voecks, Gottlieb D. Ziegler and William H. Zuehlke, Sr., saw a dream come true. The necessary 500 members had been secured and Aid Association for Lutherans was chartered to do business as a fraternal benefit society. There were two simple and specific reasons for this charter. They still are among the reasons for AAL's existence today. Our first members wanted to protect their futures and their families with the

best life insurance possible. And they wanted to conduct fraternal and benevolent activities to share God's gifts. Today, there are over a million Lutherans in AAL with over \$8 billion of life insurance in force. And the desire to share God's gifts has extended beyond AAL's membership to touch thousands of people in every corner of America. We don't think the small group of Lutherans who started AAL would be surprised at what we are doing today. Just pleased.

common
concern for
**human
Worth**

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