

LUTHERAN

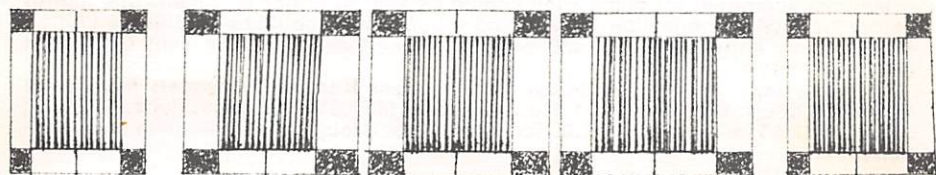
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# SPOKESMAN

CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION

UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN



## THINGS OF CHRISTMAS

*I love to hear the bells of Christmas  
As they ring both far and near  
For they tell of a great wonder;  
Jesus our Savior now is here!*

*I love to see the Star of Christmas  
As it points the way for me  
So I go to Bethlehem  
And there the Savior Babe I see!*

*I love to hear the songs of Christmas  
How they fill my heart with love!  
And I think I hear the angels  
As they once sang in skies above.*

*I love these many gifts of Christmas  
But the best and dearest one  
Is the Special Gift God gave us  
When He gave us His Own Dear Son.*

*Elsa Romberg*

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# Right Move, Wrong Reason

This month marks the founding of a new church body. On December 4 and 5, the five synods that will form the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches met in Chicago to set the organization in motion. The regional synods that make up the new group—East Coast, Great Rivers, Southwest, Pacific and English—held their constituting conventions during the month of November. The membership is comprised of “moderate opponents to the conservative leadership of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod” who “maintain that they have been ‘evicted’ from the synod by the policies of its president.” Estimates of how many congregations and pastors will make up the group at its beginning vary, but a substantial number have already committed themselves.

## Features

Proposals that will come before the December meeting give indication of the character and direction of the Association. A definite effort is to be advocated for decentralization. “A small staff is all that will be necessary. The synods themselves are the central pastoral unit, and at the local level they need to recognize and act on those needs which are essential for their ministry.”

There will be a recommendation that the by-laws “Provide for a review every two years of the necessity of the AELC’s existence in the light of its greater concern for Lutheran unity.” A spokesman says: “We’re serious about the unity of Lutherans in America and want to make it clear from the outset that we aren’t interested in establishing just another Lutheran church body.”

It is hoped that a “partnership” relationship which is described as “cooperation without control,” will be established with the Concordia Seminary in Exile (Seminex). The president of Seminex says: “We definitely want to be known as the seminary of the AELC and at the same time be able to work cooperatively with other Lutherans in planning for the training of Lutheran professional church workers.”

The spirit and trend of the group is further indicated by what has already been approved at November regional synod meetings. There was “an endorsement of the ordination of women into the pastoral ministry of the new body,” and an expressed desire for “complete pulpit and altar fellowship with all Lutherans.” It will be recommended that the new body “participate in several forums of Lutheran cooperation, including the Lutheran World Federation and the Lutheran Council in the USA.”

## How Come?

Without question this is a separation movement. Pastors and congregations are separating themselves from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and start-

ing a new church organization. In itself this need not be faulted. Scripture does indeed present a separation principle to be followed by believers. Our Church of the Lutheran Confession came into existence because of it. When there is disagreement in doctrine, there must of necessity be error to be avoided. This is a scriptural requirement.

And this is what bothers here. In all our reading on the controversy that has been going on for years in the Missouri Synod we do not find that either side seriously considered it a scriptural requirement to “avoid,” to separate when doctrinal unity no longer existed. As we see it, the AELC moderates are leaving the Missouri Synod because they lost what might be called a “political” battle for the control of the synod. Since they have already made known their fellowship principles, with them it could never be that they would separate from other Lutherans because of teaching.

The burden of bringing about a separation between the disagreeing groups within the Missouri Synod really rested with those who call themselves conservative and are remaining in the synod. They are the ones who were calling the moderates false teachers. Since they had come to this conclusion, and to a great extent we share this evaluation, they are the ones who should have brought about a separation. In this we have something rather unusual: the wrong people are doing the right thing for the wrong reason.

### **No Change**

We don't want to make the mistake of thinking that now since the liberal element is clearing out of the Missouri Synod, the way is open for a reuniting of the synods who once made up the Synodical Conference. The Missouri Synod has never renounced the teachings and practice that brought about the break-up of the Synodical Conference—chaplaincy, scouting, cooperation in externals, fellowship with the ALC, to name a few. These issues still remain.

What incongruous situations develop when men no longer understand and uphold the scriptural doctrine of fellowship! Though there is a separation, a formal fellowship relationship still exists, since both groups are in fellowship with the ALC. To get on a proper scriptural course the Missouri Synod still has a great deal of back-tracking to do.

*G. Sydow*

## *Where Were You?*

For many congregations, January is a time for annual meetings. Financial reports for the previous year are considered, the activity of the congregation is reviewed, plans and a budget for the coming year are adopted. This annual meeting is usually just another one of four quarterly meetings commonly held in our congregations. At all of these the attendance of the voting members of the congregation is expected.

Here is a responsibility that God has laid upon the male members of the congregation, having said that women are "not to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." (I Tim. 2:12) A voting member who is able to attend the voters' meeting, but does not, is shirking a duty that God has laid upon him. No doubt one of the factors which brought about woman's suffrage in many Lutheran churches today was that many male voters were not fulfilling their duty in respect to voters' meetings.

The past presidential election was expected to show a poor voter turn-out. A news commentator had remarked that elections in other countries often bring out as many as seventy, eighty, or even ninety per cent of the voters. It all depends upon how much people value their freedom. Voters turn out best in those countries which either had lost their freedom in the past, or had been in great danger of losing it.

There is some worthwhile instruction in this matter of voter participation. Is the absence from a congregational meeting caused by thoughtlessness, carelessness and unintentional neglect, or is it a lack of appreciation for the privilege God has given to all believers to participate in the preaching of the Gospel of salvation in Christ? Is a hierarchial system (not unlike a political dictatorship) in which orders are handed down from the clergy to be preferred?

Whatever the reason may be, let us realize that our congregational meetings deal with the Lord's business, that God has given each voter the duty, the responsibility, and the privilege of helping guide the church's work. He expects us to be present. May all of our voting members who are physically able attend their congregational meetings, and pray, speak, listen and decide on these church matters which are pertinent to the Gospel for the glory of God and the welfare of the Church.

(Adapted, Oct. 17, 1976 bulletin, Faith, Markesan, WI)

## *Different Spirits*

In America it is considered healthy to hold whatever opinion and idea one would like. All have the right to disagree with other opinions. Some have adopted the heroics of a Voltaire who suggested he may disapprove of what you say, but he'd defend to the death your right to say it. The exchange of ideas on the one hand is very stimulating. It may challenge a person to re-evaluate his assumptions and bases for understanding and explaining things. On

the other hand, often the expression of ideas, approaches, and methodology becomes bewildering because of their multitude and variety. One begins to cry out for a bit of truth among all the lies and fiction. A compulsion to know who's right begs a better authority than is humanly available.

In the Christian world one would expect that at least there the priorities and assumptions are all sorted out. Certainly everyone be-

believes God's communications in Scripture. Not so! Even the Scriptures themselves predict the arising of a variety of error which will masquerade as truth. God has nothing but the harshest words and threats against those teachers and preachers who are false prophets.

God invites us to the unity of the Spirit—a divinely created understanding of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Among the fruits of this Life-giving and Life-preserving faith is a wholesome—yes, holy—awe and concern for the Book which brings the Gospel information. It speaks truth on many subjects. We are warned to “test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1 John 4:1) God's Word is the standard for this testing.

The fact that there are differing spirits at work in the world and even within the pale of Christianity becomes evident regularly. Consider these events:

### 1. Two Deaths

During the last months we heard of the deaths of two men, Dr. Martin Franzmann and Dr. Rudolph Bultmann. Both were contemporary theologians. Both were “Lutherans.” That's where the similarity ends.

When Dr. Franzmann studied Scripture he saw the majesty of the historical God-man Jesus Christ, Savior of mankind through His death on Calvary and His resurrection to abundant life. He sought to teach and write of God's truths as God stated them, especially to

Lutherans who were having trouble knowing them. His gifts in New Testament scholarship are widely recognized and appreciated by those interested in hearing God's Word God's way.

Dr. Bultmann wanted the best of two worlds—Biblical and scientific. When he studied Scripture he assumed that there could never be any interference of supernatural, transcendent, or divine power in human affairs. He is the one who is credited with the radical assertion that the New Testament must be “demythologized,” thereby casting doubt on miracles, the deity of Christ, and His resurrection from among the dead. He doubted that very little, if anything, could be known about the historical Jesus. The Gospel accounts, he asserted, are records of what certain early Christians believed and not God's record of eternal verities, established as they were in this historical God-man Jesus Christ.

These were of different spirits.

### 2. Origins

We recently audited a taped debate between Dr. James Gavan and Dr. Duane Gish. Both are scientists. Both have earned degrees because of their recognized proficiency in applying the scientific method to the accumulation of information. One is an evolutionist; the other is a creationist. The debate, held at the University of Missouri in 1975, had this topic: “Resolved that the theory of evolution is superior to the theory of special creation as a scientific explanation for the evi-

dence relevant to the present biological world.”

Dr. Gavan spoke for the affirmative. Dr. Gish, a noted defender of creation, one of the directors of the Institution for Creation Research, spoke against the proposition. A person need not understand the technical aspects of the variety of arguments to note the different spirits of these two men.

One would think that two intelligent, educated men could look at the same data or phenomena and come to the same conclusion about it and its relationship to the rest of the universe. Not so! Dr. Gavan demonstrates the typical evolutionistic assumptions that there is no Creator and that there is no proof of His existence. Dr. Gish continually asserted the scientific bankruptcy of the theory of evolution. He quoted primarily evolutionist sources to say that the theory is mathematically improbable, violates known scientific laws (2nd law of thermodynamics and biogenesis), lacks fossil evidence in transitional forms (missing links)—that the theory of evolution is religious in nature, not scientific.

They are men of different spirits. One believes in God; the other doesn't. One accepts God's explanation of origins; the other holds to a godless explanation in the supposedly scientific theory of evolution. The two approaches are irreconcilable and incompatible.

### 3. Abortion

I heard a mini-debate on television recently discussing when life begins.

Discussion of this topic became popular and necessary since abortion received legal status in our country. Typically the sides in the debate were represented by an anti-abortionist versus a pro-abortionist. Their differing spirits became evident immediately.

The pro-life defender explained the existence of new life at the moment of conception, that the cells had 46 chromosomes as typical human cells have, that the newly conceived life begins to exist separately from its host, that the organs and functions for life exist and are functioning at 10 weeks of age.

The pro-abortionist mustered the customary sociological and legal arguments that the fetus was not a person. She said that the Supreme Court had determined the legal fact that the fetus was not a person. She cited the fact that the courts, most Jews, many Protestants, and even a few Roman Catholics agreed that abortion is an acceptable procedure.

A Christian doesn't waste much time arguing when a fetus becomes a person since he's not going to murder it anyway. Even at that, he has God's word on the fact that new life and identity begin at the moment of conception. cf. Psalm 139:13-15; Psalm 51:5. Talk about differences! What kind of nation is it that favors the right to privacy over the right to life?

### 4. Born-Again

A bit closer to home was a discussion in a recent Bible class. Some of our people spoke of a theological prejudice which made Christianity

suspect—were they “born-again” Christians? Various Baptists and others insist on their description of regeneration as necessarily involving a conscious decision for Christ and submission to the symbolic baptism by immersion. Any suggestion that regeneration is totally the work of God, without human inclination or capacity (decision) falls on ears too tuned to the rational necessity of “something in man” which would fit him for salvation. Unless one is born again that way, he’s not born again.

This prejudice results in a rejection of the possibility of faith

acquired without decision and symbolic baptism by immersion. We in principle simply restate Scripture’s own proposition that all who believe in Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sins will be saved. That applies universally—even to those whose explanation of conversion and regeneration reflects a humanistic interference which may not have as yet compromised their saving faith. The dogmatics books call it a happy inconsistency. The Baptists evidently would not be inclined to be so charitable to others.

*M. Sydow*

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## **Church News**

### **New Hands in the Vineyard**

#### **Part I**

You heard of their graduation from the CLC pastor-teacher training institution at Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Now we offer some brief reports of these same people at work in their assigned fields.

#### **Miss Sarah Fiegel**

Miss Fiegel was born in rural Wisconsin near Beaver Dam, where her parents, the Bernard Fiegels, operated a farm. It was during her six years at Faith Lutheran School of Markesan that Sarah began to see herself as a future teacher—an ambition much encouraged by the staff. After public high school in Markesan, Sarah took the Education courses at ILC, with practice teaching experience at Messiah School of Eau Claire.

Miss Fiegel is in charge of 21 students of grades 3-4-5 at Luther Memorial School in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

#### **Miss Christy Mueller**

The teacher of the ten children in grades Kindergarten through fourth at Jamestown, ND, was born in Milwaukee. Her parents now live in Houston. Except for her first year of high school, Miss Mueller took all of her courses at Immanuel of Eau Claire, financing her education by working one full year and several summers as an assistant claims processor with an insurance company. Her practice teaching was done at Austin, MN, under the direction of Miss Carla Thurow and Miss Diane Lietz.

When asked what it was which particularly influenced her career choice, Miss Mueller speaks warmly of the personal dedication she observed in the teachers of the CLC at their professional conferences.



## The Rev. Paul R. Gurgel

Our report on the new pastor of Immanuel Church in Winter Haven, FL, must be a bit longer, since the pastoral ministry is really a second, almost a third career. Born at Rib Lake, WI, the second child of Professor and Mrs. Roland Gurgel (presently of ILC), he spent his early years in Belle Plaine, MN, Phoenix, AZ, and Cheyenne, WY, and finally Eau Claire during his high school period.

After high school, Gurgel worked for a year as a surveyor and designer with an engineering firm in Eau Claire, learning the craft that would later help him support his family while he studied for the pastoral ministry at the Seminary. Then followed four years with the Air Force. During three of those years, he worked as an intelligence analyst for NSA in Washington, D.C. After that tour of service he returned to



Rev. Paul R. Gurgel

Immanuel for six years of pretheological and theological study.

In June of 1973 Gurgel was married to Barbara Bernthal of South Milwaukee, WI. For her, the move to Winter Haven was a sort of home coming, since she had taught the primary grades of the Christian Day School there during the 1972-73 school year.

The Gurgels have two sons, Jeremy and Nathan.

*Rollin A. Reim*

## INSTANT ITEMS

• Truths, that is, the laws and principles, about electricity, gravity, or mathematics hardly excite us; but a current, a fall, or a bookkeeping account may well produce action. The "truth about" these forces rarely stimulate us to any vibrant living, but the forces themselves surely do. Is the distinction difficult? Try this: for the good of sinners and their salvation we "hold" the truth so that we can "speak" the Good News. We *hold* so that we can *tell*, and it is Good-News-told that vibrates us. Truly, there can be much *living* with

very little *knowledge of* if only there is *obedience to* and *functioning according*. It is as with the health laws of Moses: their keeping yielded life to Israel some 3000 years before science had knowledge of their principles.

• Christians visiting distant Christians note the similarities that the Spirit has worked: the same attitudes, the same minds, same characteristics. The Church is one body of many members. But there is this additional amazing truth: that the more they are made the same under

the teaching of the Word, the more they also become different as members of the same body. It is as with school children: the more each one learns, the more he becomes distinct from the rest, unique in his personality. The more Christians advance in their knowledge of spiritual truth, the more "news" they have for one another when they come together to exchange thoughts. It is the undeveloped one that keeps most silent in a one-to-one spiritual relationship—we do not say social.

• God's anger is highest against us when he ceases to call us to account, said St. Augustine. "Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul. And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel (1 Samuel 15:34-35). "The worst thing that can ever happen to a willful and disobedient man like Saul is for God to let him have (go) his own way," said Daniel March. No worse thing can befall a person than that no Christian any more makes way to his door. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:2-3).

• Beware Satan's hook: when men have enough religion to be respectable, but not enough to be bothersome; when men depreciate the serious nature of sin and are indifferent to piety but will accept anything that seems to have spirit; when churches build no theological fences

either to keep people in or out; when in the cause of larger fellowship one denomination gives up this and another one that until there is nothing left, but everybody is just glad to be together. Thomas Hooker, sometimes called the Luther of New England in colonial days, said, "While we are parleying and disputing what we should do, we omit so long to do what we ought that we unfit ourselves to do what we intend." Lest we be tricked pedagogically to take harmful shortcuts, Luther said in his Saxony School Plan that we should not perplex children by controversial questions, but teach "truths necessary for right living . . . not polemical matters . . . not as many unskillful teachers do, accustom the children to hate the monks and others."

• "The strongest, whitest, sweetest soul the world has ever known. How strange, how very strange, that would sound in a letter of Peter or Paul!" wrote Clarence Macartney in a book on Peter. "They, too, and that in matchless terms, could speak of the lovely traits of the Son of Man. But what constrains their love and indites their song of thanksgiving and gives wings to their hope is not the loveliness of the character of Jesus, but the fact that He died for them and bare their sins in His own body on the tree."

• The exchange of thoughts (discovered truths and insights) is one of the top delights of Bible readers: the excitement of a Baptist friend who now knows who is the Antichrist, the papacy, wondering if we Lutherans teach that; the understanding that Revelation is not so much prophecy

as support for overcomers to remain faithful to the end of history; that Paul is concerned with redemption which makes access possible (Romans 5:2) whereas Hebrews is concerned with the access which has been made possible by redemption; that a person suffering depression can get help from the experiences of Jeremiah.

• With a bit of reading in current writing, one can detect almost a new humility among men of science. Some of them seem embarrassed by the theory of evolution. More and more, folk wisdom is being recognized by faddists, whether in foods or in the necessity of annual health examinations. Sin is at times recognized as a factor in health and happiness. More striking, some time ago, was that men-of-atoms admitted that Scripture had already put the truth in 2 Peter 3, easily identifiable. A man-of-Scripture published these words in 1868: "We are walking every moment upon the very brink of

the awful abyss of death and eternity. We are compassed about at all times, and the very sanctuary of our being is penetrated by influences that we cannot comprehend, and by forces of illimitable power. The flame of life burns so feebly upon the secret altar of our hearts that it can be put out by the sudden jar of a single breath. The partition between us and the unseen world is thin as the garments that clothe our flesh, and as easily pierced as the bubbles that float on the wave. A slight change in the elements of the air we breathe would wrap the whole earth in devouring fire or stop the breath of everything that breathes. The draught of water with which we quench our thirst holds imprisoned an electric force great and terrible enough to darken the heavens with tempests and to shake the eternal hills with its thunders." (Daniel March, *Night Scenes in the Bible*, p. 26)

*M. Galstad*

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## *Get Well*

We have the custom of sending get-well cards. It is a commendable practice. When one is seriously ill physically, he most likely is also down mentally. To be remembered with a card or letter at such a time shows concern and brings wholesome and needful support.

### **We Think About Things**

We are Christians and take more than a casual look at what we do. We

are constantly thinking of things in relationship to our Christianity. So it is that we ask ourselves what we have in mind in sending get-well cards. Is it this: that the one who is ill is restored to good health so that he can get back to his family and friends, and to his work, to continue his life as it was before. Most likely, in every instance this motivation is present, but it is not distinctly Christian. Even the unbeliever can have such compassionate wishes.

Something else may be lurking in the background. Invariably our hopes go in the get-well direction. Does that mean that the alternative to getting well—death—is an unwelcome, wholly unacceptable thought, a woeful tragedy? Right away most likely we are aware that such thinking isn't quite Christian, and yet in our humanness, it stays with us.

We do well to let the Apostle Paul speak to us on this point. In his letter to the Philippians we find him in prison. This is not quite the same as being seriously ill, and yet the same two alternatives come into consideration. His imprisonment could end in execution at the hands of the Roman government, or he could be released to go about as he did before. Death or life lies before him. He considers this in the closing verses of the first chapter of this letter.

### **Dying Is Gain**

From Scripture we derive enough insight about the character of the Apostle Paul so that we hardly expect him to be bogged down with self-pity concerning death. However, considering his work, that he was God's chosen messenger to the Gentiles, with all the work and concerns that went with it, one could suppose that he would see it as somewhat of a tragedy should he be removed from the scene. What would become of the mission to the Gentiles? What would become of the congregations that he started? How could they get along without him? Nothing of this is forthcoming. He simply says "to die is gain," (v. 21) and speaks of a "desire to depart, and to be with

Christ, which is far better." (v. 23) There is nothing dreadful here, no tragic overtones.

We know very well why Paul can speak that way. He knows all about sin and death. In Romans (5:12) he says: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The happy life God intended for man at creation came to an end. And it isn't just physical death that is meant. Death in the scriptural sense includes more—eternal separation from God in everlasting torment. When sin and death stand alone there is no speaking of "gain" or something "far better."

But Paul knows more. In that same chapter five of Romans he says "that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." (v. 21) Through the wonder-working of the Holy Spirit he has learned the meaning of Jesus' words: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10) He writes of Easter this way: "Death is swallowed up in victory." (I Cor. 15:54) He proclaims Jesus Christ as the One "who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (I Tim. 1:10) Here is to be found the "gain" in dying, the "far better" companionship with Christ.

### **Too Gloomy**

The complaint has been made that Christianity dwells too much on the

gloomy topic of death and dying. How else could it be? That's what the Bible, God, Christ, Christianity are all about. Even for natural man there is nothing more foolish than to ignore death, to pretend it doesn't exist. Even he knows that the moment we are born we start dying under the curse of sin. How useless the philosophy of the one who said: "The secret of happiness is not to think of death." The strength of Christianity does not lie in ignoring death and emphasizing an ethic for this life, but rather in facing up to death and having a solution for it.

There is a booklet in use in our midst entitled "Preparing For Death." It presents scriptural devotions pertaining to that subject. The title is legitimate. As Christians our entire life can be viewed as a preparing for death. And yet, the booklet could just as well have been titled, "Preparing For Life," the more abundant life promised in Christ. Christians can look at their existence in this sinful world in two ways. Life can be a long, sorrowful, funeral procession to the grave, or a happy, triumphant march to eternal glory. Surely, the latter is to be preferred.

### **The Flesh Hinders**

We can't quarrel with the Apostle Paul's viewpoint. We know it is the heart and soul of Christianity. And yet it may be that we can't always speak with his confidence and assurance in the face of death. Though in our heart of hearts we know and believe what Scripture says, misgivings, apprehension, fears arise. The flesh clings to the life it knows, even

though it is sin-tarnished and burdensome, and looks upon death as an unwelcome ordeal. Here again we learn something of the nature of the flesh—how insidious, wicked and powerful it is. It hinders us from being what we should be, even what we want to be. Now we understand why the anguished cry arose: "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief." (Mark 9:24)

### **To Live is Christ**

Paul also speaks to the Philippians on the other alternative—living. On that he says: "For me to live is Christ." (v. 21) For him that means to "continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith." (v. 25) His life is wrapped up in Christ. If he lives, it is only for this one purpose, that the Gospel of salvation may be furthered, that more souls may be brought to eternal life.

We may be inclined to put a limitation on the thought that "to live is Christ." It fits the Apostle Paul and other public servants of the Word for whom work in the Gospel is a whole life calling. There is little question there, but don't other Christians of necessity have other demanding interests? Dare any Christian say, "For me to live is my work, my family, my property, my career, my recreation?" Does not Scripture say: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (Col. 3:17) There is no place in the life of a Christian where Christ is set aside. No matter what our station in life, our entire existence is wrapped up in Him, and what

we can do for Him and His saving Gospel. We say as much in Luther's explanation to the Second Article: ". . . that I should be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness; even as He is risen from death, lives and reigns to all eternity."

### Both Good

In contemplating living or dying Paul says, "Yet what I shall choose I wot not, for I am in a strait betwixt

the two." (v. 22-23) It is beyond him to make a decision between the two. Obviously, how things will go with him will be in the hands of the Lord, as it is ultimately for all of us. But this much he has made clear. The alternatives of living or dying are not to be thought of as a contrast between good or bad, better or worse, happy or tragic. Both are good for the child of God! This should be kept in mind when we as Christians send get-well cards.

G. Sydow



## DAILY DEVOTIONS

DAILY DEVOTIONS. DAILY—because such is our need for the bread of God's Word. Without such regular meals our Christian lives become anemic because of malnutrition of the soul, faltering faith, and heart disease. DEVOTIONS—because we set aside a time in which to devote ourselves to the Word. DEVOTIONS—because the dedicated life of the devoted disciple draws its strength and purpose from a thoughtful listening to the Master. As Mary of Bethany demonstrated, discipleship begins at Jesus' feet. (Luke 10:38-42) As followers of the Word Made Flesh we cannot help but be followers of the written Word—disciples of the Scriptures.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES are a personal letter to each Christian from his Heavenly Father. A letter to be read and re-read, to be pondered and discussed. Don't leave the Father's letter to you unopened. Don't file it or frame it. Don't read it as though it were someone else's mail. It speaks in vital ways to your daily life. Do not fail to recognize that you are the "thou" in the "Thou shalt nots," and the one of whom Jesus speaks when He says "whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES center about the person of Jesus Christ. His face is watermarked on every page of the Bible. He is the reason for its existence. He is the heart of its message of salvation for sinners. Every event recorded in the Scriptures, every person described, is found there because of its relationship to the person of Christ. To use the Bible rightly is to sit at Jesus' feet, and see the imprint of His Presence in every passing chapter; on the caravan route Abram took to Canaan as well as the Emmaus road; on the streets that led to Calvary and the streetcorners of Corinth; in the Garden of Eden and the Garden of Gethsemane.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES are the tool of the Holy Spirit. He is the One who makes its contents clear. The Word is His means of grace, the instrument He uses to bring God's forgiving love in Christ into our hearts and lives, the instrument through which He enlightens and transforms, guides and comforts, encourages, strengthens and supports all who He has taught to trust in Christ Jesus. Of Him the Savior said, "When the Helper comes . . . the Spirit of Truth . . . He will bear witness of Me." (John 15:26 NASB) No teacher could possibly compare with the Holy Spirit. Indeed, all true teachers are taught by Him. The Spirit loves to teach Christ's people. He lives within them, waiting for you and me to take up the Word and ask Him to open its treasures to us.

Therefore, our daily devotions will fittingly begin with prayers for the Spirit's guidance and help. And, as we read and meditate, we ought to continue to direct prayer-questions to the Spirit of Truth, turning to the Giver of Life for guidelines for living, prayerfully pursuing His instruction. This is where Bible Study methods can be useful. They can help us to consider the Scriptures in a thoughtful way, a way which causes us to raise those questions the Holy Spirit is waiting to answer. They can help us to seek out and pluck off for ourselves more of the precious fruits which God has grown for us on the tree of His Word.

In this and some of the months ahead we will be making use of a variety of Bible Study methods which can prove fruitful as we seek the Spirit's teaching. Remember: methods are to be servants and helpers in our meditations even as translations, chapter divisions, and verse numberings are. Therefore, use them as tools. Don't worship them; dig into the Word with them.

In using January's Bible Readings from the Life of Christ, may I suggest that you:

- A. *Begin with a portion of Psalm 119* as a prayer pattern in asking for the Holy Spirit's guidance. (Verses from this Psalm will be listed with each day's reading. Remember that "Law" means "The Word of God" in most places in this Psalm.)
- B. Ask: *What does the text say?* (Observe)  
As you read note the outstanding facts. Who is involved? What happened? What is said? Where did this take place? When? Seek to make new discoveries, to see truths already familiar to you in their proper textual setting.
- C. Ask: *What does the text mean?* (Interpret)  
Seek out the meaning in the text for the people first involved. Relive the situation. Define words, phrases, sentences. Ask: Why was this said or done? What was the implication and significance?
- D. Ask: *What does it mean to me?* (Apply)  
Especially pray for the Spirit's help here. Apply the main teaching of the text to your life. Consider your thoughts, attitudes, actions, behavior. Look at your relationships in the home, at school, on the job, in your city and country. Pray that the Holy Spirit make the needed changes in your life, and cause you to put into practice what you've learned. Prayerfully plan to follow through right away. Jesus Christ is Lord of All. No part of our lives ought be exempt from the application of His Word.

#### Psalm 119

January	1	1-4	Luke 1:26-38	18	81-83	Luke 4:16-30
	2	5-8	Luke 2:1-20	19	85-88	Luke 5:1-11
	3	9-12	Luke 2:21-40	20	89-91	Mark 1:21-38
	4	13-16	Matthew 2:1-12	21	92-95	Mark 1:40-45
	5	17-20	Matthew 2:13-23	22	97-100	Mark 2:1-12
	6	24-27	Luke 2:41-52	23	101-104	Luke 5:27-32
	7	28-32	John 1:19-29	24	105-108	Matthew 12:9-15
	8	33-35	Matthew 3:13-17	25	109-112	Mark 3:13-19
	9	36-40	Matthew 4:1-11	26	113-117	Luke 6:20-26
	10	41-48	John 1:35-51	27	123-128	Luke 6:27-38
	11	49-52	John 2:1-11	28	129-136	Luke 6:39-49
	12	57-60	John 2:13-22	29	139-144	Luke 7:1-10
	13	61-64	John 3:1-21	30	145-152	Luke 7:11-17
	14	65-68	John 4:1-26	31	169-176	Luke 7:36-50
	15	71-72	John 4:27-42			
	16	73-74	John 4:43-54			
	17	75-77	John 5:1-18			

W. V. Schaller

## Treasurer's Report

July 1, 1976—November 1, 1976

RECEIPTS:	OCTOBER	TO DATE
Offerings	\$14,920.94	\$ 58,296.79
Memorials	—	340.00
Mission Refund Exploratory work	—	231.90
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$14,920.94</b>	<b>\$ 58,868.69</b>

(Continued on next page)

# Announcements

The Lutheran Spokesman cover designs for the coming church year will be the work of Peter and Randi Gullerud of Servant of Christ congregation, Canoga Park, California. We appreciate it that these young people are voluntarily making this effort on behalf of the Spokesman.

Again, we thank Waldemar Bernthal of Messiah congregation, Hales Corners, Wisconsin for another year's art work on the Spokesman covers. They were truly distinctive.

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 SCHALLER, PAUL REV MRS  
 20864 HAVILAND AVE  
 HAYWARD CA 94541

## DISBURSEMENTS:

Retirement Benefits	1,368.00	5,472.00
Emergency Fund	—	387.53
Capital Investments	1,672.79	7,222.64
General Administration	406.62	1,863.40
Missions and Administration	7,020.93	28,169.20
Immanuel Lutheran College	7,128.00	28,512.00
<b>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS</b>	<b>\$17,596.34</b>	<b>\$ 71,626.77</b>
<b>CASH DEFICIT FOR PERIOD</b>	<b>(— 2,675.40)</b>	<b>(— 12,758.08)</b>
<b>CASH BALANCE, JULY 1, 1976</b>		<b>30,189.95</b>
<b>CASH BALANCE, NOVEMBER 1, 1976</b>		<b>\$ 17,431.87</b>

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 I.L.C. EXPANSION FUND RECEIPTS      \$ 967.12      \$222,204.29  
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## COMPARATIVE FIGURES

BUDGET OFFERINGS NEEDED	\$20,994.00	\$ 83,976.00
BUDGET OFFERINGS RECEIVED	14,920.94	58,868.69
DEFICITS	(—\$ 6,073.06)	(—\$ 25,107.31)

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 BUDGET OFFERINGS, 1975-1976      \$20,903.07      \$ 62,438.75  
 DECREASE, 1976-1977      (— 5,982.13)      (— 3,570.06)

Respectfully Submitted,  
 Lowell R. Moen, Trustee's Treasurer  
 B. J. Naumann, Chairman