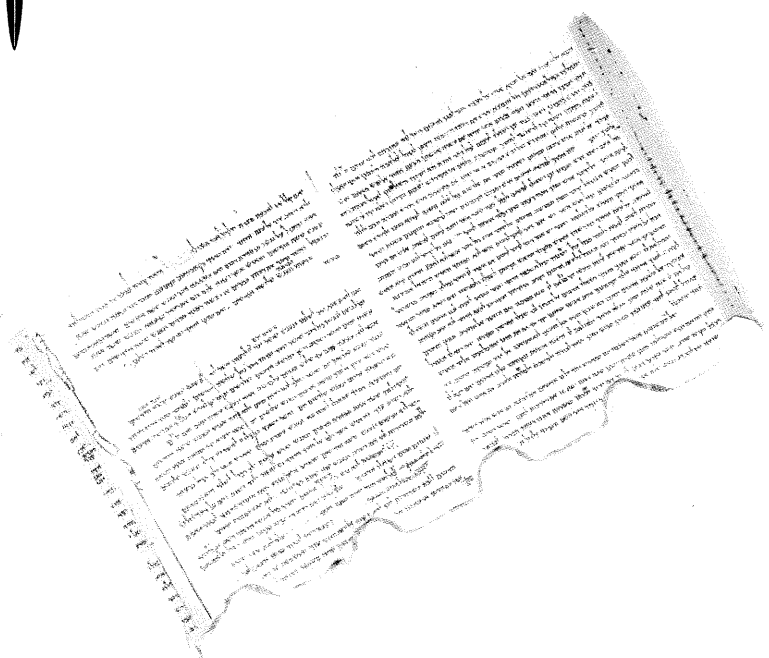


Volume XVIII No. 3

September 1978

ISSN 0360-9865



The

Lutheran

Synod

Quarterly

LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY

Theological Journal of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Edited by the Theological Faculty of  
Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary  
Mankato, Minnesota

Editor: Pres. Theo. A. Aaberg

Managing Editor: M. H. Otto

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Subscription Price: \$4.00 per year

Address all subscriptions and all correspondence to:

LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY  
Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary  
447 N. Division Street  
Mankato, Minnesota 56001

## F O R E W O R D

There are several changes to report regarding the Quarterly. Prof. J. B. Madson replaces Prof. G. E. Reichwald as Book Review Editor. We thank Prof. Reichwald for his many years of service in this capacity. While the Quarterly is not in a position to review all the books that should be reviewed, Prof. Madson will seek to concentrate on thorough reviews of a few of the new publications that are most noteworthy and pertinent to us.

Mr. Carl Seebach, acting manager of the Lutheran Synod Book Co., has printed the Quarterly for many years. The Lutheran Synod Book Co. is now out of the printing business, and so the Quarterly will be printed by a commercial firm in Mankato, at least for the time being. We thank Mr. Seebach for his many years of service.

This issue includes the sermon delivered at the opening of the current school year, the first year in our new seminary building; also an article on "The Threat of Cults to Christian Family Life," by the Rev. Donald McElwain, Lay Minister of St. Paul's First Lutheran Church, No. Hollywood, California. Dr. David P. Scaer, editor of the Concordia Theological Quarterly, Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, has kindly given us permission to reprint his article, "Should Children Go to the Communion Rail for a Blessing?" Rounding out the issue is a report by Pastor Paul J. Haugen, Belview, Minnesota, on a series of lectures which he heard delivered in Minneapolis by Dr. Carl Fr. Wisløff. Dr. Wisløff has been active for many years in church circles in Norway, especially in the Menighetsfakultet (an independent seminary which has trained a large number of the Lutheran pastors in Norway).

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Sermon Delivered at the Opening of the  
1978-79 School year of  
Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary

Pres. Theo. A. Aaberg

Text: "He must increase, but I must decrease."  
(John 3:30)

Dear friends in Christ, and especially students of  
the Seminary:

You recognize John the Baptist as the one who  
says, "He must increase and I must decrease." You  
also recognize the special nature of John's calling  
as the forerunner of the incarnate Christ, so that  
his words fit a unique situation.

Yet what he says, namely, "He must increase but  
I must decrease," is also true for every Christian  
in the service of Jesus, and true especially for  
every pastor, teacher, or missionary in the church.

These words of John were in reply to his dis-  
ciples who came with the report that he was "losing  
ground" to Jesus of Nazareth. "Rabbi," they say,  
"he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou  
barest witness, behold the same baptizeth, and all  
men come to him." Not only is John losing out to  
Jesus, but there is the implication that John is  
partly to blame for having given Jesus such a good  
recommendation when the two were together beyond  
Jordan.

In reply, John patiently explains how they  
themselves had heard him say earlier that he was  
not the Christ, but was sent to point him out to  
the people. What is more, John declares that so

far from being jealous or hurt over Jesus' increasing popularity he was happy, a joy which he likened unto that of the friend of the bridegroom.

There was nothing wrong then that people were turning to Jesus rather than to John. This was precisely according to God's will and plan: "He must increase, but I must decrease."

So it continued to go in John's life as he continued to direct more and more of his followers to Christ as the Savior, and this pattern gathered momentum until it finally resulted in John's imprisonment and his grisly earthly death at the hands of Herod.

This whole matter of John the Baptist's ministry as expressed in the words, "He must increase and I must decrease" can be made to sound quite pat -- in fact, a little too pat -- as though it were all a very simple matter for John: no doubts, no trials, no temptations, no struggles, no failures, no sin -- just Christ increase, John decrease.

The Apostle Paul is a similar case. He says, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." He says he has "suffered the loss of all things and counts them but dung, that he might win Christ."

What John and Paul say about Christ, and their own lives in relation to Christ, is true. But we also have to remember, for example, what Paul says about another law, the law of sin warring against his members and the wretchedness it brings to him as sin gains the upperhand at times, as he says, "The good that I would, I do not, and the evil which I would not, that I do."

John is confessing his sins, including no doubt also sins regarding his calling, when he says he has

need to be baptized of Christ, that he isn't worthy to loosen the laces of Christ's sandals, and he is confessing his faith in Jesus as his Savior from these sins when he points out Jesus "as the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

What we have then, both in the calling of John the Baptist, and in that of the Apostle Paul, is this great faithfulness to their divine call coupled with 1) humble repentance over their sins, 2) faith in Christ as their Savior, and 3) a daily striving throughout life to be faithful and ever more faithful to their calling -- John the Baptist to this that "He must increase, and I must decrease," and St. Paul, that Christ "might have the preeminence." (Col. 1:18)

Now none of us is the Messiah. Nor are we John the Baptists or Apostle Pauls, but we do gather as those who have been brought by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel to a confession and repentance over our sins and to faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior from those sins. We gather, as God's children, His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. We gather as servants of Christ, ready and eager to do His will.

John the Baptist's words can therefore serve us well as one of the guiding principles in our life of Christian service. "He must increase and I must decrease."

We should not dismiss too quickly the need for self-denial in our service to Christ, as though it presents no great problem in our life. Pride is deep-seated in the Christian's sinful flesh. Not a little of the trouble which arises in the church militant comes not from without but from within the

Christians themselves at the expense of Christ and the Gospel. Since we are today observing the opening of the seminary, we trust no one will be offended if we point out that the problem of pride, of self-exaltation, is every bit as great a temptation for the clergy as it is for the lay member.

County Judge Thatcher, in Mark Twain's Adventures of Tom Sawyer wasn't of the clergy, but you might remember his visit to Sunday School anyway, and how everybody started to "show off" when he arrived. Mr. Walters, the Superintendent, began bustling around, giving orders, delivering judgments and directions wherever he could find a target. The Sunday School librarian ran around with his arms full of books, spluttering and fussing wherever he went. Young lady teachers bent so sweetly over the heads of pupils that were being boxed moments earlier, and young gentlemen teachers gave little scoldings, etc. All the teachers seemed to find lots of business up at the library and pulpit, and that three or four times. In the meantime the boys and girls were busy showing off too. And what about the good judge? How was he reacting? Mark Twain says of him, "and above it all the great man sat and beamed a majestic judicial smile upon all the house, and warmed himself in the sun of his own grandeur -- for he was 'showing off' too." Preachers and teachers in the church can have the same affliction.

Another idea we should get out of our heads is that you can follow in John's footsteps of "He must increase and I must decrease" by daily saying a few pat phrases, or going through a few outward motions. You can utter 150 "Praise the Lords" or some such phrase every day and of itself it doesn't mean that you are doing as John the Baptist did. You can likewise perform any number of good works every day, even



deprive yourself of many things, but of itself it doesn't mean that you are following John's principle of "He must increase and I must decrease." Whatever we do or say must come from the heart and be a true expression of our love to Jesus as our Savior. Anything less is hypocrisy.

As we turn to our books in the Seminary in this new school year to learn new facts, to deepen our knowledge of divine truth, to grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we also need to give attention to our Christian life that that too may be developed and strengthened. And one of the things in which we must train ourselves, by the power of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel, is that of self-denial, of learning to give up things, even ourselves, for the cause of Christ.

It is not an easy lesson to learn. To learn when "giving ground" cannot be done without doing harm to the cause of Christ, and to learn when giving ground, "taking a back seat," as it were, involves only a personal loss which will enhance the cause of Christ, is something one learns slowly during one's lifetime. But the time to start learning is now in the seminary, if not before.

With close attention to the Means of Grace, Word and Sacraments, not only in an academic way, but using them in a close, personal, spiritual way, walking in repentance and faith, we as students and teachers in both seminary and college will grow also in that great virtue of John the Baptist, without which there can be no true service of Christ: "He must increase, but I must decrease."

To this end may God's blessings rest on our seminary and on our college in its new year. Amen.

\* \* \* \* \*

Heavenly Father, Thou didst send Thy Son Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth, who became one of us, and taking all our sins and guilt upon himself, died for us, so that in Him Thou art reconciled to us unworthy sinners. We truly have all things in Jesus who comes to us through the Gospel which Thou has committed to us.

Give us grace also in this new school year, to treasure that grace, to make and keep it our most prized possession, to believe it, to live according to it, and to teach it in all diligence by precept and example to our students.

Bless our students and their families as they prepare for the ministry. Let the year be a year of rich growth in the grace and knowledge of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Keep them and us in the truth, protect us and turn us away from all heresy and hurtful things. Grant that we as faculty members may make good progress during the year in the training of faithful pastors for future service in our congregations.

And now we come to our new building which looms large in our eyes as a great blessing and which is a great blessing, and yet which, when compared to the Gospel treasure which we have by Thy grace, is one of the least of our blessings. We thank thee for this gift of a new building. Let Thy protecting hand be over it day and night. Grant that it ever be used to proclaim the truth, and never for the spread of false doctrine or as a base or course of false prophets, whether professors or pastors.

Thou knowest our needs better than we ourselves. Do Thou tend to them this year, fulfill them according

to Thy mercy and grace, and give us the grace ever  
to be thankful for Thy blessing and to show that  
gratitude in word and deed.

It is Thy cause, O Lord. Do Thou look to it  
and take care of it. Amen.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE THREAT OF CULTS  
TO CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE

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"Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood; and it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven." (Deut. 29:18-20). These words were given by God to Moses at the time God renewed His covenant with the people of Israel after having cursed them for their disobediences. These words of God are also a warning to us, today; and we must look at them seriously. For today we are plagued with many cults and sects, some anti-Christian. In addition to the sects we are familiar with, such as: Mormonism, Christian Scientist, Jehovah's Witnesses, we are faced with more subtle, more dangerous cults. It is these that we will discuss in this paper. These are the cults aimed

mainly at perverting the youth of the nation, and seem to have a very peculiar attraction to them: therefore, these are the most dangerous to the well-being of the Christian Family. I will discuss them briefly one at a time:

1. Transcendental Meditation: Founded by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in 1959, here in California. Maharishi was a pupil of Guru Dev, the leader of a Hindu sect in India. It was not popular in the United States in the early days, but in 1960 the program was revamped so as to eliminate all religious vocabulary and adopt, instead, scientific and psychological terms. It claims not to be a religion. An examination of its beliefs gives the lie to such a claim. Besides the Hindu background, TM teaches that God is the impersonal "Creative Intelligence" which includes everything in existence. This God seeks happiness through creating. It teaches also that the purpose of life is happiness sought through an endless cycle of incarnations and reincarnations. This happiness is attained by divining within ourselves to discover this creative intelligence within us, thus ridding ourselves of ignorance of who we are. This discovery is "bliss consciousness." "Bliss consciousness" is attained only through the seven steps of transcendental meditation. In doing so the mind is by-passed and the seven steps are accomplished by a liturgy called the "mantra."

A closer look at this process causes one to realize that according to Maharishi each human works out his own destiny. Each one probes deep inside himself or herself and picks up only those thoughts which are in tune with God. Then one can use those thoughts in saying and doing the right

things. However, Maharishi also states we experience only three states of consciousness: waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep. He also says there is a fourth state: complete knowledge of Self alone, (Caps his!). In this state everything is cut out except god within! It is a state of pure awareness. However, it is not the last level: for the fifth level adds back to you awareness of the outside world; and the sixth level is that in which one experiences all the subtle qualities of the world with one's senses: One experiences the essence behind everything! And the final, seventh state (after a period of living in the sixth level so that perception becomes sharper), is the level in which (maybe) one grasps the subtlest of the essence of creation: pure absolute being. This state is called "Unity" by Maharishi. In this state one has turned one's self completely over to something other than one's self! Maharishi says this is surrender and submission to the almighty power of nature. This sublime state can be attained only through the pursuit of TM courses, all costly. Maharishi has a World Plan to be fulfilled in this generation through the TM technique of meditation. All areas of society are reached systematically through television, newspapers, and magazines. In some documented instances TM has government endorsement and has been incorporated into classrooms. The introductory lectures offered are free, but the courses cost a substantial amount. There is even a university in Fairfield, Iowa; and the movement (Maharishi) owns other properties, especially old resort facilities. Many low-paid volunteers are utilized in the evangelizing of the program.

In Maharishi's Hindu view, everything consists of the same nature. This means that when

all is said and done, there is no difference between God and Creatures, or between matter and spirit! Absolute Being includes everything in the universe, therefore, everything is divine! This implies that God's nature or essence is also created. The opening verses of scripture (Gen. 1:1) tells us: "In the beginning God created the heaven and earth," and John opens his gospel with the words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." A proper refutation of all Maharishi teachings is contained in 1 Cor. 15. Maharishi has not solved mankind's greatest problem - the fear of death. God IS distinct from His creatures (1 Cor. 15:38): "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body." Happiness is not mindlessness; it involves the mind by which one knows God and willingly obeys Him. And ignorance of ourselves is not the human problem; it is ignorance of the True (Triune) and living God which is the human problem. And TM in no way offers forgiveness of sins and salvation. I recommend you read 1 Cor. 15, keeping in mind the teachings of TM, and read especially verse 33: "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not: for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame."

2. Divine Light Mission: This also is one of the many Hindu sects of India; however, this particular sect has not been too popular nor has it a large following in India. It is a variation of the school of yoga, called: Siddha Yoga. All that is needed to know in this particular sect is that the "guru" is all important! (Guru means: venerable one, teacher). The guru is the means to "enlightenment" and if one is completely devoted

to his guru - abandoned -- the guru will lead to all necessary answers to all problems! Paran Sant Satgurudev Shri Hans Ji Maharaj was such a guru. He was wealthy, highly respected, and served a group of followers for forty years. And he formed the Divine Light Mission. He also was the father of Maharaj Ji, born in 1957, who is the present guru of the sect. Maharaj Ji has been "teaching celestial wisdom since the age of two! The sect was brought to the U.S. in 1971, headquartered in Denver. By late 1972 DLM centers (Ashrams) were springing up all over the United States. In May, 1974, Maharaj Ji (age 17) married a devotee eight years older than he. His marriage and life style (expensive cars, dancing, drinking, and the eating of meat) has caused division between Ji and his family back home in India. Briefly, the sect teaches that: God is sometimes personal and sometimes impersonal, and that He has appeared in the world throughout history by many incarnations, the latest of whom, of course, is Ji. Maharaj Ji has replaced Jesus Christ as the "Word made Flesh" (Jn. 1). Ji is a god with a human body, possessing all of divine light and knowledge. He is the fulness of divine love! The goal of human life is unity, which is accomplished by by-passing the mind and merging with the divine within us. Failure to accomplish this is due to ignorance. And, of course, the goal is obtained by the help of Ji and the DLM system of meditation. The devotees of the sect are called premies, and they enthusiastically recruit their friends to hear "satsangs" (holy discourse). Mahatmas serve as teachers and initiators and are quite adept at out-of-context quotes of the Bible and the books of other religions. The cult is propagated by the personal evangelism of the premies, by films, a newspaper, and a magazine. New converts must undergo a



thorough indoctrination, which amounts to nothing other than brain-washing. The premies live together communally and must give extreme devotion to Ji.

A deeper study of DLM makes one realize that what the premies teach and believe is that the Word is pure and perfect energy. It is God, it is cosmic vibration, the vibration which is inside all of us (demonstrated by the sound of our own breath). Since God is the force behind all things, He is the Divine Light in all beginnings. As such, He has come bodily in human form many times. Among the incarnations of God are: Vishnu, Ram, Krishna, Jesus Christ, and Buddha. Each one of these is one of a succession of Satgurus (Perfect Masters) for each age; one only per age! In refutation the Christian can only say that an impersonal god cannot be incarnate, and mindlessness cannot "decide" to do anything! For 2000 years the Church of Jesus Christ has known that the Word of Genesis and John is Christ Himself, the Eternal God, and has consistently rejected pantheism and other heresies. Only the Second Person of the Trinity; Jesus Christ, True Son of God became true man: God incarnate. And only Jesus Christ is the Savior of sinful humanity; and only He is Lord. The goal of humanity is not to contact the seed of divinity within ourselves, but to enter the Kingdom of God where Christ is Lord and King, not Maharaji Ji! He "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son: In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." I recommend a reading of Colossians 1 keeping the goals of the DLM in mind.

3. Hare Krishna: Also a sect imported from India. It originated there under the guidance of a man named Chattanya, but was imported to the United States in 1965 by the Swami Prabhupada. It caught on in Greenwich Village by public chantings. The Swami publishes a magazine: "Back to Godhead," and after the start in Greenwich Village the movement gained life and its influence spread to the Haight-Ashbury of San Francisco. An International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) has been established in Europe. The many writings of Prabhupada are eagerly devoured by his followers, and are really the heart of the movement. Briefly, the Hare Krishna teaches that Krishna is a personal god who is everything, so he can be present in anything. The real person of a human being is his pure soul, with the body being a culprit. Devotees are believers in reincarnation. The main purpose of life is Krishna consciousness: which is to understand Krishna and rebuild the forgotten relationship with him; therefore, mankind's big problem is ignorance of Krishna. Krishna consciousness is attained by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra with the mind being by-passed. Eight things happen when the worshipper reaches the cleansed state through chanting the mantra. Sixty-four rules of devotional service can then be engaged in, after the attainment of the cleansed state. Devotees live in temples under a strict Hindi cultural code with nine items of ritual followed. (There are about 30 temples in the U. S. and 35 in other countries - 1976). Sexual relations between married couples is limited to once a month, and the children are seldom raised by their own parents. Prabhupada is the authority for everything and in Krishna's representative, Devotees are under his total domination. Money is raised through street begging and peddling, especially "Back to Godhead."

Tapes and books are also available. Public festivals are celebrated and temple lectures and worship services are conducted so as to attract newcomers. Christian refutation is the same as already indicated for the other sects imported from the East. One thing that seems to be common in these sects mentioned so far is the chanting of the mantra. This is a devilishly contrived form of self-hypnotism, and is a very dangerous ritual that turns the performers into "zombies." As Pastor Marks has indicated in his paper on music, so too the chanting has a very similar effect.

4. The Unification Church: The so-called "Moonies." This sect was founded by Sun Myung Moon in 1954. This individual has a very unsavory past history. Born in Korea in 1920, he was the son of Christian parents (Presbyterian); educated in Waseda College in Japan where he studied electrical engineering. He claims that in 1936 he had a vision of Jesus Christ while on a lonely Korean mountain-side. In the vision Christ told Moon to "carry out My unfinished task!" This is important, for all of Moon's "theology" is based on the supposition that Jesus failed in His mission! Moon married, fathered a son, and developed a successful business. Living in North Korea after World War II, he associated with Pentecostal Christians in the underground church at Pyongyang. These Pentecostals developed a prophecy of a Korean Messiah, and Moon made that a part of his developing concept. He is a dynamic speaker, and soon had a following. He started working on a theological system called the "Divine Principle." He was excommunicated from the Presbyterian Church in 1948. About this time he was arrested and in prison for three years. He claims it was because he is anti-communist; the communist authorities claim it was for adultery and immorality.

Nevertheless, in June 1950, during an air-raid by the U. S. forces, he was able to escape and settle in South Korea. His first wife left him; probably because there is documented proof that he was guilty of adultery, with more than one female. So, in 1960 he married a young Korean woman named Hak-Ja Han. This is important to his "Divine Principle" for Moon teaches that he is "Father," Hak is "Mother" and together they are the "True Parents." Moon teaches that what is needed is complete physical redemption of fallen mankind, and so a perfect couple is needed to replace Adam and Eve. Guess who is the perfect couple? Thus is established also the perfect family, into which one gets by adoption: "The adoption of sons" of scripture. Moon has also rewritten human history. According to Moon, history is divided into separate stages, with a different divinely ordered plan for each stage. (Dispensationalism) He teaches there are literally 6000 years of human history (here he is close to conservative Christians). There are three stages of progress of mankind. First: the Providential Age for the Foundation of Restoration, running from Adam through Noah to the departure of Abraham for Egypt (1000 years). Along the way, Noah was designated by God to restore the human race, but it didn't work, because Noah's family failed him. The next choice was Abraham, but he blew it, too! However, Abraham and his progeny, Isaac and Jacob established enough for a new age to start: The Providential Age of Restoration, which lasted 1930 years. This brought mankind up to Jesus. But according to Moon, Jesus' mission failed, because of John the Baptist! John was supposed to clear all obstacles left by the failure of the others who preceded Him. John knew Jesus had come as the Messiah, but John lost faith! And gave up. So Jesus had to do John's job before He could do

His own! And Christ unfortunately was still doing the work of John when the Roman authorities crucified Him. This means physical redemption is impossible through Jesus, so finally Moon is the chosen one to complete the job of redemption. This presupposes many things, which are taught in Moon's "Principles." Jesus Christ is not fully God; God is single, not Triune; the Holy Spirit is a female spirit; Jesus Christ failed in His Mission, and Moon is the true savior of mankind around whom the world is to unite. There are about 7000 hard-core "moonies" in the United States. They live on a bare subsistence, while Moon himself lives high. Moon does all the thinking for his followers; they are, in fact, brain-washed. New converts to the sect are gained through aggressive personal evangelism, and massive rallies. The red carpet treatment is given political leaders of all nations where possible, and patriotism is emphasized, especially in western nations. The bottom line here is that nothing is too good for Moon, for he is the Messiah of the third stage of progress! I wonder how Moon handles John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten son, Jesus Christ, that Whosoever should believe on Him should not perish but have everlasting life"?

5. The Children of God: Founded by a former ordained Christian and Missionary Alliance minister, David Berg, here in California, 1968. It was during the period of unrest caused by the Vietnamese War, and Berg took advantage of the times to expound his "theology" and exploit the dissatisfaction with the "establishment." Berg, incidentally, is now known only as Moses David. He preaches the message of doom against all established authority, and particularly the United States of America's government and people. He also has a vitriolic hatred of the

established Christian Church and the Home. He has followers in 70 different nations (1976). Followers live in communes, known as colonies. Each colony is made up of 12 members, and there are 7 levels of leadership (even though the movement is "anti-establishment"). Immorality and even polygamy is practiced by some members. Money used to support the movement is obtained mostly by peddling of literature (all written by Berg); and all teachings and "doctrines" are dispensed through "Mo letters" (also exclusively the writings of Berg), and even though the cult uses the Holy Bible, it is interpreted through the "Mo letters," which hold a position of authority similar to that of Mary Baker Eddy's writings with Christian Scientists.

There is no systematic theology. All life revolves around the colony, which demands a complete break with the past. Relationships within the colony are temporary, and individuals are "transferred" around frequently, so as not to permit enduring relationships. All converts are gained through high-pressure witnessing, with the concentration being on young people, and especially high school and college age students who are dissatisfied with conditions of established authority. All converts are indoctrinated by obvious brainwashing. According to COG only this cult has the true and pure doctrine of the Bible. Salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ AND by forsaking all to follow COG. All humanity will be saved eventually, as will satan, who will be restored and "reinstated." The historical Christian Church (past and present) is false and satanic, and only the COG is the true expression of the Visible Christian Church. Berg blasts especially at parents; e.g., the following quote: "Your parents are the most God defying, commandment breaking,

insanely jealous rebels of all time who are on the brink of destroying and polluting all of us ... to Hell with your devilish system. May God damn your unbelieving hearts." I wonder how he reconciles this with the Fourth Commandment? He is equally violent in denunciations of the historical Church and of civil government. In refutation the Christian must refer to Romans 13:1-4: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same; for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." As regards Berg's position on the Church we must remember first: "Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27) and "Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Cornerstone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:19-22).

Time does not allow for great discussion on two other cults that are disturbing in that they are attractive to primarily the young, and those who feel a void in their spiritual lives and are searching. And so I will touch very briefly on these two, and their beliefs. First is The Way, International. Founded by Victor Paul Wierville, a minister of the Evangelical and Reformed Church (now the United Church of Christ). He is a graduate of Mission House College and Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary from which he received his Master's Degree in Practical Theology. The movement really grew out of the Jesus Movement, in that it picked up many followers from the Jesus People ranks. It was founded officially in New Knoxville, Ohio, in 1968. It ignores the doctrines of the Christian Church and uses a novel system of biblical interpretation for the purpose of behavior modification, with emphasis being stressed on the "Power for Abundant Living." It teaches Jesus Christ is not God. The Trinity is denied. The Holy Spirit is God, but not a distinct person of the Godhead. Salvation is a Legal transaction secured by the death and resurrection of God, and salvation is experienced by gaining the right knowledge, and this comes only in the various Bible courses obtained only from The Way. Behavior is modified by the "renewing of the mind," which also is nothing other than brainwashing. The other movement briefly touched on is the Local Church. This cult stems from the Little Flock movement in China as far back as 1940, with Watchman Nee being the dynamic teacher of the movement, and Witness Lee a gifted organizer. In 1948 Lee fled to Formosa and established the movement, which ultimately came to the United States in 1958 and formally established in 1962. The Local Church teaches that it is the only Church, and that the established Church



is Babylon of scriptures. It teaches that God's purpose is for God's uncreated life and human life be joined together in an intrinsic union through an alteration process which it called "mingling." The human and divine natures of Christ were mingled together, therefore, we each are to become a God-man too. This mingling takes place by by-passing your mind and turning to your spirit. The Lord Jesus is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, therefore, there is only one person in the Godhead. Historic Christendom is Babylon; therefore, the church of Witness Lee called the Local Church is the true church, and all other churches within a locality are false, and for fifteen centuries the truth of God has been totally obscured by the historic Christian Church. Lee even hints that before the end of the first century, A.D., the real truth of God for the Church was being submerged! According to Lee, there can be only One true church in a community, and that must be the Local Church, thus, the name. Lee says this calls for the "recovery" of the true church, which began with Luther and the Reformation; but even then the true church was not recovered. It was the beginning stage of five stages of recovery: 1) Fundamentalism, 2) Pentacostalism, 3) Evangelism, 4) The Deeper Life, and 5) the Church (Lee's, of course).

In studying the teachings and operations of the cults, I found them to have certain things in common, such as: 1) Each was founded by a human being, and within recent times; 2) Each claims it is the true church, stretching and twisting the truths of scripture to prove it; 3) Each is very vigorous in the evangelizing of people; 4) Each is aimed mostly at the youth, and endeavors to

alienate the youth from established Christian Churches, and even from family and other authority; 5) Each demands total or nearly total submission; 6) Each puts other writings of men on an equal basis with scripture, or eliminates scripture entirely; 7) Most try to remove followers from the mainstream of society by communal living or other forms of isolation; and 8) In each instance the founder stands for monetary gain.

The question now is: how can we Christians cope with these and other cults (such as Church of Scientology, which is fast becoming popular also)? The answer lies in family altars, regular church attendance, Bible study groups such as classes, Sunday School, cottage meetings, etc., using only source materials approved by the congregations of Synods in which we are in fellowship, and our own congregations of CAL. All of our people should be made alert to the dangers of the cults and concentrate on the doctrines of our beloved Lutheran Churches as set down in God's Holy Word and explained in the Formula of Concord, the Confessions of the Lutheran Church. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; Trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass" (Ps. 37:5). "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1), and "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

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## SHOULD CHILDREN GO TO THE COMMUNION RAIL FOR A BLESSING?

Dr. David P. Scaer

Worship customs in connection with the celebration of Holy Communion are not identical in every Lutheran congregation, and there should be no attempt to achieve absolute liturgical uniformity. Churches with the same confession, however, will tend towards a certain sameness. Certain customs have grown up in connection with certain beliefs. Lutherans, for example, kneel at the altar rail instead of standing as a confession of their faith that Christ's body and blood are really present in the Sacrament of the Altar. Certainly there is no prohibition against standing, and in certain situations standing is preferable. Those who are ill or inform receive the Sacrament standing, sitting, or lying down flat on their backs. Yet kneeling became a confessional sign against the Reformed who prohibited kneeling and insisted on standing or sitting in order to indicate their denial of the presence of Christ's body and blood. Thus, for Lutherans, kneeling at the reception of the Sacrament is not a mere custom without meaning, but a sincere confession of belief in the real presence.

In recent years the practice of children coming along with their parents to the altar rail at the distribution of the Sacrament has grown in popularity. A generation ago children were not seen at the altar rail. Previously the children were left in the pew with another adult, or the parents took turns in going up to the altar. Today it is quite common for parents to go to the altar with their children in

their arms to receive the Sacrament. Quite common, too, is the practice of older children walking along with their parents to the altar rail, but not receiving the Sacrament. In some cases, indeed, unconfirmed children, unaccompanied by adults, go with the communicants to the altar rail. In some churches all these children receive a blessing from the pastor by the imposition of hands. There seems to have been a gradual development from the bringing of infants to the altar by the parent as a matter of convenience to the final practice of blessing unconfirmed children of all ages at the altar. The encouraging of children to go up to the altar rail at the celebration of the Sacrament may have resulted from the same general school of thought that encouraged reception of the Sacrament by children at seven or eight years of age, before the time of confirmation.

Liturgical uniformity for its own sake is an unacceptable goal in the Christian Church. Doctrinal diversity has frequently been covered up by liturgical uniformity. Yet altering the liturgy has always been an effective method of introducing new doctrines into the church. Since liturgy is a very sensitive issue in the church from both practical and doctrinal points of view, the church must take time to reconfirm roots behind time-honored customs, like kneeling for the reception of the Sacrament, and to scrutinize new, though popular, practices in our churches, like bringing children to the altar during the distribution of the Sacrament.

Consideration of the place of children at the altar rail should not get muddled up with a discussion of who will sit with the infants while the parents attend Communion. The obvious answer is that each parent may go separately, or a nearby adult may serve as a five-minute babysitter. The Holy Communion is the celebration of union with

Christ and not a marital and familial solidarity. The real question is this: "Do children receive any extra benefit by going with their parents to the altar rail at the time of the distribution of the Sacrament?"

We are now getting into an area where practical and doctrinal questions demand equal space and at times can hardly be separated. Some will contend that a child who accompanies the parent to the altar will more likely be faithful in his reception of the Sacrament later in life. This is an opinion for which there is no solid evidence; at best it is only a pious and perhaps wishful opinion. It could be argued that remaining in the pew and observing from several feet or yards away is an equally, or even more effective, learning device than going to the altar. If the purpose is to inculcate in the children a rote, unthinking practice, then the custom really already stands condemned. If the approach of the children to the altar rail is chiefly an educational device, then another arrangement could readily be made. A place for the children in the front of the nave or in the sanctuary itself could be found so that they could watch more closely, without having them kneel at the altar with the communicants.

Lurking behind the custom of inviting unconfirmed children to the altar rail there seems to be some fuzzy thinking about the Sacrament. Those who observe this practice could easily come to the conclusion that proximity to the Sacrament assures a certain advantage. Thus, a child at the altar rail has a spiritual advantage that the child in the pew does not have. This view would have more in common with a Roman Catholic understanding of the Sacrament than a Lutheran one. A worship service in the Roman Church fast falling out of

popularity is the Evening Benediction, in which the congregation is blessed by the lifting up of the Sacrament but does not participate in it. Similar is the Corpus Christi holiday on which the consecrated Sacrament is paraded through the streets for adoration and the receipt of a blessing. Lutherans, whose respect for the Sacrament is unmatched, have objected to attaching any blessing to the Sacrament which is not derived from the bodily eating and drinking. The words spoken in connection with the Sacrament convey the forgiveness of sins, to be sure, even where no reception takes place. But the benefit of these words is not derived from the proximity to the Sacrament. The words spoken during the celebration of the Sacrament benefit everyone present, child or adult, at the altar rail or in the pew. These words are appropriated by all who are penitent. The believing communicant himself benefits from these words before, during, and after he receives the body and blood of Christ. It must be made clear that a child at the altar rail receives no special blessing because of his proximity to the Sacrament. Such a view is completely un-Lutheran. Behind such thinking lies the infused grace concept of Roman Catholicism, by which grace is a substance to be organically or substantitively communicated instead of being, as Lutherans hold, God's forgiving attitude on account of Christ.

In some churches the child receives a special laying on of the pastor's hands during the distribution of the Sacrament. The laying on of hands can be a very effective image in certain cases and occurs in Scripture. The laying on of hands symbolizes the direct applicability of God's word to the individual. In many German Lutheran churches the custom is properly retained in absolution, and in our churches it is used in focusing certain Biblical admonitions on those who are being inducted

into certain offices of responsibility, e.g., pastor, teacher, president, etc. The exact purpose of laying hands on the non-communicant children during the distribution of the Sacrament is somewhat elusive. No one has suggested that they are being inducted into an office. Nor is it possible to associate the action with the general absolution pronounced earlier in the service. Could it be that for some the child is, through the laying on of the pastor's hands, receiving the benefit of the Sacrament -- the forgiveness of sins -- without receiving the Sacrament? Thus, one who is too young to receive the Sacrament of the Altar receives instead a kind of Ersatzsakrament (substitute sacrament). Some might see a precedent in Jesus' own blessing of the children (Matthew 19:13-15), where he assures them of a place in God's kingdom with all of its benefits. The orthodox church, however, has never deduced from this pericope a separate sacrament of blessing children by laying hands on them. This pericope has been, rather, one course of the church's commitment to infant baptism. The Lord's promise of the inclusion of children in the benefits of His death and resurrection is fulfilled in their being baptized as He commanded. In the Sacrament of Baptism, the laying on of hands symbolizes a direct word of God to the child and his specific inclusion in God's kingdom because of the Lord's promises.

A certain amount of latitude, then, is allowed in church customs, but explanations for all practices should be available. As a number of children going up to the altar rail without receiving the Sacrament seems to be increasing, the time is ripe for someone to provide a thorough rationale for the innovation on the basis of the Scriptures, the Confessions, and the Lutheran tradition, especially with respect to the Sacrament of the Altar. The



issue is a delicate one because children are involved, but it is one which requires a theological rationale. The necessity to provide a theological explanation for any liturgical custom cannot be pushed away by mere sentimentalism. Sentimentalism can never pose as a legitimate theological answer to any question.

Printed with permission from: Concordia Theological Quarterly, April, 1978, Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

Comments on Dr. Carl F. Wisløff's Minneapolis Lecture  
on

THE THEOLOGY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER: STILL A LODESTAR

"The theology of Dr. Martin Luther is still a lodestar today." That is what Dr. Carl F. Wisløff claimed in his week of special lectures at the Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary in Minneapolis on October 9 - 13.

Dr. Wisløff is the leading living theologian in Norway. He received his doctorate in Germany and taught at the Independent Lutheran Seminary in Oslo for 40 years. After retiring in 1970, he has traveled and lectured throughout the world. He spent the last school year in Japan as a guest lecturer at a Lutheran seminary there. In October of this year, he toured the U. S. giving Luther lectures in Minneapolis, Fergus Falls, and Seattle, Washington.

The Independent Lutheran Seminary was started in 1908 in opposition to the liberal trends of the state church of Norway. At first it was supported by free-will contributions, but is now state-supported together with the state school of theology which is at the University of Oslo. The Independent Lutheran Seminary trains most of the pastors for the Lutheran church in Norway today.

Although Dr. Wisløff had reached pension age in 1970, he was not required to retire. He did so, though, because of theological trends in the school with which he could not agree.

I was able to attend three of his five lectures. The following is MY summary of those three lectures. I was not able to receive copies of the lectures, so this summary comes from notes I took during the lectures.

In the conclusion I will make a few comments on the lectures.

Is Martin Luther still a lodestar for us today? Martin Luther did not like that claim. He would rather have his followers call themselves Christians. Yet for practical reasons, Dr. Luther did use the term "Lutheran." And for practical reasons today, we use the word "Lutheran." It distinguishes for us those who believe and confess the doctrine as Martin Luther taught it from the Scriptures from others who would disagree with that doctrine. And in that sense, the theology of Martin Luther is still a lodestar today.

Martin Luther's theology is still a lodestar in his teaching on the Holy Scriptures. Dr. Luther maintained that Scripture alone is the authority and norm of our faith. Others may maintain that Scripture and tradition, or Scripture and reason, or Scripture and experience are norms of our doctrine. Martin Luther maintained that Scripture alone is the norm of our doctrine.

Some, today, try in a number of ways to make Luther into a Bible critic.

1. They say Luther taught that the Bible is its own interpreter AND its own critic. Luther, they say, set up a canon within the canonical books with his rule drawn from the Scripture themselves -- "Christum treigen": what does not teach Christ is not canonical.

But that statement taken from Luther's preface to James is gravely misused. For Luther, this rule together with apostolicity, helped decide which books belonged to the canon. Luther did NOT use it to pick apart the books already included in the canon. Luther did not use this statement as a canon within the canon.

2. Luther admitted to errors in the Bible. One example is Luther's comment that it seems impossible that 600,000 people could cross the Red Sea in two hours. Another example is Luther's comment on Zech. 9:9 where he says that Matthew made a mistake when he quoted this passage and referred it to Jeremiah.

What this simply shows, though, is that Luther recognized that there were difficulties in the Bible. Yet Luther's comments in all these areas, if taken in context, show an a priori respect for the inerrancy of the Scriptures. Luther points up the problems, suggests solutions, but never seeks to change the Scriptures. Something is to be believed just simply because it is written in the Scriptures. Luther leaves his suggested solutions open -- they are not binding -- but he never considers the inerrancy of the Scriptures an open question.

3. Luther sets Christ against the Scriptures. "If our opponents press the Scriptures against Christ, we will press Christ against the Scriptures."

What Luther meant by that statement is that the Bible must be interpreted as the Author would interpret it. Let Scripture interpret Scripture. If you quote Scripture against Scripture, you have misunderstood Scripture.

4. Luther takes a critical attitude against the

Old Testament. Luther maintained that we accept in Moses only what agrees with natural law.

Yet Luther did most of his lecturing on the Old Testament. That in itself should raise questions about the claim of his critical attitude of the Old Testament. Besides this, Luther always interpreted the Old in light of the New Testament. The reason Luther did not hold all Old Testament law binding is because the New Testament has freed us from the civil and ceremonial laws of the Jews.

Martin Luther's theology is still a lodestar in his teaching on the Church.

The Church is not something, but someone -- not an institution, but people. When Luther in his Large Catechism, Third Article of the Apostles Creed, defines the Church, he does not mention institutions or regulations, but who the Church is. The Church has institutions and regulations, but it is not these things.

Does the Church err? Luther would say that the Church does not err. But Luther would immediately ask, "Who is the Church?" The Church is those people who confess and believe the Word of God. Since the Word cannot err, then neither can the Church err.

That's why everyone should be obedient to the Church. For, since the Church is those who teach only according to the Word of God, to be obedient to the Church is to be obedient to the Word. If someone teaches contrary to the Word, he is teaching as a member of the devil's church. The church which teaches contrary to the Word is a counterfeit church -- a church that looks like but is not the Church of God.

Does that mean then that the Church ceased to exist in the Dark Ages? No, the Church did exist in the Dark Ages. That is why Luther taught that the Church needed to be reformed. The enthusiasts taught that the Church needed to be restored; Luther taught that it needed to be reformed. For the Church existed even in Rome, even where the pope is. In fact, Luther said, the pope, the anti-Christ, sits in the temple of God.

Another error often propounded today is that the Church must return to the unity of the first four centuries. The Church, shortly after Pentecost may have been united, but it did not last long. The unity was destroyed when men began to teach contrary to the Scriptures.

Today the ecumenical movement seeks to restore the unity without restoring conformity to the teachings of the Scripture. But when the Bible is not the final authority, then who is? Usually the tradition of the church -- in the Roman Catholic Church, their church fathers, etc. -- in the Protestant ecumenical movement, their various confessions, which then become not "binding," but "enriching." Modern theology seeks to lead us to believe that the Bible varies, but the Church does not err, i.e. the tradition of the Church does not err. Various traditions may contradict each other, but they do not err, because they all enrich us all.

Many reformations were started before, during, and after Luther's time, but Luther's reformation was singular in that he taught that the most important reformation was the return to the dogma of the Gospel as so clearly taught in the Scriptures.

Martin Luther's theology is still a lodestar in his teaching on Baptism and the universal priesthood.

We should not tell our people to return to their Baptism, but to return to the promise of their Baptism. The former is Sacramentalism and loses the Gospel.

High Lutheranism says that the new birth takes place in Baptism and no place else. So it condemns Pontoppidan who says in his catechism that there must be a new birth from the Word for regeneration from Baptism to be effective.

This teaching of High Lutheranism is a real hindrance to the teaching of conversion. Nothing can be more harmful to healthy preaching of conversion than harping on the saying that every baptized person is a child of God.

Luther does talk of new birth in Baptism, but also that new birth is an effect of the Word of God. There is regeneration in Baptism and regeneration by faith. Contrary to what some Lutherans say, the new birth can be lost. Then a new birth comes through Word and faith.

High church Lutheranism is similar to Roman Catholicism. It divides and distributes God's grace. It desires to distinguish between the functions of the various means of grace.

The Word of Institution is not taken by high Lutheranism as a proper key to the Sacrament. The important thing is the promise. Luther maintained that faith and promise are ineffective without each other.

We must be careful to distinguish between the effect and validity of Baptism. This is especially true in the case of Baptism of adults who are later

discovered to have been unbelievers and in the case of Baptism of infants. In the case of the hypocritical adult, the Baptism had no effect. Yet that does NOT mean he should be rebaptized when he repents. Baptism is always valid, even though its effect may not be worked in an individual because of his unbelief.

Do infants believe? Luther maintained they did. God can give them faith. In fact, Luther claimed that the most certain conversion is that in infant Baptism. An adult can plot to deceive; an infant does not.

Is faith a necessary condition of Baptism? Yes, it is, but we are not to base our Baptism on our faith, but to receive Baptism in faith.

Baptism is what makes us priests of God, not ordination or any other rite. To be a priest is to have access to God. We have access to God through Jesus Christ as He is given to us in Baptism.

There is no difference among Christians except in their office or work. Luther would say that we are all priests although we are not all ministers. To be a minister of the church is to have a call of the congregation to function in the office that is common to all Christians. Yet every Christian should act as a minister if he sees a need and if he is gifted for the task.

Today in modern Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogues, neo-Lutherans are saying that Lutherans never questioned the validity of the Roman Catholic priesthood and ordination. What a terrible thing for Lutherans to say. The Roman Catholic ministry



is invalid because they are ordained to a function that is not listed in the New Testament.

My comments: These three lectures were very interesting and enlightening. It was very evident that Dr. Wisløff sincerely believed that the theology of Dr. Martin Luther is still a lodestar today.

There was one area I felt that I either gravely misunderstood Dr. Wisløff or clearly disagreed with him. That was in his third lecture on Baptism. He seemed to distinguish between the new birth of the Word and the new birth of Baptism. He divided between Baptism and the promise of Baptism. Yet later he says that it is Roman Catholic to distinguish and divide between the functions of the means of grace. He also seemed to overlook the fact that the new birth of Baptism is not different from the new Birth of the Word. For Baptism is water AND the Word. The new birth of Baptism is effected by nothing else than the Word in Baptism.

So we can tell people to return to their Baptism. In fact, Luther taught that to repent of our sins is nothing else than returning to our Baptism. Besides, the empirical fact of their Baptism can bring people great comfort. It can do much to strengthen faith in God's grace and forgiveness in Christ. For since Baptism is a work of God it, together with the other means of grace, brings good hard evidence from God of His desire that we come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved.

Is the theology of Dr. Martin Luther still a lodestar today? "OH, yes," Dr. Carl F. Wisløff would say, "because the theology of Dr. Martin Luther is drawn from the Scriptures."

-- The Rev. Paul J. Haugen  
Belview, Minnesota

## A HISTORY OF "ELS" LATIN AMERICAN MISSIONS

1968 - 1978

It is significant that in the same year - 1968 - that our Synod celebrated it's 50th Anniversary, it also began work on its own in Latin America. In the most complete history written of our Synod, A CITY SET ON A HILL by Rev. T. A. Aaberg, and published in 1968, the following paragraph is found, concluding the section dealing with our Synod's Foreign Mission endeavors since its founding:

The ELS, since withdrawing from the Synodical Conference, has given limited financial support to the foreign missions of the Wisconsin Synod, while seeking to establish its own foreign mission field. Pastor Theodore Kuster, who volunteered to serve as a foreign missionary, has been called to this task, and is preparing himself for work in Latin America. The Rev. Adolph Harstad, Executive Secretary of the ELS Mission Board, and Pastor Kuster made a field survey in South America in early 1968, and will make their report and recommendations to the 1968 ELS Golden Anniversary Convention.<sup>1</sup>

A report and recommendations were submitted to the Convention that year, and the Convention took action: "WHEREAS, T. F. Kuster and A. M. Harstad, who toured Peru and Bolivia, South America in January and February, 1968 in the interest of exploring the missionary needs in these countries, have reported that between 800,000 to a million people live

in the approximately 120 different 'barriadas' of Lima, Peru; and WHEREAS, They report that very little Christian missionary work is being done among the thousands of people in these barriadas, and WHEREAS, The Mission Board recommends that the Synod begin missionary work among these people, therefore BE IT RESOLVED, a) That the Synod endorse this recommendation with thanks to God that He has granted us this opportunity for missionary work, and further b) That our missionary, Pastor T. F. Kuster, begin work in this area as soon as practicable."<sup>2</sup>

The Rev. and Mrs. Ted Kuster and their four children, and lay-workers, Mr. and Mrs. Orlin Myrlie, arrived in Lima, Peru on July 16, 1968 to begin their missionary work. The first objective was to improve their knowledge of the Spanish language, become better acquainted with the customs of the country, learn the culture of the people, and then begin gathering groups of people to hear the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. There would be no way to judge, before they started, the degree of success that the Holy Spirit would grant to their future teaching and preaching efforts.

The Board, together with Missionary Kuster, had decided to go the route of establishing an indigenous church. In a paper prepared by Missionary Kuster in November of 1972 he explains a little bit the indigenous principle:

What is meant by the term INDIGENOUS?  
Dictionaries would say: "Produced, growing, or living naturally in a country or climate; not exotic; native; hence figuratively, inherent." In missionary work this means that as a result of

missionary effort, a native church has been produced which is able to govern itself, support itself, and reproduce itself. . . We are not introducing a new and complex system into missionary work. The very opposite is true. To follow indigenous church principles means to return to the New Testament method - to the simplicity of the apostolic pattern. St. Paul established indigenous churches. The methods he used are those which we today call indigenous church methods."<sup>3</sup>

After several months of intensive language study at the Barranco Language School where all of our missionaries in the last decade have studied, our new missionaries started work among the people. In November of that first year they began by gathering small groups in Sunday School type sessions in various *barriadas* (shanty towns) surrounding the city of Lima. The Field-Secretary for Foreign Missions reported to the 1969 Synod Convention:

After ten months on the field there are 900 children, plus many parents and youth attending many weekly sessions. Thousands of tracts and Bibles, which are treasured by the people, have been distributed. In the Reynoso *barriada*, where we have rented quarters, regular Sunday services were instituted on Easter Sunday. In the *barriadas* of Mariano Melgar, Villa Maria, Pomplona, we have six straw-mat structures on property which our people have claimed for themselves. Weekly meetings have

also been set up at two spots in Santa Rosa. A Catechism for our own special use is in preparation.<sup>4</sup>

There was much enthusiasm for the work both on the field, and here at home, in that first year of operation. And although setbacks in the work would occur in the years ahead to mellow the first glow of success, the enthusiasm for the work would not diminish. The matter of getting established in the work, and actually getting started with teaching and preaching the Gospel was accomplished by our missionaries much sooner than either they or the Mission Board expected. The training of national workers and the beginning of national congregations soon became of prime importance. For this reason the Mission Board recommended to the Synod at its 1969 Convention that a second theologically trained man be called to the field. The Synod concurred, and Pastor James Olsen was called early in 1970, accepted the call, and was commissioned. He and his family arrived in Lima on May 30th, the day of the famous earthquake that destroyed large sections of northern Peru.

Early in 1970 two members of the Mission Board - Rev. Paul Anderson and Rev. A. V. Kuster - visited the field. They liked what they saw of the work our missionaries were doing. In a report to the Synod that year they said: "Our missionaries enjoy the confidence of many people in the barriadas of Lima. A thousand souls are being contacted in 11 spots that are served regularly. At two of these spots we have claimed our property and have erected wood-crate buildings. A powerful PA system (donated) has been installed on the four wheel drive car; this increased the 'audience.' Our staff possesses the alertness to search out and

capitalize on opportunities for effectiveness of the work. An increasing number of native workers are engaged in Saturday and Sunday School and Vacation Bible School teaching. A new mimeo machine (donated) has speeded up production of lesson sheets. Two young adult study classes leading to confirmation have been started. A simple Catechism is being published in parts. . . . The difficulties facing our missionaries and our Board of Mission are many, and ours is still a young mission effort. Yet it is unmistakable that the hand of the Lord has been mighty in blessing our venture in the Savior's name."<sup>5</sup>

The amount of \$27,300 was budgeted for Foreign Missions in 1970. It was in this year also that a reconditioned offset printing press was shipped to Peru from the U.S. It was a gift of a corps of contributors organized by Rev. Robert Moldstad. It was in 1970 that Miss Gloria Bublitz, the first Lutheran-Collegian-Supported volunteer came to Peru. She was to turn out to be an outstandingly successful worker in our Mission. The Synod took note of the fact that we were making use of lay workers in our foreign mission work with a special resolution at its 1970 Convention: "RESOLVED, That we recognize the valuable contribution these workers are making to the mission field, and that we give thanks to Lutheran Collegians and others who are enlisting the help and supporting the needs of such workers."<sup>6</sup>

In the Mission Board's report to the 1971 Synod Convention the observation was made that "the harvest in Peru is beginning to move from the sowing stage into that of reaping. Over a dozen baptisms and two dozen confirmations of nationals have been reported, including several young men.

Confirmation classes are being conducted continuously. Elementary Christian Day Schools are in operation in three locations, and evening High School classes have been started in various locations, taught by members of the staff in their respective fields of specialization, using existing facilities and materials on hand."<sup>7</sup>

Gloria Publitz completed one and a half years of volunteer work in the Mission, and returned to the U.S. during 1971 to become eventually Mrs. Peder Dressel. She presently resides in Rochester, Minnesota, where she and her husband are active in the WELS congregation of that city. She also is a charter member of the "LIFE" organization (Lutherans in Foreign Evangelism) which was organized by former volunteers at Western Koshkonong Lutheran Church, Cottage Grove, Wisconsin, May 30, 1976. Gloria was the first of our missionaries to actually take up residence in one of the poor barriadas, thereby demonstrating that an American can live among the people they serve in the lowest class of Peruvian Society, though it isn't essential to the carrying on of the work. When she returned to the States she spoke in about twenty of our Synod congregations, promoting the work of our new-found mission. Mr. Bill Krug replaced Miss Publitz on the field as the one supported by Lutheran Collegians.

Reformation Day, 1971, will go down as a red-letter day for our Peru Mission. On that day our church there was officially organized and legally established. The official name given the fledgling church was "Centro de Asistencia Social Ambulante de Los Pueblos Jovenes (Centro Cristiano)." We have from the beginning consistently referred to it as CENTRO CRISTIANO. The official name was adopted to satisfy the government. Officers from among the Peruvians were elected and installed in

a formal meeting. This ruling body has been called the Junta. One of the disappointments of Centro Cristiano's work has been the fact that the members of the Junta have really never taken an active role in directing the affairs of their church.

The year 1971 saw another lay worker go to the field. In November of that year Ralph Mozach, a WELS parochial school teacher from Milwaukee, came to the Mission as a self-supporting volunteer. While it was the intention of the Board and Staff that he would be in charge of coordinating and supervising Christian education on the elementary level, he discovered his niche in another area of the work, and that was to seek out and instruct adults. In this he was most successful.

January 31, 1972 was an important date for the young mission, as on that day seven adults were confirmed in the Christian faith. This was the largest number of people confirmed at one time since the opening of the Mission. At that time the membership totaled 30 confirmed, and 35 baptized children. In February of 1972 the Mission was the recipient of a gift of \$8,651. Of this amount \$5,190 was raised through local AAL branches in our Synod, and the Home Office of AAL, through its benevolence program, added the additional \$3,460. Most of this money was used for equipment in the mission's Central House located in San Gabriel.

The Orlin Myrlie family returned to the States after three and a half years on the field. They were given a warm reception at King of Grace Lutheran Church of Golden Valley, Minnesota, late in February of 1972. In March and April they went on an extended speaking tour, visiting about



thirty of our Synod congregations, and telling the story of our Latin American work.

In April of 1972 President of the Synod, Pastor George Orvick, made a ten-day visit to Lima to view firsthand the work, so that he could report back to the Synod as to work being carried out on our foreign-mission field. In June of that year he reported to the Synod: "We were most inspired by the work that is being carried on there by our missionaries. Our Synod can be very thankful to God for the dedication of its workers and for the success which they have had on the field. The methods employed by our missionaries have proven to be wise indeed. They have not been afraid to work with the people where they are and as they are. Living in the *barriadas* and working in them has shown the people that we truly have their welfare at heart. As a result our Mission in Lima has gained many more souls than some other missions which have been there longer. I am convinced that this is an area which is truly 'ripe' for the Gospel, and that we shall continue to win hundreds of souls there. I was also greatly impressed at the efforts of our missionaries to teach the people that this is their church, a truly Peruvian church, and that they are responsible for its welfare."<sup>8</sup>

Now another door opened to us in Latin America. Independent Lutheran Missions, headquartered at Deshler, Ohio, contacted President Orvick and our Mission Board asking if we had a missionary available to take over a newly begun mission in Managua, Nicaragua. A Rev. Herbert Swanson, who had left the LC-MS mission work in Central America over doctrinal concerns, and had begun an independent Lutheran mission in Managua getting support from ILM, would be coming home to the U.S. and he wanted someone to carry on the work. The main reason given

by Pastor Swanson for his return to the U.S. was the health of his wife. The Mission Board liked the idea of getting started in Central America, and felt it would be best to call a seasoned missionary to this new field of labor, and so the call was issued to Missionary Ted Kuster, who was finishing out a four-year term in Lima, and would be coming home on furlough with his family in June of that year - 1972. Pastor Kuster accepted the call. It was his intention to begin work in Nicaragua early in 1973, after completion of his six-month furlough. His plans would change due to an early departure from the field by the Swansons, and the earthquake that hit Managua in late December of 1972. Since the Mission Board had gone ahead with the decision to enter this new field before the Synod Convention had met, it was necessary to get approval for their action. This was done through the following resolutions at the 1972 Convention: "WHEREAS, The Lord has granted us the opportunity of serving Him in a new foreign mission field, and WHEREAS, Financial support has been offered by Independent Lutheran Missions of Peace Lutheran Church, Deshler, Ohio, and WHEREAS, The Lord has supplied willing workers, therefore BE IT RESOLVED, That the Synod ratify the action of the Mission Board in calling a missionary into this field, and be it FURTHER RESOLVED, That we ask the Lord to bless His work in Nicaragua."<sup>9</sup>

Rev. Robert Moldstad was then called by the Mission Board to replace Missionary Kuster in Peru. He accepted the call and moved with his family to the South American field in September of 1972. We had begun work in Latin America in 1968 with one theologically trained missionary and his wife, and one layworker and his wife, working in one country. By the end of 1972, only four years later, we would be blessed with three theologically trained men on the field, and two layworkers, and now would

be working in two countries instead of one. The Synod had in June of that year taken note of these blessings by resolving: "that the Synod hereby express its gratitude to the Lord of the Church."

The Field-Secretary for Foreign Missions could report to the 1973 Convention the good news that "the growth of the church in Lima has been pleasingly significant during the past year. Membership increased from 85 to 280 souls. Many baptisms and confirmations were performed." Of special interest during this year was the work begun in a little village in the Andes Mountains north of Lima, called Pacclon. Our missionaries were introduced to this village by a resident of the village who had come to visit friends in Lima. There was a noticeable receptivity to the Gospel by these mountain dwellers. And work in this village would bring a new dimension to our work in Peru, as we would now branch out and do work both among the *barriada* dwellers in Lima and also among the people in the mountain villages. Because of the family ties between the *barriada* dwellers and those who remain in the mountain villages, it is only natural that we should be working both areas.

A new volunteer arrived on the field in Peru in the fall of 1973 in the person of Vicki Miller. She would be the third Lutheran-Collegian-Supported volunteer. Ralph Mozach returned to the States in 1973. Bill Krug had returned already at the end of 1972. An encouraging sign during this period of time as far as the growth and stability of our Mission in Peru was concerned was the fact that more men were becoming involved with the work of Centro Cristiano. In the early going of our Mission it was mainly women and children who were touched by the Gospel, but as we became more established husbands and fathers were becoming more receptive.

It was in 1973 that our work officially began in Central America also. Missionary Kuster had visited the people of the mission in Managua four times in 1972. He had made a visit there in April to assess the work and make recommendations to our Board of Missions. Then on his return for furlough from Lima in June he and his family stopped off in Managua to visit the Swansons. At that time things seemed to be going good for Pastor Swanson and the work of the Mission. Pastor Swanson's wife, who was having health problems, seemed to be OK, though somewhat nervous. Missionary Kuster recalls that about 80 people attended the worship service the Sunday he was there. In October Mrs. Swanson suffered a nervous breakdown, necessitating the early departure of the Swansons to the States. Missionary Kuster cancelled two weeks of his furlough time and went down to Nicaragua right away. He was not prepared to stay and take over the work at that time. He did meet with the male leaders of the church every day during his two week stay. Ruben, Oscar, and Salvador were equipped by Missionary Kuster with sermons and the know-how for conducting services, and taking care of the work until Missionary Kuster could return at the beginning of the year. November and December marked a gradual decline in the membership of the church, due mainly to a couple of things. Those who had been attending for the financial and medical aid that they had been receiving from Rev. Swanson left right away. Many of the other members split their loyalties between the national leaders who had been left in charge until Missionary Kuster could return. Then when the earthquake hit Managua on December 23rd, leaving things in a shamble around the city, Missionary Kuster made an emergency trip to the city on December 28th. During the two weeks he was there on this trip he located most of the members of the congregation, although they had been scattered hither and yon because of the quake. He assisted the people in getting food and water

and shelter, and conducted several worship services. The quake had been a terrifying experience, and there was a noticeable spiritual concern among the people. Upon returning to the States Missionary Kuster made preparations to move his family to Central America. They moved in late January. Because of the horrible living conditions and lack of schooling in Managua after the earthquake, the Board had decided that for the time being it would be best for the Kuster family to settle in San Jose, Costa Rica, about 275 miles to the south of Managua. Missionary Kuster made monthly trips up to Managua, conducting services and Bible classes, and instructing a couple of men who showed signs of taking on leadership roles in the church.

Mr. David Skogen arrived in Managua in late February of 1973. David is a member of our Synod Congregation at rural Princeton, Minnesota, and attended our Bethany Lutheran College and University of Minnesota. He also has a master's degree from the School for International Training at Brattleboro, Vermont. He had previous to this time worked in Nicaragua with the Ministry of Agriculture for a full year. He was fluent in the Spanish language, and knew quite well the culture of the people. He would end up spending eighteen months in Nicaragua, all the while assisting greatly with the work of our Mission. Shortly after the earthquake, offerings were taken up in our Synod congregations for assisting the people in their needs. Some \$20,000 was contributed to this Emergency Fund. Much of the money to begin with was distributed by Missionary Kuster to the members of the church in Managua. As time went by it was determined by Missionary Kuster and the Mission Board that the "hand-outs" from the Emergency Fund were causing jealousies, and bringing about a dependency among the people that was not healthy for the growth of an indigenous church. Direct "hand-outs" were

stopped, and the monies were used in more indirect ways to aid the people and the work. It should be noted that two generous gifts to this Emergency Fund came from outside our Synod. The WELS World Relief Committee sent a check for \$2,000 and a Protestant group at Menasha, Wisconsin, contributed \$1,000. The generous response to this appeal demonstrated once again the readiness of our people to "do good unto all men, and especially unto those who are of the household of faith." Galations 6:10

The Mission Board in its report to the Synod at the 1974 Convention stated: "This is our sixth year in the Latin American Mission work. During those six years we have passed through many doors, and turned many corners in the work. Even so we have much to learn in the matter of Latin culture and methods for carrying on the work in the best possible way. But we have one all-important thing going for us, and that is that our missionaries are equipped with the unconditioned Gospel to bring to the people. And it is the Gospel, and it alone, that "is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." Romans 1:16

A new lay-worker went to the Peru field in 1974 in the person of Sue Hawkins of Libertyville, Illinois. She attended Bethany Lutheran College. She had in the course of her college years specialized in linguistics, and was a valuable one-year addition to our staff on the field, as she chiefly did translation work for our Mission. She was sponsored financially by her home congregation, St. John's of Libertyville, then a member of FAL, and now of WELS.

There was a normal and steady growth of Centro Cristiano during 1974. Soul care numbered over 300. During their VBS sessions that year they reached

over 600 children, including about 25 teenagers. It was the stated goal of the Staff to attempt, during the year, to centralize the work in the barriadas a little more. Work continued in the mountain villages, particularly Pacclon. It was during this time that the members of the church in Pacclon began talking seriously about purchasing land and constructing a church building. A Cuna-Jardin (Day Care Center and Kindergarten) was reopened at the Mission House in San Gabriel. Missionary Kuster and his wife had begun one a couple of years earlier, which had taken hold originally with great success, but for lack of parent support was discontinued. The same fate would befall the new attempt at such an operation. 1974 was also the year in which inflation really hit Peru, and which has not let up to the present time. Shortages of various essential items in the economy arose. Beef, for example, became a very scarce commodity. Gasoline had to be conserved, making it necessary for non-commercial vehicles to be rested two days out of every week. This caused the missionaries to rearrange their work schedules to comply with this particular government law. This restriction has since been lifted, but gas prices continue to be extremely high.

Looking northward to our operation in Central America, it was in the summer of 1974 that the Kuster family, at the request of the Mission Board, left San Jose and moved to Managua. Conditions had improved since the earthquake, so that housing and schooling were available again, and it was the feeling of the Board that it would be better for Missionary Kuster to be closer to the action of our Mission in Managua, for supervising of the work and instructing the national leaders. David Skogen returned to the States from Nicaragua in August of

the same year. He had rendered a valuable service to the work while there, which the Synod took note of with a special resolution at its 1974 Convention: "WHEREAS, David Skogen has faithfully served in our Synod's Managua Mission for nearly two years as a self-supporting lay-worker, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Synod thank David Skogen for his faithful efforts, and be it FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Synod's members be encouraged by this inspiring example faithfully to support our Synod's mission program with their prayers, their letters, and their financial contributions."<sup>10</sup>

The growth of the Managua church was also normal and steady during 1974, so that it could be reported to the Synod Convention that soul-care (the church there was not yet officially organized) included 305, with 95 communicants. Work was also begun during the year in the town of Bluefields on the east coast of Nicaragua. Our missionaries were brought in contact with the villagers there through a young Nicaraguan woman, Rosa, who had returned to Bluefields after having lived in Managua for a time. While in Managua she had been instructed and confirmed a Lutheran in our Mission. The group in Bluefields is made up mostly of women and children. And while no formal church has been organized there, our missionaries have continued to make regular trips there to preach and instruct. Rosa has since dropped out of the picture, but a friend of hers by the name of Josephina has been instrumental in keeping children's classes going. Summer volunteers from the States have usually spent a couple of weeks teaching VBS in this village.

At this point we would mention something about the summer volunteers who have worked for our Mission in Central America. The first group of volunteers went down in the summer of 1973. They were Bethany College students who raised their own



financial support from their local congregations and interested individuals. They stayed about two and a half months. Though they were not able to speak the Spanish language, they did assist the missionaries in many ways. In the summer of 1974 the Synod's Youth organization (The LYA) took on its biggest project in history when it raised enough money to support four of its members as volunteer workers in Nicaragua. Then in 1975 three more Bethany students, these from the "Mequon Program," and the wife of one of them, went as self-supporting workers in Managua. In 1976 four Spanish language students from Lakeside Lutheran High School (the WELS area HS at Lake Mills, Wisconsin) and their teacher, Mr. Fenske, spent two months in our Central American Mission. These students had raised enough money for their support under what they called "Project 76." They raised their money through their own personal donation, through coat-checks at school functions, chapel offerings, and donations from individuals and organizations. During the 1976-77 school year students from the same high school have raised money through "Project JOY" (Jesus, Others and You) so as to be able to send seven students to work in our Central American Mission. While these short-term volunteers may have their disadvantages, not being fluent in the language and not being familiar with the culture of the people among whom they work, they nonetheless do accomplish something. And perhaps the greatest good that comes out of their summer's work is realized after they return to the States. The enthusiasm with which they present their summer's experiences to the people in our congregations here at home rubs off on the people sitting in the pews, so that they too become more interested in the work of foreign missions. Since the first volunteers went down to Central America in the summer of 1973, there have been twenty-one

young people who have spent their summers working in our Central American Mission. Some of them have worked more than one summer.

In February of 1974 Foreign Field-Secretary Rev. Norman Madson, and the Chairman of our Mission Board, Mr. Loyd Miller, made a three-week visit to our Central American and South American Mission fields at the request of the Board. It was their first on-the-site inspection of the work, and proved to be both instructional and inspirational. They both came home with a better understanding of the joys and disappointments our missionaries meet with. These two Board members would return to Lima in December of the same year to attend the first ELS Latin American Missionaries' Conference. Taking part in the meeting were Missionaries Kuster, Moldstad and Olsen, the two Mission Board members, the wives of the missionaries, and the two volunteers who were presently on the field - Vicki Miller and Sue Hawkins. It was a strenuous, but profitable five-day meeting. Out of the meeting came the first draft of "The Principles and Policies of the ELS Latin American Missions." These were gone over again by the Board and a sub-committee of the Board, and were submitted to the Synod Convention for approval at its 1976 Convention. The Convention directed that they be submitted to the Doctrinal Committee of the Synod for approval. At present they are being studied by that Committee. These Guidelines may be found on pages 76-81 of the 1976 Synod Report.

Missionary Robert Moldstad came home for his first furlough in December of 1974. He and his family remained in the States until mid-March of 1975. While he was away from Lima the indigenous principle of mission work that we have been pursuing was given a good testing. During his absence the work he had been doing, especially in San Gabriel,

was put in the hands of one of the National leaders, Julio Gonzalez. He handled his responsibilities very well, and has now emerged as one of the most capable and respected leaders in our Peruvian church. During 1974 our work in the mountain villages continued to be one of the bright spots in the overall picture of the work. Leaders from the village of Pacclon, where we first began our mountain work, began going to neighboring villages with the Gospel, without the assistance of our missionaries.

Following the first ELS Missionaries' Conference in Lima in December of 1974, Missionary Olsen and Field-Secretary Madson made a three day visit to Porto Alegre, Brazil at the invitation and expense of a Mr. Luiz Rauter, a concerned Lutheran Layman who had severed ties with his LC-MS church of that country, and was concerned that a conservative Lutheran Church be established in his city and country. After studying the situation on the basis of reports submitted to the Mission Board by Missionary Olsen and Pastor Madson, the Board did not think it feasible to begin work there at the present time. Since that time Mr. Rauter has been in touch with the WELS Board for World Missions, and though they have promised to give the work there a trial run, they have at this time not been able to secure a man for the field. Our Board recognizes that Brazil, as one of the emerging powers among the third world nations, is a ripe field for mission work. The language used there is Portuguese.

The church in Managua was formally organized on June 2, 1974. It took as its name "The Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches." In Spanish the first letters of the words that make up the official name spell the Spanish word, FIEL, which means "faithful." It is our sincere hope that the people comprising this Nicaraguan Lutheran Church will remain faithful to our Lord and Savior, and

to the blessed teachings of His infallible Word.

The year 1975 saw both fields stress the training of national leaders to eventually take over the teaching, preaching, and pastoral work among their people. In Peru much of the time of missionaries Moldstad and Olsen was given to the instructing and training of Peruvian men for leadership roles in the church there. Since most of these men are working, family men, who have to support their families, the instruction classes are worked into their busy schedules every which way. Most productive have been the two and three week intensive study periods, when these men have had a break from their occupational labors. Also in Central America Missionary Kuster continued to spend much time especially with the young man in Managua, Abelardo Gonzalez, who has assumed a leadership role among his people. Encouraging was the fact that when Missionary Kuster returned to the States at the end of 1975 for a six-month furlough, young Abelardo kept the group together and carried out his role as pastor and leader. In 1975 Missionary Kuster was instrumental in starting a school in Soluble, the barrio of Managua which contains our only church building. While it is not a Christian Day School in the strict sense of the term, the school is taught by members of Our Lutheran Church, and singing Christian hymns and Bible reading are part of the daily instruction. The financing of this school has been made possible mainly by money gifts from Faith Mission Society, and a small tuition that is charged the pupils.

In April of 1975 Mr. David Skogen came to Lima as an administrator in international social service. Soon after his arrival he got in touch with our missionaries, and already in May of that

year he was assisting with the work of our mission. After completing a contract of one year, and desiring to get back into full-time mission work again, he applied to our Mission Board. His request was handled at the Board's October, 1975 meeting, and the following resolution was passed: "RESOLVED, To engage David Skogen as a lay-evangelist on our Peru field, supporting him with extra-budgetary funds our Board has received." David was married in Lima in May of 1976, and shortly after moved with his bride to Chimbote, a city about 300 miles up the north coast of Peru. It was a staff decision that he begin work there. While in Chimbote he did Evangelism work, held instruction classes, and conducted worship services. He also made trips to Pacclon and Chiquian and other mountain villages where CC had made previous contacts. When our missionaries conducted intensive study sessions for the leaders of CC, David also assisted in this. We are grateful for the work he has done, and that on a very limited salary, even as we are grateful for the work of all the volunteers who have served on both fields during the past ten years.

Late in 1975 Dr. Ken Johnson, a young dentist from the WELS congregation at New London, Wisconsin, came to Peru as a self-supporting missionary. He assisted in the spiritual part of the work in addition to using his talents as a dentist among the poor people of the barriadas. He returned to the U.S. in May of 1976. During this furlough time he married, and returned to the field with his young bride in the fall of 1976. They remained in the work until June of 1977. It was deemed not necessary for the missionaries to live in the barriadas to carry on effective work among the people.

During 1976 a personnel change was made on the Peru field in the theologically trained members of the staff. Missionary James Olsen and his family returned to the States, according to a timetable that they had established a couple of years earlier. To replace him, Rev. Martin Teigen was called. He was commissioned at Western Koshkonong Church, rural Cottage Grove, Wisconsin in mid-October, and arrived in Lima the last days of that same month. His assigned work will be primarily teaching in the Seminary by Extension which we use in the instructing and training of the Nationals. Early in 1976 Missionary Moldstad and his family moved out of the San Gabriel Mission House and into a middle class section of the city. The Kusters, the Olsens, and the Moldstads had all taken a turn at living in this barriada Mission House constructed for the most part under the direction of Missionary Kuster in the years 1971-72, and with monies from the Manthei family at Petoskey, Michigan.

Missionary Kuster returned to the Central American field in June of 1976. He settled with his family in San Jose, at the suggestion of the Mission Board. He has since his return gathered a group around the Word and Sacraments in San Jose.

In January of 1978 Rev. David Lillegard, who had earlier accepted the call of the Mission Board to serve as the second theologically trained man in Central America, was commissioned at King of Grace Church in Minneapolis during the time of the General Pastoral Conference, and arrived with his family in San Jose to join our mission work force there.

As we conclude the first ten years of our Mission efforts in Latin America, the missionaries and the Mission Board recognize that they are still learners in the tremendous task of discipling the

nations. There have been fruits of the work, in that many souls have been won for the kingdom of God through the power of the Gospel. This we humbly acknowledge as the work of God's grace. There have been the failures, too, and these we attribute to the faults and limitations of human beings. We praise our gracious God for leading us into these foreign fields to spread His Word among the heathen. And, as we embark now on the second decade of this important work, let us pray with the hymnwriter:

May God bestow on us His grace,  
With blessings rich provide us;  
And may the brightness of His face  
To life eternal guide us;  
That we His saving grace may know,  
And what is His good pleasure,  
And also to the heathen show  
His riches without measure,  
And unto God convert them.

-- Norman A. Madson

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