



The DEAF LUTHERAN



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A Study in Contrasts . . .

"DEAF PEOPLE CAN DO IT"

By Rev. Donald W. Zuhn, Secretary
North American Missions Blind/Deaf
LCMS International Center
St. Louis, Mo.

In the past six months, I have had two experiences that I found very interesting--and very different from each other. I could summarize the first with the sentence: "DEAF

Alpha, Rochester, Receives \$100,000 from LCMS Forward in Remembrance

Alpha Lutheran church, Rochester, N.Y. (Rev. Mark Seeger, pastor) received a letter a few weeks ago with the wonderful news that their ministry would be blessed with a gift of \$100,000 to help buy or build a church building.

The money comes from the recent synod-wide appeal called "Forward in Remembrance."

FIR had planned to raise \$40,000,000 for its mission programs, but instead, it was blessed with almost twice that, or \$80,000,000 and the FIR directors decided that Alpha could benefit with some of the money.

We rejoice with our brothers and sisters at Alpha, who have received this gift from God to enhance their work in the Rochester area.

PRAISE THE LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD!

1984 EPHPHATHA CONFERENCE

The 1984 Ephphatha Conference will be held at Concordia college, River Forest, Ill. from Sunday evening, July 15 through noon Thursday, July 19.

This year's program will be determined by the program committee (Dixie region).

Costs will be approximately \$110 per person (double occupancy) or \$125 per person (single occupancy) which includes lodging, meals and registration.

PEOPLE CANNOT DO IT" . . . and the second with: "DEAF PEOPLE CAN DO IT!" Both of these are probably overly simplified, but I will stand by them for a moment.

The first . . . "DEAF PEOPLE CANNOT DO IT" was one impression that I gained about much of deaf ministry in European churches. During October I had the pleasure of attending the Third International and Ecumenical Seminar on Pastoral Care among the Deaf, held in Vatican City. About 100 pastors or church workers (about 40 per cent from Lutheran churches, 40 per cent from Catholic churches and the remainder from various reformed churches) gathered from all over the world for this seminar. Rev. Daniel Pokorny and I

DEAF PEOPLE CAN DO (continue on page 4)

Louis R. Kieffers, Pittsburgh, Observe 50th Wedding Anniversary on November 5.

Approximately 175 friends and relatives gathered in the basement of Trinity Lutheran church, Pittsburgh on Saturday, Nov. 5 to honor Mr. and Mrs. Louis R. Kieffer on the occasion of their Golden Wedding anniversary.

The couple were married on Nov. 4, 1933 in Wellsburg, W. Va. They have spent all of their 50 years together in the Pittsburgh area and where they were also former students at the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf.

Staunch supporters of their church and congregation where Louis has spent 18 years as treasurer, they also are involved in several organizations for the deaf.

Highlighting the happy occasion were letters of congratulations from President Reagan, Gov. Dick Thornburgh, and other prominent persons. Hosting the event honoring their parents were sons, David and Louis, and their six grandchildren.

Hearty congratulations!

REPORT FROM BRAZIL

Concordia School for the Deaf Porto Alegre, Brazil

". . . My Word . . . shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please . . ." Isaiah 55:11.

And so thus it was 17 years ago that a new missionary endeavor was begun in Brazil to bring the Word of God to the deaf of that huge country. The early days of the school at Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1966 saw much hardship and only the barest of essentials with which to bring the Good News of Christ and an education to the country's deaf youngsters. Poverty of the families with deaf children often precluded their very ability to even bring them to the school, even from short distances. Most had never seen the inside of a school building or knew anything about chastity and cleanliness, let alone even what rest rooms were for.

All that is now history. Naomi H Warth, who has been with the school since its inception, sent a very interesting Christmas letter this year in which she listed the school's blessings the past 12 months.

Now Thank We All Our God

Now thank we all our God
With heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom His world rejoices;
Who from our mother's arms
Hath blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love
And still is ours today.

Oh, may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us
With ever joyful hearts
And blessed peace to cheer us
And keep us in His grace
And guide us when perplexed
And free us from all ills
In this world and the next!

All praise and thanks to God
The Father now be given,
The Son, and Him who reigns
With them in highest heaven:
The one eternal God,
Whom earth and heaven adore!
For thus it was, is now,
And shall be ever more.

From a mere handful 17 years ago, the enrollment has grown to 140, with 15 children confirmed this year. Rev. Ely Prieto, who graduated on Dec. 11, has been called to be the first pastor to the deaf in Brazil.

There have been problems, it is true. The state endured a very serious flood; and inflation stands at about 200 per cent. Mrs. Warth says, however, that it was wonderful to receive the many gifts of love, including religious materials, German used books and clothing.

Two representatives of the Mill Neck Foundation, Rev. William Thompson and Mr. Norbert Koschmann visited the school on September 12 and as a result of their report, the Foundation made funds available to complete construction of a new school building, presently scheduled to be opened and dedicated on April 29, 1984.

The school was also able to complete publication of a book on Brazilian sign language called "Linguagem de Sinais do Brasil" and again, with financial assistance from the Mill Neck Foundation. The book has been a fantastic success with letters coming in praising it as an aid in communication.

We join the many friends of the school in giving praise and thanks unto God for His goodness to even the least of these, His Children.

West Hartford Has a New Pastor

Drayl D. Gehlbach, who graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in November has been called to be pastor of Lutheran church of the deaf in West Hartford, Conn.

A native of Lincoln, Ill., he is a graduate of Illinois State university with a degree in communications. After a year of working as a radio announcer, he enrolled at Concordia in 1979. His vicarage was served at Christ Lutheran church of the deaf/Gallaudet college in Washington, D.C.

Pastor Gehlbach is married to the former Janet Steinbach, a native of Austin, Minn. whom he met while she was a student at Gallaudet college. After graduating with a degree in psychology, she obtained a master of education (counseling) degree from Washington university in St. Louis last August.

Gehlbach was ordained into the Lutheran ministry on Dec. 4 in his home church in Lincoln, Ill., and will be installed at Lutheran church of the deaf in January.



Normal, Ill. Celebrates 35 Years

Christ Lutheran church of the deaf of Bloomington-Normal, Ill., celebrated their 35th anniversary with the theme of the fete being, "The Bells of Joy Ring . . . Thanks to God for 35 Years of His Favor." The chapel was decorated with a number of white bells, and three large bells--one with the symbol of God the Father, one with the symbol of God the Son and one with the symbol of God the Holy Spirit.

The Rev. Donald Zuhn was the guest speaker. Rev. Larry Larsen was the liturgist. J. Mel Morrison led the hymns and Susan Perhai read the Bible lesson. Members of the choir sang "Jesus Christ" which was specially adapted by them for the anniversary.

The first service was held in Bloomington/Normal on Jan. 5, 1947 by Rev. N. Paul Uhlig. Succeeding pastors were Rev. Delbert Thies (1956-1962), Rev. Orlin Anderson (1962-1974), Rev. Robert Rowland II (1974-1976) and Rev. Larry Larsen (1976-1982).

The last pastor mentioned, Rev. Larry Larsen recently accepted a call to American Indian ministry in New Mexico.

Lutheran Social Services of New Jersey to Sponsor Conference

"Your Congregation's Ministry With Disabled Persons" is the subject of the second spring conference to be sponsored by Lutheran Social Services of New Jersey. It will be held on Friday evening, March 23 and Saturday, March 24 at the new Hyatt Regency of New Brunswick.

Rev. Harold Wilke of "The Healing Community" will be the keynote speaker on Friday evening. On Saturday, for workshops will be geared towards establishing better relations between the church and disabled persons.

For further information, contact the LSS office at (609) 393-3440.

The crosses of Christians are the cords of God's love by which He draws us closer unto Himself.

Motels With "No Vacancy" Signs Are Nothing New . . .

By Rev. William A. Ludwig
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Seattle, Wash.

Nearly 2,000 years before motels gave it's "No vacancy" signs to many tourists, a similar notice was served by an innkeeper in Bethlehem: "No room in the inn!" NO room for the coming Son of God!

That innkeeper! It is more than possible that he was of God's chosen people, a church member, very important in the synagogue of Bethlehem. Yet, there was no room in his inn for the Gift of God's love. And no room in his mind and heart for HIM!

"And so God's Son was born in a stable, because there was no room in the inn. "Jesus came unto His own people, and His own received Him not." Wonder what that inn-keeper would have done had he known what was happening.

That inn-keeper of Bethlehem was the father of many so-called Christian who are living for themselves. They say they believe in God and Jesus, but they have NO time for church. In doing so, they answer without thinking, "No room!"

No room for Jesus in their thinking! No room for Christ in their living! No room for God's Son in their loving! No room for the Saviour in their time! And no room for God in their giving! Their thoughts and lives and time and gifts are crowded with earthly "things" that leaves no room for Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary.

But the new-born Christian is not the spiritual-child of the inn-keeper. He goes to church to thank God for each new chance to prepare room for his personal Saviour. In doing so, he says: "Take my life and let it be dedicated, Lord, to Thee." He has room for Jesus; He makes room for Jesus in his heart; for he has stood at the manger where Christ was born and, BY FAITH, has knelt before the cross on which that same Christ was crucified for him and for his salvation, and by the grace of God has become one of those of whom it is written, "as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe in His Name." John 1:12.

May each day in your New Year be Christ-centered.

Deaf People Can Do (continue from page 1)

were two of three representatives from American churches. (The third was Rev. Lawrence Bunde from the American Lutheran church). Talking to these pastors was most interesting, especially those from European Lutheran churches. Some rather large groups of deaf people gather for worship. But deaf ministry is mostly ministry FOR deaf people; hearing people doing things FOR deaf people. In one example, a deaf congregation of more than 75 people depends on a hearing "janitor" in a hearing church to open the church door for services on Sunday afternoons, to arrange the seating, to set up the altar for Holy Communion, and even to fix coffee and cookies for fellowship after the service. The impression was that **DEAF PEOPLE CANNOT DO IT.**

Sad! Thank God that deaf people in the USA and Canada have many opportunities to serve the Lord by working in the church: Lay reading, teaching Sunday School, being a church officer, or even serving coffee and cookies! Most of our churches are named "Lutheran Church OF the Deaf" because we believe that deaf ministry should be ministry BY the deaf or WITH the deaf, not only FOR the deaf and the work of pastors is to equip the saints of God (or, train them) for the work that is rightfully theirs.

Then during November, I attended a different sort of meeting. I was invited to serve on a committee planning for a workshop for the National Convocation on Evangelizing Ethnic America to be held in Houston in spring 1985. The organizers include deaf people in their definition of "ethnics"--people who are separated from mainstream America by language and/or culture. Also serving on this committee are two pastors (one deaf and one hearing) from church groups often called "Evangelicals." I want to share a case study told by one of those pastors about a deaf church in a medium sized city in the midwest . . .

The pastor of a hearing church, whose parents-in-law are deaf, felt a "burden" for bringing deaf people in his city to Jesus Christ. He invited a young man who had just graduated from a Bible college to join the church staff as minister for the deaf--without salary! This was 11 years ago. The pastor supported himself and his family by working at an outside job that brought him into frequent contact with deaf people. He began his ministry of teaching Sunday school class for the deaf and interpreting worship services for a small group of people.

After five years the deaf church had grown and now needed more pastoral care than the pastor could give in the evenings and on week-ends. He took a step of faith; he quit his outside job and began to work full-time as pastor. It was a step of faith because he relied only on the salary that the deaf church could give him. The mother hearing church provided space and only a little financial help to the deaf church.

The church continued to grow. Within a couple of years, it needed a place of its own. The members began looking for a building, while raising funds to buy one. They finally did buy a building, remodeled it themselves, and moved in about one year ago (when the congregation was 10 years old). The hearing church gave \$5,000 for the building, and the deaf church became a home mission church for the first time to receive help from the district for three years (maximum) in paying for the building.

This church of about 100 people pays its pastor a "comfortable" salary, supports all church programs, and gives a sizable amount for missions--and without any other outside financial help. The clear impression that I got: **DEAF PEOPLE CAN DO IT!** and even more surprising: This church is only one of several self-supporting deaf churches in that particular church body, which as you may have guessed--is not Lutheran.

How did that church do it? Some people might suspect that they "stole some Lutheran sheep" to build their church. In this case, I doubt it. There is no Lutheran church for the deaf in that city (and not even a preaching station, if I am correct). There is a strong desire on the part of the pastor and the people of the church to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others. **DEAF PEOPLE CAN DO IT!**

Most of the church members tithe (or, give one-tenth of their income to the Lord). Some might suspect that this church uses legalistic methods to "force" people to tithe. I am not able to answer "yes" or "no" to that suspicion. Regardless of why the deaf people of that church are tithing, notice that they are doing it. **DEAF PEOPLE CAN DO IT!** How many Lutheran deaf people give the Lord one-tenth of their income? How many Lutheran hearing people tithe?

We have a great challenge from our Lord: "Go and make disciples." I estimate that 80 per cent or more of deaf people in North



**Calling All Regional ILDA Presidents:
Concerning 1984 Regional Conferences**

The editor would like to publish in these pages an up-to-date list of all 1984 regional meetings for the benefit of our readers.

Such information should include the dates, site and city and state where the meetings will occur.

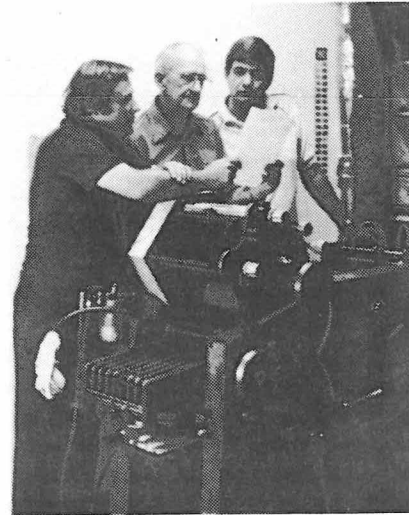
If your region is electing new officers and nominating candidates for national (ILDA) office, you should forward this information to the editor.

Your cooperation will be deeply appreciated.

Rogate Lutherans Branch Out to Serve Tampa Bay Area with Printing Needs

Rogate Lutheran Church, Clearwater, Fla. (Frank Wagenknecht, Pastor, Glen Borhart, assistant pastor) has started a new venture by underwriting the cost of setting up a print shop, to be known henceforth as the "ROGATE SILENT PRESS." Pastor Wagenknecht calls it a venture of faith by a member of his congregation, Ken Kostenbader and his wife, Carole, both of whom are skilled in printing, layout and art work.

The couple provide their skills free of



PICTURED left to right: Ken Kostenbader, printer; Norm Beinecke, president of the Rogate Deaf Congregation and Pastor Frank Wagenknecht of Rogate Lutheran Church of the Deaf in the Clearwater, Fla

charge to both Rogate and hearing churches in the Tampa Bay area, thus allowing Lutheran churches to have their printing needs done at a fraction of the cost of commercial firms.

A few of the items done by the new business are the printing of birthday cards for the deaf, I LOVE YOU stickers for letters as well as bumper stickers.

Interested readers can obtain quotes from Rev. Wagenknecht by writing him at Rogate Lutheran Church, 2447 East Bay Dr., Clearwater, Fla. 33546.

GOOD STEWARDSHIP

Good stewardship brings only joy, never trouble or regret. It honors God, upholds His work, brings Him glory, invites His blessings, places us under His generous promises.

We want YOU in the ILDA today!

*Rejoice with us in Christ's love!
Fill out and send in this membership application today! !!*

ILDA Membership Application

Put your name and addresses on the line below. Cut out and mail to Jackie Kemper, ILDA Treasurer, 1343 Graham St., ST. Louis, Mo. 63139. Membership fee: \$5.00 per year. Make money order or check payable to Jackie Kemper. DO NOT SEND CASH! Thank you.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP DESIRED

Active Associate Sustaining

Deaf People Can Do (continue from page 4)

America are NOT disciples of our Lord Jesus. And I am convinced that, if the church is to succeed in the work of making disciples of deaf people, it must be deaf Christians doing that work. It may seem to be an impossible challenge, but I am also convinced that with the power of the Holy Spirit, DEAF PEOPLE CAN DO IT!

Do you agree?

NOTHING IS FREE — OR IS IT?

By Rev. Roy Dahman
Memorial Lutheran Church
San Lorenzo, Calif.

FREE! Got your attention, didn't I? It's funny how that little word grabs our attention. Every one wants something for "free."

Business knows this. Advertising is full of "freebies." But, is anything really "free?" For example, my mail always seems to have a "personalized" letter promising to give me a "free gift"--cash, a TV, or a car! All I have to do is attend a sales presentation.

Beware! Sure, I might get some cheap gift. But, the odds of getting the big gift is usually only 0.001 per cent or less. That means if 100,000 people go to the sales presentation, only 1 (one) will get the big gift. But, the business has the opportunity to sell their product to all 100,000 people. Wow! That's good for the business. That's just my point. They want to get your money for something you may not want or need, or cannot afford. If they wanted to give you a really free gift, they would send it to you without trying to sell you anything, right?

This kind of thing makes some people say, "NOTHING IS FREE!" In business things, I would agree. But, as a Christian, I do know of ONE thing that is really FREE--that is, God's grace. Take a look at Romans 5:14-17 and 6:23 and Ephesians 2:7-8.

God has everything HE needs. We can't give HIM anything. But, God wants to give us everything HE has. So, God gave us HIS Son to suffer, die and rise again to life. Now God gives us faith in Jesus Christ so we can have forgiveness of sins and eternal life. That means we will enjoy ruling with HIM forever in heaven.

God's gift is really FREE! (No tricks or strings attached). Now, as we enter a new year, we want to remember God's precious Gift to us at Christmas just past, in the birth of HIS Son. As Christians, we receive that gift through faith. For God's FREE GIFT, we can only praise and thank HIM. Let us begin the New Year with these words of praise and thanks in our hearts.

JOY and PEACE!

Too many people are willing to carry the stool when there is a piano to be moved.

1987 Convention Theme Suggestions Being Solicited by Word of God Lutheran Church

Let it not be said that Iowans allow any grass to grow under their feet! Plans are already under way in Cedar Rapids by Word of God Lutheran church to host the 1987 ILDA convention. A fund has been established with contributions from the 1983 Fall Festival at Word of God.

Readers are being asked to submit ideas they feel would be appropriate for the 1987 convention theme and to send same to the church at 1515 -- 29th St. N.E., Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402.

Five new adult members were welcomed into



All of the new members live in the Cedar Rapids area. Photo: Back row left to right--Thomas Eaton Sr., Rev. Mueller, John Skidmore; front row left to right--Pamela Eaton, Sheri Pohlman, Jennette Skidmore.

membership at the church on Nov. 20, 1983. John and Jennette Skidmore announced their Christian faith and were baptized; then they joined Thomas and Pamela Eaton and Sheri Ann Pohlman in their confirmation vows.

Following the worship services, they were welcomed by the membership with a Thanksgiving potluck meal and a special cake presented to them in their honor.

DR. JOHN A. KLEIN DIES

Dr. John A. Klein, 95, retired director of the Lutheran School for the Deaf, Detroit, Mich., passed away recently in Texas.

The editor regrets that further details are not available.

Dr. Klein is certain to be remembered by his many former students who are scattered to every corner of this country and elsewhere.

We extend sincere sympathy to his bereaved family.

Rev. Clark R. Bailey Concludes Thirty Years in Ministry

By Clarence F. Schulz
Our Saviour Lutheran Church
Detroit, Mich.

October 16, 1983 was a special Sunday to honor the Rev. Clark R. Bailey who had completed 30 years in the ministry to the deaf. Members of Our Saviour's Lutheran church (Detroit) surprised him with a cake and a check, and a letter of congratulations.

Rev. Bailey has served congregations in Denver, Colo., Des Moines, Iowa, Oakland, Calif. and presently in Detroit.

A 1953 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, it appears evident that the Lord has abundantly blessed his labors in the Lord's vineyard.

\$4,800,000,000,000,000,000,000

Do you know how much four sextillion, eight hundred quintillion dollars would be?

That's what the widow's mite (Mark 12:41-44) would be worth today if the "mite" had been invested in the bank of Jerusalem savings account and drawing 4 per cent interest semi-annually.

If a bank on earth can multiply the widow's gift so much, just think what God can do with what we give of ourselves to Him. The money you give to the church is not spent and forgotten.

Your giving is not just to pay bills today, it's to build for eternity!

Matthew 6:19-21: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

NO, NOT TODAY

The Sunday school teacher was explaining to her class about heaven. When she finished, she asked everyone who wanted to go to heaven to raise their hands.

Everyone responded with a raised hand, except little Johnny in the last row. "Johnny," the teacher asked, "Don't you want to go to heaven?"

"No," replied the little boy, "my mom told me to come home after Sunday school."

CONGRATULATIONS, DOROTHY . . .

The staff of THE DEAF LUTHERAN and many friends wish to offer hearty congratulations to Miss Dorothy Sparks, a member of Bethlehem Lutheran church, Omaha, on her nomination as an Outstanding Young Woman for 1983. This honors young women all over the nation who show skill in their work and are active in serving their communities.

Many will remember Miss Sparks as one of the members of the "Sonshine Singers," a group which has appeared at ILDA conventions and regional conferences.

What God Cannot Do

Does God have limitations? Is there anything God cannot do? A seminary student, wrestling with that difficult question, posed it to his professor in the form of a riddle: "Professor, can God make a rock so big that He cannot pick it up?" To which the professor wisely responded, "Yes, . . . and then He would pick it up anyway."

Our heavenly Father is a most wonderful God. We look upon Him as being Omnipotent (all powerful; almighty) Omnipresent (being everywhere, in all places simultaneously) and Omniscient (knowing all things, even what we are thinking) and infinite. Still God does have limitations . . . self-imposed restrictions that He has place on His own activity.

For one thing, He will never act contrary to His promises; He has never broken a covenant that He has made. Nor will He ever act contrary to His written Word . . . and He will never release individuals from the consequences of (and responsibility for) their person choices in life.

This explains why Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of prophecy, God's only begotten Son, the Messiah, could be rejected by Israel. God would not force the nation to accept Him if they chose instead to reject Him. But though they are free to make the choice, they were powerless to escape the consequences of that choice.

Where in your life has God made His will clear to you through His Word, pastoral or parental counsel . . . or prayer . . . and yet you are resisting it?

Zechariah would be the first to tell you, and perhaps Jonah as well, that it is dangerous to say no to God.

SOMETHING SURE

Luther's anniversary is upon us . . . the 500th anniversary of his birth on Nov. 10, 1483. The postal department issued a special stamp. Why? Because he was such a great educator, I'm told. Luther's Little Catechism is still a masterpiece for religious education.

But his "Scripture Alone" emphasis is a legacy most Lutherans love above all else. The Bible is always "Something Sure."

Century follows century--there it stands. Empires rise and fall and are forgotten--there it stands. Dynasty succeeds dynasty--there it stands. Kings are crowned and uncrowned--there it stands.

Storms of hate swirl about it--there it stands. Atheists rail against it--there it stands. Profane, prayerless punsters caricature it--there it stands. Unbelief abandons it--there it stands.

Thunderbolts of wrath smite it--there it stands. Flames are kindled about it--there it stands.

This Scripture which endures forever is a book of life for life. Jesus said it so simply, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of ME. (St. John 5:39)

Stay with what is Sure . . . always sure!

"God our father has made all things depend on faith so that whoever has faith will have everything, and whoever does not have faith will have nothing."

--Martin Luther

Beatitudes for Friends of the Deaf . . .

Blessed are they who seem to know . . .
That lip-reading is difficult and slow.

Blessed are they who shake my hand . . .
And write notes to help me understand.

Blessed are they who know that I long
To hear voices, music and song.

Blessed are they who seem to see . . .
When I'm lost in a group of two or three.

Blessed are they who take time out . . .
To explain to me what they are talking about.

Blessed are they who are patient and kind.
That gives me comfort and peace of mind.

Blessed are they who have a smile . . .
That makes my life more worthwhile.

Blessed are they who make it known . . .
By faith in God's promises: I'll not walk alone.

Blessed are they who understand
As I journey to that City "not made with hands."

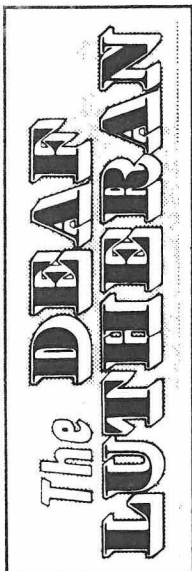
IS TOO MUCH FREEDOM BAD? MAYBE!

You hear it at work, at home, and even at church--people want to be free to make their own decisions.

Can someone have too much freedom?

Dr. Oswald Hoffman, speaker on THE LUTHERAN HOUR, says we are not to do anything we please. True freedom has its limits, created out of God's loving wisdom.

The man who rows the boat generally doesn't have time to rock it.



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