

GO!

by Robert A. Grebe

[50th Biennial Convention – WELS, Martin Luther Prep School, Prairie du Chien, WI, August 7-11, 1989]

Dear friends of our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Go to the bathroom, go take a shower, go eat breakfast, go to work, go to lunch, go home, go shopping, go for a walk, go to the movies, to the doctor (and if you run a red light on the way, go to court), go to college, go to war, go on vacation, go to bed, go to the grave, go to heaven or go to hell.....WE SURE ARE A PEOPLE ON THE GO!

And, while we are feeling the pressure to go! go! go! from all around us, we hear yet another voice calling and at the same time commanding.....“As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you.”

Who is that?

These words, as recorded in John 20:21, were the first words spoken by Jesus to His disciples shortly after His victory over death as he triumphantly appeared to them behind those locked doors where they were hiding in fear of the Jews; those words shall serve as the basis of our deliberation today.

Let me repeat those first words again, “As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you.” In Mark 16:15, it is recorded thus; “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.” In Matthew 28:19, Jesus says, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations” and in verse 20, He promises us, “and surely, I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.”

I find that statement of my Lord to be very comforting and the command to GO in all three passages, to be very challenging.

The most natural thing in the world for the growing and glowing Christian is to go. We must go because we cannot get the wonderful sound of that compelling voice out of our heads. GO!!!

As a layman, I am privileged to have been chosen to speak to this body on the “Go” portion of our convention theme. I am directing my thoughts about this command of our Lord, especially to my fellow laymen. I would like all of you to consider my remarks in the following context.

As you “grow” in grace and knowledge through your studies of the scriptures, there will be a compelling urge for you to “go” and proclaim the good news of salvation in Christ, not only with your words, but also with your lives as they “glow” with His love.

Yes, the command is very clear. “I am sending you.” “Go into all the world.” “Go and make disciples of all nations.”

Who is this that says “Go?”

It makes a difference who gives an order like that. A vicious parent who beats the stuffing out of his kids can expect them to jump when he says jump. But, they will hate it and get out of there as soon as they can. And, once they get away, they will never jump again.

A general can order his troops to charge the hill on a suicide mission, but the odds for success are very slight unless the motivation is something much stronger than fear of the one issuing the order.

But, this commander is so compelling because he genuinely cares about both the people he sends and those people to whom they’re going. All of us are in the same basket when it comes down to it. I don’t like to admit it, but I’m a damned sinner just as much as you are. I honestly hate the words, “a lost and condemned creature” when they are applied to me...but they are true. By God’s grace, I’ve been privileged to be somewhat

successful in this world. Yet I know that doesn't count diddly when it comes to earning a spot in God's heaven. And the same is true for you.

The Bible says in Psalm 53:3, "Everyone has turned away; they have together become corrupt; there is no one that does good, not even one." I know that I fit that description and if I'm reading it right, so do you!

And the result of that sin is that we are actually separated from God. We don't belong to his family. We don't inherit his "estate," as it says in Isaiah 59:2, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God."

This was an intolerable situation to God and his love. So, he did something about it. Isaiah 53:5 tells us, "But He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his wounds, we are healed."

In other words, God worked out a plan with "GO!" written all over it...for Himself...that is. And when the time came to get up and go, the Son of God himself got up and went. He got up from heaven's throne, got down to earth, got up on the cross and then got up out of the grave as my proven Savior, winner in the struggle for my soul, the cause of my own adoption by my heavenly Father, and the promisor of heaven forever. He literally went to hell to keep me from going there. Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. I happen to be an adult confirmand and was led to Jesus through baptism at age 25. My parents were bitter because the Catholic Church excommunicated my mother for marrying a protestant. I never felt the need for a church connection, for all around me, I saw those who professed to be Christians committing acts far worse than those I did. It took the death of our eldest son, Roy, at age 2-1/2 and the strong faith displayed by my beloved wife, Rhoda, to open my eyes and force me to look closely and deeply into Christianity and I thank God often for his patient and guiding hand. My faith, through the Spirit's working, is now strong and firm...I believe the Bible to be the true word of God as it is written and no human wisdom can lead me from its pure saving message. Yes, I know that I cannot earn a spot in heaven. Jesus has done it all for me. By the power of the Holy Spirit, I believe in him with all my heart. And, I know that this link-up with Jesus, called "trust," gives me life forever.

John 5:24 says, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned...."

Yes, that is the one who says "Go"

I love him so because he loves me so! And, I know you love him, too. That's the major reason for your being here. You recognize the voice of the one who said, "GO!" It's the same person who said in John 10:11; "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

There's never been another voice like that on this earth. Others may describe this commander far more eloquently than I can; all I know is that I'm not lost any longer because of him. And every time he speaks to me in his word, I recognize his unmistakable accent of love; the voice tinted with kindness and filled with care. His heart is so big that he's got the whole world in it. And, he's got a plan to bring all of us on this planet into his kingdom where there is life, peace and joy forever. That plan can be summed up with one phrase, "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."

Whom do you think Jesus is talking to? I think we all know the answer to that question, right? There is a sense of urgency in that voice. Can you hear it? He has told us that he has no other plan to save the billions who don't know him. And they are dying at a rapid rate. It's time to "GO!"

Now I ask you, have you used all the time, all the talents and all the treasures with which he has blessed you and entrusted to you to promote the extension of his kingdom?

If tomorrow were to be judgment day (and it could very well be), and you had to face the Lord to give your report of your stewardship of your time, your talents and your treasure, would you be comfortable and satisfied with your report?

I submit to you that we would all fall short of the mark that He would have us strive for! Example: When was the last time that you spoke of his redeeming love for us to your brother or sister or to your friends,

to your associates at work, to your neighbor? How about to the stranger across the street or across town or across the country or around the world?

GO! GO! GO!

The message is clear. It is a task that is meant to be completed. It is not to be busy work for the church, nor a hobby for the most dedicated. He gives us all the message we need and all the power to complete the job and he's calling us to do the work. He's given the job to us. Yes, the message is clear.

How, Go with what?

Somebody has said that 2/3 of God is GO. Since He never sleeps or slumbers (Psalm 21:4), He is always on the GO. And, it's clear that he wants us to be on the GO, too, with proper timeouts for rest, of course. When you GO for God, you take the gospel. In our English language, the word "GO!" leaps out at us even from the thing that we are to take along, "Gospel." It's there, too, in the simpler version, "GOod news!"

I've read a lot of news magazines, news bulletins, newsletters and newspapers, but I've never seen better news than this; "Jesus loves me, this I know. For the Bible tells me so."

We don't have to take along any gimmicks, or any special sales techniques. There are no extra conditions, no tricks...just a message about a great and loving God who has sent his son to go to the cross for a people who had gone astray and were lost forever. The best part of the news is that he rose from the grave and promises us a similar experience! Maybe we can sum up the Gospel with a passage like John 3:16, "for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son.....," but it is a really big God. What is even more impressive is that this message has power to turn the switch on an unbeliever's heart from unbelief to faith. The Gospel is simply the most compelling force on earth.....it's dynamite! Romans 1:16 tells us, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone that believes." The power is there because the Holy Spirit is at work in the Gospel. We don't have to worry about how we are going to convert anybody. God takes the responsibility for that. He just tells us to share the message and he will do the rest, and there is much to tell. I know, it happened to me!

God is my Savior. He has washed me clean, reaching into the very deepest parts of my heart to forgive every sin I've ever done, to clean up even the sin of my being. As it tells us in Ephesians 1:7, "In Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."

He is my solid rock and my place of refuge. This he assures us in Psalm 18:2, "The Lord is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer. My God is my rock in whom I take refuge." I know I can lean on him when I'm not strong; I can find safety when I'm in danger. He helps me whenever I need it. He never leaves me alone.

He is my comforter. When I am hurting, he heals me; when I am anxious, he calms me; when I am in trouble, he reminds me that he is bigger than any trouble and he lifts me out of it. These are the promises of Jesus as he tells it to us in John 16:33, "I have told you these things so that in Me, you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble. But, take heart! I have overcome the world."

He is my good friend, whom I speak with often and who speaks with me in his word...always reassuring me of his interest and concern for me and reminding me of the wounds in his body, put there because of me. Listen to the words in John 19:34, "Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear."

He is patient with me, constantly telling me that he isn't through with me yet and that he's got something wonderful still ahead for me. In 2 Peter 3:9 it says, "...He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

God loves me very much and proved it with the ultimate gift, the sacrifice of his only Son in my place, saving me from hell so I can be his child and live with him forever. In John 3:1, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God."

Now who's going?

When we take a look at the commands of Jesus to “GO,” we see that they were some of the last words spoken to his disciples. He had spent three years training them. They were to be on the front lines of the struggle. But Jesus didn't plan to have the effort die out when the apostles died. Look at Acts.....see how the church spread. Actually, the apostles stayed behind in Jerusalem while the lay people spread out and took the gospel with them, starting small churches wherever they went. D. James Kennedy, in his book, *The Evangelism Explosion*, says that:

By A. D. 300, the church had shown such tremendous strength and virility and was spreading so swiftly, that it appeared the entire civilized world could be evangelized by A. D. 500. But something happened. Emperor Constantine, in the year 313, issued the Edict of Toleration by which the long agonizing persecution of the Christians was at last brought to a halt. In the following decades, numerous other edicts favoring the Christians were passed, until at last, the whole Roman Empire was declared by fiat to be Christian. Thus, millions of barbarians flooded into the church, bringing with them all of the pagan superstitions and heresies. They didn't even know the gospel. They had never experienced its transforming power and, of course, they could not go out and tell others about it. So, little by little, the idea arose that there was a division between the clergy and the laity and that this task of evangelism was the job of the professionally trained individuals. So, they decided to let ecclesiastical George do it. The Dark Ages followed! With only a few bright spots in the history of the church since that time, this deplorable condition has continued down to our day.

We must get back to the lay people going! But, it doesn't seem to be happening. We're not GOing! We're pew potatoes; sitting on our couches, chairs, hands and our pews. We must get on the move again, just like those early Christians that were so anxious to “GO” and spread the word.

I think there are at least three groups of us “pew-potatoes,” always has been and probably always will be. My fervent prayer is that there will be a significant movement into the “Go” group.

Group number one is, unfortunately, quite a sizeable one. They are those who call themselves followers of the Lord Jesus, but refuse to obey the Lord's command to “Go,” for one reason or another. They were given the same measure of time, talent and treasures, but like the servant who buried his master's treasure entrusted to him, they are unproductive. They want to be on that winning Super Bowl team, and reap the rewards and the ring, but they don't want to make much of a contribution or much effort for the team and coach. God forbid that you or I be counted amongst this group on judgment day.

The second group is by far, the largest. They are those who would hesitate, would procrastinate, would deliberate, would stall, would search for excuses, would pull a “Moses act” saying, “But God, why me?”

Back to the Super Bowl team comparison. These people remind me of the tight end who drops the perfectly thrown touchdown pass because he hears the thundering footsteps of the deep safety about to make wicked contact. Or the running back who fumbles a perfect hand-off because he saw the head-hunter waiting for him through the nice gap the line had opened for him.

I have no idea as to how the Lord is going to react to this group and their measured callousness to his command. I do know what he did with Moses and I would hope that he would be as gracious and forgiving with you and me if we were to assume this stance. I'm confident that he would give us another chance and I would pray that those of us that are in this group, would hastily get our act together and make a sincere, conscious effort to “Go” and do his bidding so that we can be pleased and anxious to make our report on that glorious day.

The Super Bowl team will be those in the third group who fit the description of the verse of the hymn we sang, saying, “Send me, send me.” They are the ones who will respond joyfully by saying, “Yes, Lord,

please guide me to use my time, my talents and my treasures to the best of my abilities and may that be to your glory.” “Yes, Lord, I will gladly go.”

What a joy it will be to be in this group and hear the Savior say, “Well done thou good and faithful servant.”

All three of the groups shall reap their just rewards of grace as it is promised to us near the end of the Athanasian Creed which states, “We will be judged by what we do.”

If we “glow” from the warmth of the knowledge of his saving love and don’t let that light shine before all mankind, we are as guilty of poor stewardship as the servant who buried his Lord’s treasure for fear of losing it.

Once again I say, as we “grow” in grace and knowledge through our studies of the scriptures, there will be a compelling urge for us to “go” and proclaim the good news of salvation in Christ, not only with our words, but also with our lives as they “glow” with His love.

Now I ask you, are we, as individuals, as congregations and as a synod, really doing all that we can do or are we guilty of using half-hearted efforts and rehashed excuses for not opening more home and world missions to spread that precious gospel message? Are we also guilty of not encouraging more of our children to go into the work of the Lord?

For 22 years as a member of the Board for World Missions, I have heard the plea from the fields for additional workers to expand the harvest. I know the Board for Home Missions could also open many more new mission stations if the resources of manpower and funding were available. Both missions boards have continually gone before each convention with urgent and justified requests to try to fulfill the Lord’s command of “Go Ye” and they have been repeatedly told, “Yes, you can ‘go’ if and when we balance the budget and we have a surplus of men and funds.”

I submit to you that this may not be a God-pleasing response and that we, as a synodical body, may be guilty of not trying hard enough. I even wonder if in God’s eyes, we may be classified as a “no go” body and I would ask this body the following questions:

1. Are we really totally committed to “going?” Let me share some statistics with you from our own 1988 Statistical Report.

This past year, we had a net loss of 297 communicants. This conveys the image of a “no go” synod.

It took 93.3 Communicants to gain one adult confirmand; again, a “no go” image.

In 1960, we had 829 congregations and in 1988 – 1,200, a gain of about 44%.

In 1960, we had 235,073 communicants and in 1988, 317,740, a gain of about 35%. This represents just a shade over 1% a year increase – not what I would term a strong “go” situation.

In 1960, all-purpose giving was \$67.30 per communicant and for synod Budgeting and Special, it was \$11.31, which represents 16.8% going to synod.

In 1988, the numbers are \$392.98 and \$51.23 to synod which is 13% – a definite “no go” sign.

That \$392.98 represents \$1.07 per day per communicant for all-purpose giving and of that, only 14 cents per day is for synodical purposes.

In the light of these numbers, can we, with a clear conscience, say that we are making an all-out effort? Also, our personal worldly possessions per household is increasing each year, (such as autos, TVs, video and stereo sets), and the amount of money we spend on entertainment and dining out is also rapidly rising. These are things which we could get along without so that we could double the synodical giving to 28 cents a day per communicant and easily double our outreach program in one year, without any special fund drives.

2. Are we committed forever to depend only on PBS (Pre-Budget Subscription) for synod financing, or will we honestly and sincerely attempt to find and use alternative funding methods and procedures?

3. Are we so bound by our Germanic traditions of ultra conservatism in all areas, including financing, that we use this as an excuse to coast along at a snail’s pace in our mission endeavors?

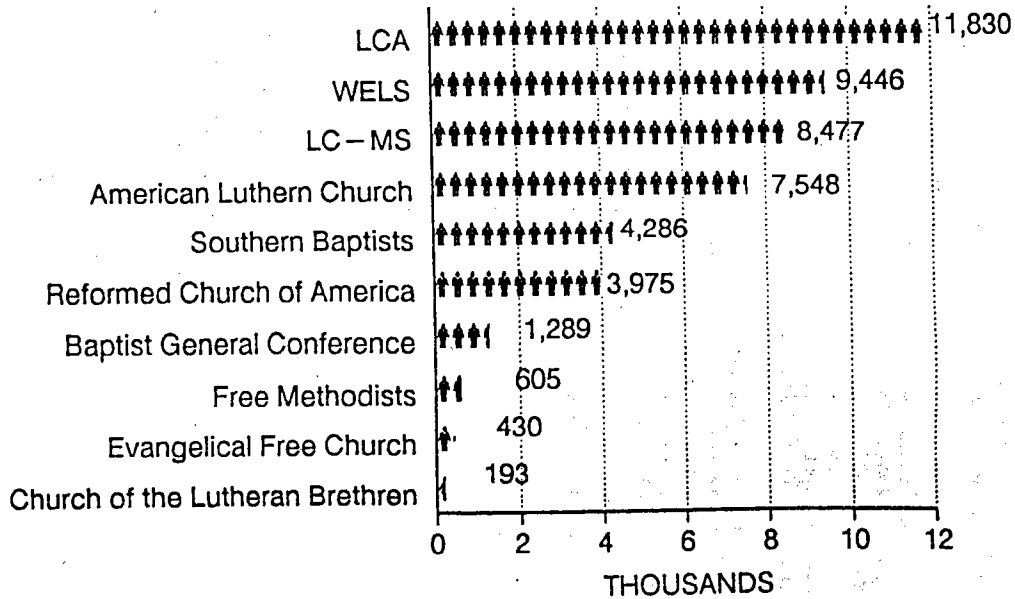
Who is to blame for our poor performance? Why not blame the pastors? I think that some of us laymen have been at least a little guilty of this, but I would remind you of two things.

First of all, we outnumber them by 300 to 1 and therefore, they are only 1/300 to blame. Secondly, I personally believe the pastors should not be fund raisers. That is not their job. Their job is preserving for us the word in its purest form. And they are under tremendous pressure to yield to a more liberal interpretation. Also, we are told in Ephesians 4:11-12, “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up.” I think they have done a great job on this score. If I were to fault our clergy at all; it would be that they have been too lenient with us about our responsibilities to obey the call to “Go” and I would ask that they “get on our backsides” about this.

Getting back to some statistics to illustrate our synod’s foot-dragging approach to its mission endeavors, I could quote figures from several other church bodies that would be even more revealing than the ones I’m quoting, but we have such a distaste for their doctrine and theology, it would cloud the issue. I know that the Evangelical Free Church maintains a very high view of scripture, as do some of the others in my graph. I consider them all to be Christian bodies, although we do not agree with them on a number of issues. The point I want to put across here, is that somehow, some way, these churches have found a way to grow quite rapidly and perhaps it would be profitable for us to study their methods and adopt some of them.

The following numbers are from Dr. Waldo Werning’s book, *Renewal For The 21st Century Church*.

MEMBERSHIP NEEDED TO SUPPORT ONE MISSIONARY ON THE FIELD



The figures I quoted should be evidence enough that we are in a “no go” mode.

But, my dear friends, all is not lost and we can “go” forward in a God-pleasing manner. I maintain that if fully informed, our WELS laity and clergy will meet God’s challenge. We must pray for more faith in God’s ability to move the hearts of our people. Remember the “reaching out” program? Many of us were positive that we would not reach the goal of 10 million, but we ended up with 22 million plus pledged and 21 million plus collected...“Oh ye of little faith!”

I also think we are too conscious of and too afraid of criticism from a small minority of verbal and generally, well spoken critics, who almost always oppose any change. This criticism always is directed at our synod leaders when they are attempting to do the Lord's work, whether it be a change in procedure or a new fund drive. Let's forget about them and the rest of us "go forward."

Now I have tried to paint a picture of our synod's mission position as I see it. It is not a beautiful one and I deplore having to be so negative. This is not my nature. I would like to now suggest some, (certainly not all), of the things that we can do to improve the situation. Please keep in mind that this is merely one layman's opinions and suggestions, but I do know that there are many of you out there who are in agreement with me and have expressed it to me through our WELS Kingdom Worker organization.

By the way, we are still seeking individual memberships in this new, exciting and active organization.

I firmly believe that the time has come that we as individuals and as a synod, take God's command of "go" more seriously and try to do some new things. I would like to suggest we do the following:

1. Pray that God would awaken a new, fervent mission spirit within us.
2. Pray for more faith in his promise that he is with us always and that his word will not return to him void.
3. Each of us should make a pledge to become more active and really get involved in our local congregations and in the synod's affairs.
4. We should keep ourselves acquainted with what is going on in synod by asking questions of our pastors about specific matters and by subscribing to and regularly reading *The Northwestern Lutheran*.
5. The synod is doing a much better job now of communicating its needs and its functions to us "pew-sitters," but the program needs to be enhanced and better promoted.
6. I would like to see each of us share our desire to accomplish the "great commission" with our fellow believers by strongly encouraging them to fulfill their role as a team player on our championship team.
7. Would a tithe be too much to ask for one who gave so much? I am speaking now of a tithe from your free time from working. Most of us work eight hours a day, 40 hours a week. We sleep about the same amount of time. What do you do with the other 40 hours? A tithe of that is four hours a week; one evening; one Saturday afternoon. How many more souls would be reached if we all did this one simple thing?
8. Dr. Waldo Werning's book, which I quoted earlier, states that Christians give less than 1% of their treasures to the Lord's work. I would ask each of us to carefully examine our spending and giving habits so that they would be more appropriately distributed to the one that gave his all for us.
9. Diligently seek out and pursue alternate methods and sources of financing. One that comes to mind would be to promote "faith missions" whereby an individual or a group of members of a congregation or group of congregations sponsor an existing or new mission project.
10. Utilize existing and new funding in a more imaginative manner. Example; take a million dollars, either in the bank or pledged, and utilize it thus. Commit \$850,000 to be spent over the next 10 years with a \$150,000 reserves (all calculations are based on an 8% interest factor). You could immediately send out two missionaries and would have \$123,754 per year to support them for 10 years. At that time, evaluate the program because the \$150,000 reserve has grown to be \$332,946 and would support the program for almost three more years. You can now decide to call them back or go out and raise some more money for their future support.

Go to whom?

Jesus has no small goals. He states that His purpose was to "seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10). His apostles gave up their lives trying to reach that goal. The world is a big place.

Ultimately, there are only two kinds of people...those who are saved and those who are lost. The saved, those attached by faith to the Lord Jesus Christ, have a single goal: To take the message of the gospel to the rest of the world...the lost. Like a firestorm of energy burning deep in the heart of every one of us, the desire to go

out to the lost with the gospel impels us to “hit the road” like the early laymen of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd centuries did, because their Lord told them to “GO” tell everyone.

We must Go to our weak and hurting!

Not too long ago, I was in the hospital for serious surgery. I greatly appreciated the visits of the pastor and vicar who came to see me. When you are flat on your back and helpless, you begin to see more clearly how little strength we really do have as far as life is concerned. The thought really hits home that the death rate still remains at 100% for the human race. It is only a matter of when, not if.

There are many in hospitals and nursing homes who urgently need to hear about their Savior Jesus before they pass through the valley of the shadow of death. And then, there are those of other cultures, those in prison, the thousands of lost souls wandering the streets without any home.

And our special children, the physically and mentally handicapped. They also have souls that are precious to our Savior.

Go to the lost in our communities!

Sometimes it seems as if we have lost faith in our Lord’s word when he tells us: “Whoever does not believe, stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son” (John 3:18). If those words are taken literally, as Jesus intended them to be, they say that our unbelieving neighbors are going to hell. They may be an All-American family, even vote Republican and fly or burn the flag, but they are still lost for eternity. And, every day that goes by is another lost day as far as their opportunity to have real hope in Jesus and to use their lives well for Him.

And yet, we delay. We don’t know how. We’re afraid of endangering friendships. We feel embarrassed. Maybe somewhere in the backs of our minds, there is the dubious thinking that somebody else might tell them, or that they might want to be saved because they see us go to church.....anything that might salve our conscience and excuse us from talking to them about Jesus. And then, we watch another TV show or rent another video so that we don’t have to think about them at all. And, we have found many new ways to spend our money on ourselves, while mission work goes unfunded.

We must Go to the world!

It is frightening to see the numbers climbing when it comes to worldwide birth rates. In my lifetime I’ve seen the world’s population nearly double. For us to remain stagnant, to even lose membership, is a major failing on our part and certainly a strong disappointment to our Savior who gives us life, salvation and strength for the major task of bringing in the harvest of souls.

The old adage of “out of sight, out of mind” probably applies here. Can you imagine the change coming in your personal support and activity of world-wide missions if every night you had to view a newscast showing the hundreds of thousands of people who died that day without faith in Jesus? Remember the newscasts about China and the slaughter of the students? Who of us didn’t go to bed those nights without haunting thoughts of the cruelty of humans to one another? But how many of us thought about their souls? Those who love Jesus love the souls of all for whom he died.

Now, why Go?

The Beach Boys singing group is closely associated with a friend of ours. We’ve noticed how crazy some ladies get over the singers. If, for instance, a singer kisses a scarf, the owner of that scarf almost faints with excitement and is quick to tell everyone around that “he touched it.”

Jesus has done more for me than just a little touch. He has made such an impact on my life that words cannot properly describe it. He has washed me clean, whiter than snow, from the inside out. He has given me not just a temporary thrill, but a real hope that lasts forever. I'm the one that must GO because only people who know the commander have any heart to follow the command.

St. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:16,18, "When I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!...What then is my reward? Just this, that in preaching the gospel, I may offer it free of charge...." That particular apostle was probably the most "outgoing" Christian who ever worked for God. He was always going out to establish new churches and then going back to make sure they were still going. Paul was all over the map. You could call him "Mr. Frequent Flyer." If he had had a car, can you imagine his mileage reimbursements? (Except he would have turned them down.)

We would love to have supported a worker like that. That's because we, too, feel the compulsion. It comes from the one who says, "GO!" It is a loving pressure, not from the outside, but from the inside. We go because Jesus wants us to go. And we want to go. Sometimes we are lazy and sometimes we're scared, and sometimes just selfish and unloving. But every time we think of Jesus, we also think of his words: "GO! Make disciples, baptizing...teaching." And then the firestorm in our hearts kicks up again.

I remember once when Pastor Edgar Hoenecke had spoken to one of these conventions about the need to reach the masses on the world mission scene. He spoke with a fire in his words, such compelling force, that somebody got up afterwards and, only half-joking offered a motion to have a 30 minute cooling-off period after any speech by Pastor Hoenecke before the convention could vote on sending missionaries out. I suppose he was one of those "head" persons who always wants the head to rule the heart. Perhaps he was afraid the convention would hock the synod office building in order to send more missionaries. I want to make a decision in the heat of passion rather than in the light of cool reason, could I propose a different approach? Rather than cooling off the hearts, why not stir them up...and then keep them stirred up when we all get home and make real and powerful impacts for once, instead of letting the synod business just be a report on a piece of paper? Don't you think it is time for a change? We're so cooled off now that we can hardly afford to send any missionaries out. We need the passion of our Savior to flood into our hearts and minds synod-wide. Remember, 15 cents a day per communicant, could double our whole synod budget. That's something to get passionate about!

In the business world, I have learned that where there is a will, there is a way. And so, the first order of business seems to me to be to seek and cultivate willing hearts for mission work. Our Savior said, "As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work" (John 9:4). I believe that with all my heart. I hope you do.

We also go because the world has no hope outside of Jesus. Only Jesus can make and keep the offer to overcome the world, even while we are in it, and in an even bigger way when we're out of it. He can make that offer because he has already done it!

And finally, there is the picture of the multitudes in heaven. I can't get them out of my mind. I hope I never do.

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with me and He will live with them. They will be His people and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. (Revelation 21:2-4)

How many will be there because you or I spoke to them about Jesus, or picked up their child for Sunday school, or mailed them a note, or prayed for them, or prayed for the missionary, or put something extra into "missions," or helped recruit a promising young person to work for Jesus, or made the decisions that please God at this convention and then went home and moved our whole circuit to see the importance of averaging five

world missionaries and 30 home missionaries a year to the end of this century? And if you join me, just think what we can do with the Lord's help!

Isn't it exciting that one person or family can have an impact that will reach across time and into eternity? Just think, after we get moving today, there will be some who will hear these words: "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' Whoever is thirsty, let him come, and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life" (Revelation 22:17). And, my dear friends, some will come because we have gone!

Let us now bow our heads in prayer.

Dear Lord Jesus, our personal Savior; as the Father sent you and as you have commissioned all of us to "go" and tell the story of your saving love and grace to all men, we beseech you to pour unto us, a deeper appreciation of that love and grace and create within us a strong desire to do you bidding. Also, dear God, grant us, as a synod, a unity of spirit and a oneness of purpose to carry out your wishes. This we ask in the name of Jesus, who went all the way to the cross to redeem us, Amen.