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AN EVALUATION OF THE
THEOLOGICAL CONTENT OF "THIS IS THE LIFE,"
THE TELEVISION FILM SERIES OF 1952-1953
PRODUCED BY LUTHERAN TELEVISION PRODUCTIONS

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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CHAPTER I

A BRIEF HISTORY OF LUTHERAN TELEVISION PRODUCTIONS

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod accepted the challenge of television with decisive action by its Board of Directors in the appointment of a special committee to investigate just what the role of the Church should be in utilizing this new medium. This committee held its first meeting on January 4, 1950. Those present were: The Rev. Prof. Leonard C. Wuerffel, Chairman, Mr. Oscar B. Brauer, the Rev. Herman W. Gockel, the Rev. Oswald Hoffmann, Mr. Walter W. Zarndt, Mr. Ewald Gutz, and Dr. Eugene R. Berterman, who was elected secretary.¹ The committee saw as its task the consideration of three important questions: 1) What is to be done by our church in the area of television? 2) How is this to be done? 3) By whom is it to be done? Through a series of six more meetings, five in St. Louis and one two-day session with consultants in Chicago, these questions occupied the sincere attention of the committee.

On June 28, 1951, an answer to the third question began to take shape in the organization of Lutheran Television Productions. Meeting at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, were

¹Minutes of the Meeting of the Synodical Board of Directors Television Committee Held at Medart's Restaurant [St. Louis, Missouri], January 4. [1950]

those men appointed by the Board of Directors to serve as a special Television Board of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Those appointed were: Dean Leonard C. Wuerffel, St. Louis, the Rev. Oswald Hoffmann, New York City, Mr. O. A. Dorn, St. Louis, Mr. Clarence Amling, Santa Ana, California, Mr. Paul Friedrich, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, Mr. Fred C. Strodel, Winnetka, Illinois, and Mr. John Fleischli, St. Louis. From these men the following officers and committee chairmen were elected: Chairman: Wuerffel; Secretary: Gutz; Treasurer: Dorn; Executive Committee: Wuerffel, Dorn, Friedrich, Fleischli and Gutz; Chairman Program Committee: Wuerffel; Chairman Sponsorship Committee: Strodel; Chairman Public Relations Committee: Hoffmann.²

Under the initial guidance of this group, together with Ian Smith, Executive Producer until July, 1952, the Rev. Herman W. Gockel, Religious Director, and Mr. Melvin Schlake, Executive Secretary, the television interests of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod crystallized in the program THIS IS THE LIFE.

The title THIS IS THE LIFE was suggested by the Rev. Herman Gockel to describe in a colloquial, yet Scriptural way, what the program is trying to show - that the Christian life is indeed the abundant life. The format of the program

²Minutes of the Organization Meeting, LUTHERAN TELEVISION PRODUCTIONS, Concordia Seminary [St. Louis, Missouri], June 28, 9:00 a. m., 1951.

is that of the situation drama featuring the members of a Christian family called the Fischers. This format was chosen because it has been proved to be the most successful of all television program formats.³ A program of this type is designed to attract the interest of every age group. It will allow the presentation of a solid, middle class, patriarchal household with which viewers may easily identify themselves. The device wherein Grandpa Fischer introduces each episode permits extreme elasticity of the subject selection.

An early statement by the Television Board elaborates on the purpose of THIS IS THE LIFE.

The ultimate purpose of all church activity must always be the glorification of our Lord Jesus Christ and the extension of His Kingdom. That, too, is the ultimate purpose of "This is the Life."

"This is the Life" seeks to achieve this glorious purpose in a number of ways, some of them direct and some indirect. We list the following:

1. It seeks to glorify Christ and to extend His Kingdom by acquainting the American public with the Gospel of redemption through the Savior's blood.
2. It seeks to glorify Christ and to extend His Kingdom by providing the American public with a witness to the power of the Savior's Gospel - in the Christian life of the Fischer Family.
3. It seeks to glorify Christ and to extend His Kingdom by opening doors to our pastors and members by an effective program of pre-evangelism.
4. It seeks to glorify Christ and to extend His Kingdom by serving as a mighty bell for our Church,

³Lutheran Television Productions Comprehensive Progress Report to Board of Directors of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod [St. Louis, Missouri], February 1, 1952 (mimeographed).

attracting the attention of the unchurched to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as a Church which is interested in them and in their problems.

With this statement of purpose in mind, and with a view toward getting audience reactions to such an effort, two pilot films were produced and premiered on Monday, January 28, 1952, at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. The general response to these films was highly favorable. Especially liked features, according to a questionnaire response solicited from the group in attendance, were the family setting, the realism, emphasis on life problems, good music, and skillful mixture of entertainment with religious thought. Grandpa Fischer and Emily, his granddaughter, were selected as the dramatically most proficient characters.

A direct result of this premiere showing was the report that the Board of Directors of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod had authorized the Television Committee to proceed with the production of a series of twenty-six programs at a cost not to exceed \$750,000. Family Films, Inc., Hollywood, California, producers of the two pilot films, were selected to carry on this work.⁴

To direct the promotion and publicity phases of the project, the advertising firm of Westheimer and Block in St. Louis, was employed upon the recommendation of Executive

⁴Minutes of Lutheran Television Productions, Lutheran Building, St. Louis, Missouri, February 1, 1952, 7:30 p. m.

Secretary Schlake.⁵ It was their task to publicize and clear public service time on television stations for THIS IS THE LIFE. The world premiere of THIS IS THE LIFE, also under the direction of Westheimer and Block, was held on September 4, 1952, at 9:30 a.m., in the Park Avenue Theater in New York City. Approximately 125 were present, including press representatives of newspapers, magazines, wire services, radio and television, as well as clergy and interested laymen.⁶

The initial showing of THIS IS THE LIFE on the DuMont Television Network was on September 9, 1952. By November 17, 1952, sixty-four television stations across the nation were scheduled to present THIS IS THE LIFE as a regular program feature.

During the week of July 7, 1952, an agreement was discussed with the National Council of the Churches of Christ in America regarding their endorsement of THIS IS THE LIFE, and their assistance in its promotion and the procuring of free television time. This agreement, assuring the Lutheran Television Productions Committee control of distribution and publicity, was ratified on July 15, 1952.⁷

⁵Minutes of Lutheran Television Productions, Lutheran Building, 210 North Broadway [St. Louis, Missouri], June 20, 1952, 2:00 p. m.

⁶Progress Report. Westheimer and Block [St. Louis, Missouri] to LUTHERAN TELEVISION PRODUCTIONS Committee. July 1 to September 15, 1952 (mimeographed).

⁷Ibid., p. 8.

One other facet of the over-all project outlined for THIS IS THE LIFE is under the direction of the "Telemission Committee", of which the Rev. William H. Millmer is the chairman. It is the task of this committee to integrate episodes of THIS IS THE LIFE with the program of the local parish. Through the District Mission Secretaries of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod local pastors are supplied with the names of the people in their respective areas who have written to St. Louis requesting the booklet "This is the Life." From contacts by telephone and in person it is determined how many of these responses to the program indicate possibilities for further mission work. A local committee is then urged to follow up this membership potential. The results of this endeavor reported by Pastor Hillmer on April 13, 1953, show the following:

Total number of people reported as unchurched - 8 per cent.

Total number reported as members of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod - 28 per cent.

Total number reported as members of some other Lutheran Church - 6 per cent.

Total number reported as members of other denominations - 57 per cent.

Not found, moved away, incorrect address - 1 per cent.

This chapter has been a brief attempt to assemble some of the pertinent facts concerning the organization of Lutheran Television Productions, its personnel and self-defined purpose and task.

⁸William H. Hillmer, "Letter to Victor Constien," dated April 13, 1953.

CHAPTER II

THE SCOPE AND SCHEME OF THIS THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

It is impossible to place the television film series THIS IS THE LIFE into any of the existing categories of motion pictures. Its producers do not conceive of it as a series of educational films, and the Church certainly did not commission its television committee to buy talent and script material for purely entertainment films, even if they were to be films of high entertainment quality. So somewhere in that undefined area where the elements of education and entertainment by films overlap are to be found the criteria for judging the consummate value of THIS IS THE LIFE. As will be indicated later, this is not the intent of this present evaluation.

In a sense, the episodes of THIS IS THE LIFE are documentaries. That is, like documentaries, they intend "to carry a lesson, perhaps even a warning or admonition."¹ The genuine documentary "does not rely on rehearsed performances, actors and stage settings. The actors of the documentary films are real people in real life situations." In this respect THIS IS THE LIFE evidences a deviation from the documentary technique. Although it attempts to portray "real people in real life situations," because of the demands

¹James S. Kinder, Audio-Visual Materials and Techniques (New York: American Book Company, c.1950.), pp. 220-221.

of dramatic proficiency, continuity and economy, THIS IS THE LIFE is executed by actors in rehearsed performances on contrived stage settings. To this degree the documentary effect is lacking.

THIS IS THE LIFE also employs some of the techniques of the "provocative film." This most recent type of film is designed chiefly for discussion purposes with film forums and councils. "As the name implies, this film raises problems or questions in such manner as to provoke frank discussions."² The film may or may not offer possible solutions to the problems raised. Evidently there will be no directed discussion after a film is viewed on a television set in a home, unless it is informally initiated by the members of the family or their guests. However, the episodes of THIS IS THE LIFE are planned to raise problems and questions. These are presented, not necessarily to stimulate discussion, but, in the end, to prompt the viewers to send for the booklet This Is The Life, written by the Rev. H. W. Gockel, religious director of the program. This further development of the Christian life is especially vital since the solutions to the problems raised in the stories involve more than can be adequately presented in the allotted time and under the limitations imposed by a dramatic format. THIS IS THE LIFE is "provocative" in that it invites, encourages, and

²Ibid., p. 228.

stirs up new interest in the Christian religion.

Since it contains some elements characteristic of both the documentary and the provocative film, THIS IS THE LIFE might be termed a "provocative-documentary" type of film production.

In evaluating a provocative-documentary film with both educational and entertainment features, it would be necessary to sample opinions from people in many fields of interest and occupation. A representative group of any determinable segment of the viewing population would have to be questioned. Reactions would have to be gathered on the theme, learning qualities, entertainment qualities, photography, sound, dramatic skills, and possibilities for personal identification of the film. Such a study would indeed make a valuable contribution toward improving future efforts, but such a study would be so tremendous that it would consume more time, energy and technical know-how than is available for the project at hand.

Therefore this present evaluation limits itself to the study of a single area. This is the question: What is the theological content of the individual episodes of THIS IS THE LIFE? To do this, each episode is treated as a single total experience. Involved are the members of the Fischer family, their relatives and acquaintances. Each experience is treated as a unit, consisting of three interrelated elements. These are: 1) An identifiable situation. 2) An

identifiable response. 3) The psychological process which unites the situation and the response.

A questionnaire was used in showing the films to theological students at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. This questionnaire attempted to determine, first of all, whether those who saw the film thought the story presented realistically a genuine experience, with the situation, response, and psychological process uniting the situation and the response clearly identified in the story itself. Since the films were designed primarily to reach the unchurched, nothing may be taken for granted about their background of understanding, religious or otherwise. So the film must carry its message clearly on its own. To determine whether those answering the questionnaire thought the experience was genuine and logically presented, these questions were asked of them: "1. Is the situation (the problem that confronts the personalities in this episode) adequately identified for the viewer?" "8. Is the psychological process which unites the situation with the response logically traced by dialogue and action for the viewer?"

Next, the questionnaire attempted to determine whether the viewers thought a theological interpretation has been made of these three elements in a unit of experience. This was done by means of these questions: "3. Is the situation identified theologically? In other words, is the situation evaluated for the viewer in terms of God's law and will for

man?" "7. Is the response identified theologically? In other words, is it clear to the viewer that the response has been offered explicitly because it is suggested by God in His Word?" "9. Is the psychological process which unites the situation and the response identified in terms of Christian motivation, so that the viewer realizes that the impulse to action on the part of a Christian comes from a heart moved by the love of Christ, Who bought us to be His own?"

In an effort to keep the answers objective, the persons filling in the questionnaire were asked to indicate upon what they based their positive answers to these questions: words in the dialogue, action on the part of the characters, or both words and action.

If a person thought the situation was adequately identified, he was asked in Question 2, "How is this identification made?" If he thought the situation was identified theologically, he was asked in Question 4, "How is this identification made?" If he thought a response was identified, he was asked in Question 6, "How is this identification made?" And if he thought the psychological process which unites the situation and the response was identified in terms of Christian motivation, he was asked in Question 10, "How is this identification made?"

These ten queries in the questionnaire form the basis for this evaluation of the theological content of THIS IS THE

LIFE. The nine following chapters will each treat one of twenty-five episodes of the 1952-1953 series. (Because of its unique character in dramatizing the Christmas story according to the Biblical narrative, the twenty-sixth episode, entitled "The Greatest Gift" will not be treated in this effort.)

Chapters to follow will be divided into four separate sections: 1. A summary of the story; 2. A brief summary of the spiritual content of the episode as published by the television committee for advance publicity; 3. The findings of the questionnaire and a study of the dialogue and actions which are reflected in the questionnaire; 4. A summary of the theological strengths and weaknesses of the episode in the light of the results of the study in section 3.

In the concluding chapter, individual episodes will be considered as contributing parts to the entire series, with special attention to those which are strong in theological content, and those which are weak. The experiences encountered in the episodes will be studied to see which offered the best opportunities for identifying the problem theologically, for identifying the response theologically, and for identifying true Christian motivation in activities of the characters involved. And finally, there will be a summary evaluation of THIS IS THE LIFE as a series of programs.

Appendix A gives the questions as they appeared in the questionnaire.

Appendices B through Q give the theological content and the questionnaire results of those episodes not considered in Chapters III through XI.

David Valeriano, an attractive, personable man of about twenty-five, comes to the village of Middleburg to do work on his sociological thesis "Life in an American Small Town." While engaged in his research he becomes friendly with Billy Fischer, the lovely and pleasant librarian of about his own age. From the outset of their meeting it is evident that Dave and Billy are attracted to each other and have to frequently found with Billy at the Fischer home. The Fischers know that Dave is writing a thesis about Middleburg, but they do not know that he is using them as "guinea pigs" by observing and recording their customs and beliefs. He considers their family activities, such as family devotions and singing around the piano as antiquated and ludicrous, and he says so quite plainly in his thesis. But on the surface his relationship with the Fischers remains very friendly and his apparent fondness for Billy progresses to such a point that Mrs. Fischer asks her husband upon one occasion, "Do you suppose Dave is serious about Billy?"

The situation is changed with shocking abruptness one day when Agnes Fisher, the village stenographer to whom Dave has taken his thesis to be typed, reads her appraisal of the Fischers and feels duty bound to tell Billy about what Dave has written. The truth is that since Dave wrote these early

CHAPTER III

THE BETTER WAY

David Wainwright, an attractive, personable man of about twenty-five, comes to the village of Middleburg to do work on his sociological thesis "Life in an American Small Town." While engaged in his research he becomes friendly with Emily Fischer, the lovely and pleasant librarian of about his own age. From the moment of their meeting it is evident that Dave and Emily are attracted to each other and Dave is frequently found with Emily at the Fischer home. The Fischers know that Dave is writing a thesis about Middleburg, but they do not know that he is using them as "guinea pigs" by observing and recording their customs and beliefs. He considers their family activities, such as family devotions and singing around the piano as antiquated and ludicrous, and he says so quite plainly in his thesis. But on the surface his relationship with the Fischers remains very friendly and his apparent fondness for Emily progresses to such a point that Mrs. Fischer asks her husband upon one occasion, "Do you suppose Dave is serious about Emily?"

The situation is changed with shocking abruptness one day when Agnes Hobbs, the public stenographer to whom Dave has taken his thesis to be typed, reads his appraisal of the Fischers and feels duty bound to tell Emily about what Dave has written. The truth is that since Dave wrote those early

chapters of his work he has experienced a change of heart and is beginning to see the value of the Christian way of life as the Fischers know and live it. In fact, he had even gone to Agnes Hobbs' office to retrieve his thesis in order to change it, but she had left, and he was too late to prevent the tragic relay of its contents to Emily.

Emily stonily confronts Dave with the words from his own thesis when he comes to see her, berating him for betraying the trust that she and the family had placed in him. Dave tries to explain but is cut short and brushed off. He realizes that the only way he can vindicate himself, his love for Emily and his newly found appreciation for the Christian manner of living practiced by the Fischers is to revise his thesis in the light of his changed opinions. This he does. Emily forgives him, and everyone approves of the new work. the only objection is raised by Grandpa, who says, "Son, I think you've gone a little overboard. This Fischer fam'ly you wrote 'bout -- they're almost like angels. -- (with a cackle) -- Believe me, we're not. Far from it."¹

Gazing fondly at Emily, Dave replies, "I think you are."

Then Grandpa writes finis to the experience as he smiles at Dave and Emily and says, "Couldn't be that maybe you're

¹"This is the Life," Episode III, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms), p. 50.

a little -- er -- partial?"

The spiritual content of this episode has been printed in summary by the Television Committee for use in advance publicity, and reads as follows:

This episode demonstrates the truth of the Apostle's words: "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (1 Tim. 4:8) To the sophisticated Mr. Wainwright it seems that the Christian life of the Fischer family is a drab and barren thing. Ultimately he learns, however, that theirs is the abundant life -- that a life which is based upon a faith in Christ the Savior pays spiritual dividends, not only in the life which is to come but also here and now.

The life of the Fischer family, being based upon a common faith in Christ, the Savior, is a life of peace, assurance, contentment, and joy. The climactic moments of this episode contrast the barren life of Mr. Wainwright with the fruitful life of the Fischer family and demonstrate that theirs is, indeed, "The Better Way."

There was little doubt in the minds of the students who filled out the questionnaire on the David Wainwright story that it presented a realistic, genuine experience. Forty-eight answered "Yes" to Question 1, "Is the situation (the problem that confronts the personalities in this episode) adequately identified for the viewer?" There were no negative answers. Ten thought this identification was made with words in the dialogue; one thought with action on the part of the characters; and thirty-seven thought it was done with both words and action. Question 5 on identifying a response to the situation was answered in the positive by forty-seven students, with one person indicating he did not think a

response was identified for the viewer. The manner in which this identification was made was sought for in Question 6. "With words in the dialogue," said fourteen. "With action on the part of the characters," said two. And eighteen indicated, "With both words and action." To Question 8, "Is the psychological process which unites the situation with the response logically traced by dialogue and action for the viewer?" there were forty-four answers "Yes," and three answers "No."

In evaluating the theological content there was less agreement. Thirty-five thought the situation was identified theologically; thirteen thought it was not. (Question 3) Answering Question 4 on how a theological identification was made, fourteen said "With words in the dialogue;" two said "With action on the part of the characters;" and eighteen said, "With both words and action." Thirty-four thought the response offered for the situation was identified theologically; fourteen said it was not. (Question 7) To thirty persons the psychological process which unites the situation with the response was identified in terms of Christian motivation. To eighteen it seemed that this identification was not made. (Question 9) Of those answering Question 10 on how this identification was made, ten said, "With words in the dialogue;" two said, "With action on the part of the characters;" twenty-one said, "With both words and action."

A study of the film and the mimeographed third draft screenplay script of the story shows that the best identification of the problem facing David Wainwright is made by Dave himself. In the scene where his mother discusses with him the Fischer family and the thesis he is writing about them, Dave says,

If we had been like them, we might not have had to run away -- and keep on running all our lives -- afraid to look at ourselves -- afraid the emptiness of our lives might catch up with us. . . Now I know why I wrote about the Fischers the way I did. I HAD to criticize them -- I HAD to despise them to justify my OWN way of living. . . Can't you see it, Mother? Our lives have been so terribly empty. . . We had all the things money could buy! But peace of mind? -- inner contentment? -- goodness? -- kindness? -- love? . . . Maybe you can go on running away from yourself, Mother -- but I can't. Not any more. I want the kind of things the Fischer family tried to give me. . . What was it her father read from the Bible that night? "The thief came to steal -- and to kill and destroy." That's what I did. I came to destroy. As if I could. As if anyone could take away what God has given them -- and would have given to you and me -- if we had wanted it.²

This final sentence of his statement comes closest to identifying Dave's problem theologically. He finds his life empty because he has rejected God, the same God who has filled to abundance the life of the Fischers. It is never stated specifically that Dave's real problem is that he is existing apart from God, separated by sin from Him who alone in forgiveness of sin could grant to him fullness of life in time and eternity. However, 75 per cent of those answering

²Ibid., pp. 45-48.

the questionnaire thought that the statements which were made adequately identified the problem theologically.

Another scene which undoubtedly prompted them to this opinion shows Dave, just previous to meeting his mother, walking slowly along the street, his face deeply serious, as he recalls the words of the Savior he had heard Carl Fischer read from the Bible during family devotions.

"I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly I am the door. By me if any enter in, he shall be saved."³ Because he had not entered in through the door which is Jesus, the inference is drawn that Dave knew that he did not have "the life."

A solution to Dave's problem is once again identified for the viewer by Dave himself. Dave's mother, trying to minimize the condemnation he has made of himself, says, "You act as if you had done something awful." Contritely, Dave responds that he did. Because of his so-called sophistication, he saw Emily's sweetness as weakness, her mother's kindness as stupidity, her father's contentment as dullness, her grandfather's warm heart as the crumbling of a senile mind. "Don't you understand, Mother? All the time, THEIRS was the abundant life."⁴ The inference is then to be made by the viewer that the answer to Dave's own situation

³Ibid., p. 31.

⁴Ibid., p. 48.

is to be found in accepting the way of life practiced by the Fischers.

It is never said in so many words that this way of life comes through faith in Jesus Christ, but the life of the Fischers is closely associated with the devotion experience related in the story, where the words of Jesus are read from the Bible, "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." This inferred association identified the response theologically in the minds of 71 per cent of those filling out the questionnaire.

As the story is advanced from an evaluation of the situation to a response to this situation, what evidence is there that the characters act from a true Christian motivation? Sixty-three per cent of those answering the questionnaire thought that there was such evidence.

This motivation is seen most clearly in the closing comment to their family devotion, where Carl Fischer says, "Let us be thankful that our Savior died that we might live." Then the whole family joins in the prayer, "Let us give thanks unto the Lord for he is good -- and his mercy endureth forever. Amen."⁵

The Fischers openly show their love and concern for Dave, but the only other verbal evidence given which might

⁵Ibid., p. 19.

be taken as the witness of an inner life centered in the Savior, who could have all people come to Him and be saved, is when Emily tells Dave she should hate him for what he has done, but she doesn't. She pities him. "With all your education -- your travels -- your money -- you've missed the most important things of life. I really feel sorry for you."⁶ Emily does not expand here on what these important things are. However, she has already indicated one aspect of it, when she questions Dave's sincerity with the words, "Falling in love with ME? -- How could YOU? A girl like me -- who loves her family -- and believes in what a family stands for!"⁷ Emily is a girl who reads the Bible and believes what it says! She is a girl who is content with the Christian way of life!

Thus the conclusion is made that the David Wainwright story, "The Better Way," is at its best, theologically speaking, when it is making an evaluation of Dave's problem. Its attempt to identify a theological answer to his problem is accomplished with limited success. And it is at its weakest theological point when it is trying to show that the Fischers are motivated by the love of Christ in their friendship with Dave.

⁶Ibid., p. 41

⁷Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

THE POWER BEYOND¹

Otto Brandt is going to be a father, and he's nervous. In fact, he's so nervous that he can't stand it any longer in his bakery shop. He's got to get away. So he uses the excuse of delivering to the Fischers some cake and bread in order to satisfy his desire for something different. His visit at the Fischers is cut short, though, by a telephone call from his wife. "There's nothing to get excited about, dear, I just think perhaps you'd better come home -- in case."

In his haste to get home, Otto speeds, but Frank Hill, the motorcycle cop, knowing Mary's condition, is understanding and lets Otto go without a ticket. Otto drives more slowly on the way to the hospital, but once they get there it is evident again that he feels more anxiety about the coming event than his wife.

The last few moments before Otto has to leave Mary's room find the two of them gratefully acknowledging that at long last, after twenty wonderful years together, one of their fondest prayers is about to be realized. More wonderful years are ahead of them.

¹"This is the Life," Episode XIV, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

With Mary at the hospital, Otto makes his way to Fischer's drug store to spend some time with Carl Fischer, the owner, drinking some of his "terrible" coffee. This visit, too, is destined to be interrupted. A call from Dr. Lawrence, the family physician, asks Otto to come to the hospital right away for consultation. Anna, Carl's wife, goes along.

It's Dr. Conrad Hahn, top gynecologist, who informs them that because Mary is forty years old and this is her first confinement, complications have resulted that could be critical. Otto is worried. Dr. Hahn is extremely cautious in committing himself as to the certainty of the outcome.

In this tense situation, Anna reminds Otto of the power of Christian prayer. She also approaches Dr. Hahn, to whom prayer seems to be something foreign, urging him to help Mary to pray, as she certainly would be doing now, were she fully conscious. Dr. Hahn is skeptical, hesitant. He later does what Anna requests of him, though, quietly whispering at Mary's side, "God will give you strength. Lean on Him. Pray to Him." Mary responds with her own short supplication to Jesus for help.

Mary is in the delivery room now, and it's an anxious moment for everyone. Beads of perspiration glisten on the foreheads of the doctors. Otto and Anna fidget in the waiting room. But not for long. Dr. Lawrence's words of

assurance announce that "Mary's going to be all right. And the baby, too."

The end result of this answer to prayer is not only the thankfulness shown by Otto when he reads the 100th Psalm with the Fischers in their family devotions. That might be expected from a Christian. But the real climax of the experience comes in the life of Dr. Hahn. Grandpa Fischer reads about it in the paper. A desperately needed doctor's skill is dedicated to the cause of Christian service.

"Dr. Conrad Hahn, of Middleburg, has been appointed supervising head of the Medical Missionary Hospital in Antigua, Guatemala."

The spiritual content of this story has been summarized and printed for use with advance publicity by the Television Committee.

Is there a power beyond medical science? Is the origin of human life and the termination of the span of life merely a matter of "natural causes?" In this episode we meet a physician who knows of no power beyond the power of natural science.

Contrasted to this attitude we have the faith of Anna Fischer who insists that beyond the power of medical science we have the power of prayer and the power of God. In a tense scene in a hospital delivery room we witness the answer to Christian prayer. Where medical science stood helpless, God intervened in answer to prayer. The single impact of the story impresses the viewer with one overwhelming fact: there is a power beyond all human power, the power of God which can be invoked through Christian prayer.

The students who viewed this film and answered the questionnaire were convinced of its genuine realism. Forty-five answered "Yes" to Question 1, "Is the situation (the problem that confronts the personalities in this episode)

adequately identified for the viewer? There were two negative answers. Two thought this identification was made in the words of the dialogue; two thought in action on the part of the characters; and forty-one thought it was done with both words and action. (Question 2) Question 5 on identifying a response to the situation was answered in the positive by all forty-seven filling in the questionnaire.

Everyone thought a response was identified for the viewer. The manner in which this identification was made was sought for in Question 6. "With words in the dialogue," said three; "With action on the part of the characters," said two; and forty-one indicated "With both words and action." To Question 8, "Is the psychological process which unites the situation with the response logically traced by dialogue and action for the viewer?" There were forty-four answers "Yes" and three answers "No."

Answers to the questions on theological content showed this difference of opinion: Thirty-nine thought the situation was identified theologically; seven thought it was not. Answering Question 4 on how this identification was made, six said with words in the dialogue; no one said with action on the part of the characters; and thirty-three indicated it was done with both words and action. Thirty-nine thought the response offered to the situation was identified theologically; eight thought it was not. (Question 7) To thirty-seven persons the psychological process which

unites the situation with the response was identified in terms of Christian motivation. To eight it seemed that this identification was not made. (Question 9) Among those answering Question 10 on how this identification was made, one said "With words in the dialogue;" one said "With action on the part of the characters;" and thirty-seven indicated that it was done "With both words and action."

The dialogue and action involved in the presentation of this theological content may be studied more carefully from the corrected shooting script of the episode.

That the problem under consideration in this film was identified and identified theologically was the opinion of 85 per cent of those who filled out the questionnaire. In this particular episode the problem takes the form of a need. This need is first of all recognized, and then it is acknowledged to have been filled.

It is the need for a power beyond the power of medical science which is identified by Anna Fischer as she talks with Dr. Hahn.

HAHN

(forebodingly)

There is no change. She is very weak. (Then trying to be reassuring) Of course, you can be sure we'll do everything within the power of medical science.

ANNA

What about some of the things OUTSIDE the power of medical science, Doctor?

DR. HAHN

(kindly, but not grasping)

Outside?

ANNA

Yes. Beyond the power of medical science, haven't we the power of prayer, Doctor? The power of God?

DR. HAHN

On that, I have no opinion, Mrs. Fischer. I was speaking merely as a physician.

ANNA (to Otto)

If it's the Lord's will that Mary and the baby live, He'll find a way. We must put her in His hands, Otto. We must pray. Pray that His will be done.

OTTO (confused)

What do you think, Doctor?

HAHN

(professionally)

As a doctor, I can only say that the case is critical.

ANNA

(placing her hand in Otto's)

And as Christians we can say that Mary's in God's hands.²

Thus Anna has pointed out, both to Dr. Hahn and to Otto, that the first step in quieting the worried mind is to look to the power of God. It is greater than the power of medical science. Anna has said, in effect, that this power of God is unleashed upon the soul in answer to prayer. Otto is to pray that he might receive strength to submit himself to the will of God, also in this matter which is so close to his heart. Dr. Hahn is to recognize that the power of God is also available to him in his sacred position as the doctor, eager for the life of his patient.

Anna recognizes still another phase of this need for

²Ibid., pp. 23-24.

the power of God. Mary herself must be reawakened to the help that comes from God in answer to prayer.

ANNA

Doctor -- would you do us a great favor?

HAHN (guardedly)

Anything I can, Mrs. Fischer.

ANNA

(without sarcasm)

Would you -- just for this moment, at least -- accept the possibility that there may be things in heaven and earth not dreamed of in your medical books?

HAHN

(puzzled at what may be coming)

I -- I'm not sure I understand.

ANNA

Doctor, Mary is weakening -- slipping fast. If she were fully conscious, I know what she'd be doing. She'd be praying to God for strength and courage. If there were a way of helping her to pray, would you do it?

HAHN

All I can say is that, as a doctor, I am passionately concerned about saving the life of any patient.

ANNA

Mary is a religious woman -- deeply. What she needs now is someone to whisper words of faith to her -- words which will help her put her hands into the hand of God. I would be glad to speak to her.

HAHN

But you know that no one is permitted in the --

ANNA

(cuts in)

Then -- won't you, doctor -- won't you just repeat these simple words to her: "God will give you strength, Mary. Lean on Him. He will bear you up. He will hold you in His strong arms."

HAHN

Mrs. Fischer -- I'm a doctor -- I --

OTTO

(cuts in; pleadingly)

But Doctor -- don't you see -- this is what Mary would want you to do!³

Having experienced vicariously the foregoing scenes, the viewer has been made aware of the fact that a need for the power of God exists and that it is available in answer to prayer. He now awaits a response to this situation. This response is identified in the words and action of Dr. Hahn and Mary in the hospital room. Eighty-three per cent of those filling in the questionnaire thought that this response was placed in its true theological perspective.

In all his gesturing and movements we see not only Dr. Hahn, the competent physician, but a great tenderness.

DR. HAHN

Mary -- God will give you strength -- Lean on Him and He will bear you up. He will hold you in his strong arms. Pray to Him, Mary.

He waits. There is a long silence. He reacts when he sees Mary stir. Her lips move.

MARY

(an almost inaudible whisper)
Jesus -- Jesus -- Help me!

DR. HAHN

(with strange conviction)
He is near -- very -- near.

MARY

(an almost inaudible whisper)
He -- will -- bear -- me -- up.
(a pause)
Oh, Jesus! Help me! Help me now!⁴

³Ibid., pp. 24-25.

⁴Ibid., pp. 26-27.

This seems to be the theological climax toward which the episode has been progressing. This prayer to Jesus is the response suggested in answer to the situation where the need and availability of God's power are recognized.

The most forceful evidence that the characters of the story are moved by the love of Christ, although this motivation is never expressed in just this language, is to be found in the scene around the Fischer dinner table after the birth of Mary's baby boy, Otto, Jr.

OTTO

Carl, if you don't mind. My heart is so full of thankfulness tonight, I'd like to read my favorite Psalm.

It's a Psalm Mary and I often read together. And it's been going through my mind all day. Let's see -- here it is. Psalm 100.

(reads with deep sincerity and reverence)

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.

Serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord He is God. It is He that hath made us and not we ourselves. We are his people and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. Be thankful unto Him and bless His name.

For the Lord is good. His mercy is everlasting. And his truth endureth to all generations.

CARL

Let us all give thanks. (He begins as family joins him in following prayer) Oh, give thanks unto the Lord,⁵ for He is good, and his mercy endureth forever. Amen.⁵

Further action in the episode, the motivation for which is intimated to be the love of Christ, is to be seen in the

⁵Ibid., pp. 33-34.

experiences of Anna Fischer and Dr. Hahn. Anna's witness to the power of prayer is a manifestation of the deep conviction of her own faith. Dr. Hahn decides to go to Guatemala. As Grandpa says in the final close-up:

Some folks might be wondering what possessed
Dr. Hahn to go bury himself off in a Guatemalan
mission -- to give his life to Christian service --
But we know, don't we?

Eighty-two per cent of those answering the questionnaire agreed that there was an adequate identification of Christian motivation in the film, by means of these scenes.

In review, then, it may be said that the three theological elements of the film as studied here are of almost equal strength in presentation. The one element of the three which receives the weakest verbal attention is the defining of Christian motivation.

CHAPTER V

THE ANCHORED HEART¹

A surprise telegram for Emily Fischer tells that Helen Harris plans to arrive for a visit that evening at eight o'clock. Helen is a childhood friend of Emily's who has moved to Kansas City. When ten o'clock rolls around and there is still no Helen, the family is plainly worried. Then Emily gets a telephone call from the Royaltown Police Department. Helen has been picked up for driving while under the influence of liquor. So, David Wainwright drives Emily and Mr. Fischer over to Royaltown to bring Helen home with them. She is ashamed and embarrassed, but she goes with them.

Helen unfolds the story of the last few months and pours out the despair in her heart. Unofficially engaged, with the understanding of a future wedding date with her boy friend, Larry, Helen becomes concerned when she doesn't hear from him for five whole days. She traces him one evening to a party, but gets from him only an hysterical laugh in answer to the question, "Has anything happened?"

The next evening, though, Larry explains that he has

¹"This is the Life," Episode XV, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

received his draft notice. Filled with self-pity, he feels and acts as if the bottom has dropped out of everything because his efforts at a promising job have now been stymied. He tells Helen not to wait for him the two years of his enlistment. "You might fall in love with someone, or I might." Dazed and hurt, Helen has not seen Larry since that night. It was thinking about him that caused the excessive drinking when she stopped for dinner on the way to Middleburg and the Fischers.

David and Emily take a trip to Kansas City to show Larry that there is a better way of meeting the problem of an uncertain future than with "the bottle." They are unsuccessful, even though David makes it clear that he, too, has just received his draft notice. Larry peremptorily rejects their offered friendship.

Concentrating her attention now on Helen, Emily tries to help her to a new inner power that will aid her in making an adjustment to the bitter loss she feels. Emily tells her of an anchored faith in Christ that will help her through the storms of life. Helen, still in bitter anguish, rushes from Emily's presence and drives away in her car. As she drives many thoughts course through her mind.

The folks at home are once again concerned about Helen's absence and are considering informing her parents of her sudden departure. But their fears are cast aside when at long last Helen reappears and rushes into Emily's embrace.

"Thank God you're back," whispers Emily. And with a new found confidence that portends of better things to come, Helen answers, "Yes -- thank God!"

The spiritual content of this episode has been summarized and published by the Television Committee for use in advance publicity.

What does a person do when the bottom falls out of his life? This episode develops two possible ways of reacting to such a situation. In the one case a young man goes completely berserk and indulges in all sorts of excesses -- high life, parties, drinking, etc.

In the other case, we see two young Christians (Emily Fischer and her boy friend, who has just received a draft notice, much to their disappointment) accepting their deep disappointment in the light of God's over-all plan and providence.

In a warm, intimate scene we hear Emily Fischer telling Helen Harris, her disillusioned girl friend, that she has found an anchor for her life in her faith in Christ the Savior. She, too, has had to weather some terrible storms in her young life, but in each case her faith in Christ has seen her through.

The heart of Emily Fischer was an "anchored heart," anchored firmly in the assurances of her Savior.

Answers to the questionnaire indicate agreement on the fact that this episode presented a genuine realistic experience. All thirty-nine students answered "Yes" to Question 1, "Is the situation (the problem that confronts the personalities in this episode) adequately identified for the viewer?" Six thought this identification was made by words in the dialogue; one thought with action on the part of the characters; and thirty-two thought it was done with both words and action. Question 5 on identifying a response to the situa-

tion was answered in the positive once again by all thirty-nine. Everyone thought a response was identified for the viewer. The manner in which this identification was made was sought for in Question 6. "With words in the dialogue," said six. "With action on the part of the characters," said five. And twenty-eight indicated, "With both words and action." To Question 8, "Is the psychological process which unites the situation with the response logically traced in dialogue and actions for the viewer?" there were thirty-five answers "Yes," and four answers "No."

There was also major agreement on the fact that the theological content of the film was presented well. Twenty-seven thought the situation was identified theologically; twelve thought it was not. (Question 3) Answering Question 4 on how a theological identification was made, seven said, "With words in the dialogue;" one said, "With action on the part of the characters;" and nineteen said, "With both words and action." Thirty-three thought a theological response was offered and identified; six thought it was not. (Question 7) To thirty-four, the psychological process which unites the situation with the response was identified in terms of Christian motivation. To five it seemed that this identification was not made. (Question 9) Of those answering Question 10 on how this identification was made, nine said "With words in the dialogue;" two said, "With action on

the part of the characters;" and twenty-three said, "With both words and action."

The corrected mimeographed shooting script of this episode yielded the evidence presented now as to how this theological content was verbally defined.

An identification of the problem challenging both Helen and Larry is made by Larry when he says, "Helen, listen -- the bottom's dropped out of everything! . . . It's a crazy world! No sense to it! No use planning anything!"² A sudden realization of the uncertainty of the future has shaken the only props Helen and Larry have known right out from under their lives. They feel themselves awash in a windy sea. Helen has leaned on Larry's love but now -- "Larry's gone! He doesn't love me! And I still love him!" As Emily tells David, "She's going to pieces. She just couldn't stand staying at home -- or even working at her job."³ Helen was just going crazy listening for that phone to ring.

There is some question about whether this problem is ever placed into its theological setting in the episode. Those filling in the questionnaire expressed their greatest doubt in answer to this: "Is the problem identified theologically?" Forty-one per cent of the answers were negative.

²Ibid., p. 20.

³Ibid., p. 22.

Those who answered positively undoubtedly felt that the response Emily suggests to Helen's problem indirectly, yet adequately, serves to point up the real problem, a complete and utter lack of the presence of God, a rejection of the life of God that is offered those who know Christ as their Savior.

The most satisfying experience in this episode is the scene where Emily tries to find the right words with which to comfort her friend and suggest the way out of her present mental conflict. Eighty-five per cent of those who filled out the questionnaire thought that this adequately identified the correct theological response to the problem.

EMILY

Helen -- darling -- you can't go on this way.
You've just got to get hold of yourself.

(quietly, intimately)

Helen, we've been friends for years. You know that whatever I've had -- I have always been willing to share with you. Right now I want to share with you the most precious -- the most priceless -- thing I have -- and something you need most desperately.

(quietly, simply)

My faith in Christ!

HELEN

(puzzled; incredulously)

Your -- ?

EMILY

Yes, Helen, my faith in Christ. You see. I've had my share of disappointments and disillusionments. Maybe not as bitter as yours right now. But they were just as bitter and painful at the time.

(wistfully)

It was at moments like that -- when my own dreams were shattered -- that I realized more fully than ever, what my faith in Christ could really mean.

. . . .

It's just when everything goes wrong -- when we feel ourselves being swept away -- that we need Christ as our solid anchor. Someone to hold us -- to see us through the storm! Christ can see you through, Helen. Please believe me.

HELEN

(sullenly)

I wish I could -- but I can't!

EMILY

(with deep conviction)

But, Christ died for us, Helen. And now He lives -- to comfort and strengthen those who put their trust in him. He's promised us His peace -- peace of mind and heart and soul, if we'll only believe Him. Don't you see, Helen, that's what I'd like to share with you -- that peace and hope and strength that God has put into my heart! -- through faith in Christ, the Savior!⁴

Thus to Emily goes the credit for identifying for Helen and the television viewer the ultimate answer that must be given to those who are troubled in heart and soul about the uncertain future. God puts peace and hope and strength into the human heart through faith in Christ, the Savior. Christ's death and resurrection make up the anchor that is firmly grounded in the heart of God, and trust in Christ is the chain that attaches the believer's life to a solidness that is divine. The confidence that comes from that attachment results in stabilized living.

There was also frank agreement on the fact that this episode gives evidence of true Christian motivation. Eighty-seven per cent of those questioned were of the opinion that

⁴Ibid., pp. 30-31.

Emily's conduct, coupled with her verbal witness to the Savior, sharply identified her as a person moved by the love of Christ. "I want to share with you the most precious thing I have -- my faith in Christ. I'd like to share with you that peace and hope and strength that God has put into my heart!"

Emily is not merely content with showing Helen by her own life that it is possible to be strong through trials on every hand. She realizes the necessity of communicating in simple words the message of God's love in Christ which is intended also for Helen Harris.

A summary of this film proves its theological strength to lie in the identification it makes of true Christian motivation. Here it is at its best. There is also a successful identification of the proper theological response for Helen's problem. But when it actually comes down to evaluating the problem itself theologically for the viewer, the story is weakest.

CHAPTER VI

THE HIGHER LAW¹

Just before leaving Middleburg to make his home in San Francisco, Jack Bates turns over to Carl Fischer the deed for an insignificant acre of ground in token payment of a \$300 debt his father had incurred with Carl at the drug store.

Not long after Jack's departure, the Midland Manufacturing Company offers Carl \$3,000 for the land. Carl is then faced with a problem. His wife Anna encourages him to sell and loan the money to her brother, Tom, who is in dire need of the cash. But Carl feels that the major portion of the money realized from the sale belongs to Jack Bates, who was not aware of the real value of the land at the time he gave the deed to Carl. Carl himself was, of course, ignorant of this value, too, at that time.

Carl finally decides to try to reach Jack in San Francisco. But it is too late. Jack has moved from his last available address and the next thing Middleburg hears is that he has been lost at sea, washed overboard from off the ship on which he was working.

Anna thinks that now the problem is solved. But the

¹"This is the Life," Episode XVI, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

old problem in a new form is introduced with the appearance in Middleburg of a woman who claims to be the wife of Jack Bates. Now Carl and Anna are really confused as to what to do with the \$3,000. Carl calls on the woman and is satisfied that she is Mrs. Jack Bates. Then he and Anna visit with Pastor Martin, seeking his advice.

After this brief visit their course of action is clear. They go to Mrs. Bates, befriend her, and give her a check for \$2,700. They feel that this amount is really hers, after subtracting from the \$3,000 the \$300 debt owed to Carl by Jack Bates' father.

Mrs. Bates, overcome with their kindness, tells them of the approaching birth of Jack Bates' child, and decides that Middleburg is the right place after all for her and the child to call home.

The Television Committee has summarized the spiritual content of this episode for use in advance publicity of the film:

This is a story of Christian honesty. Mr. Fischer is involved in a borderline case which calls for the application of the highest principles of Christian ethics. He is confronted by a problem of fundamental honesty, involving an important financial decision. After brooding over the situation for a number of days he goes to Pastor Martin with his problem. Pastor Martin tells him that a Christian can never be satisfied with merely being legally right; he must always be sure that he is morally right. "It is not so much a question of: Can my behavior stand before the law? as it is a question of: Can my behavior stand before my Lord?"

In a climatic scene Mr. Fischer decides to do the

scrupulously honest, thing, although his decision involves the loss of \$2,700. His decision was made in obedience to the higher law.

Those answering the questionnaire were quite positive in their opinion that this story presented a genuine, realistic experience. Thirty answered "Yes" to Question 1, "Is the situation (the problem that confronts the personalities in this episode) adequately identified for the viewer. There was one answer "No." Five thought this identification was made in the words of the dialogue; no one thought with action on the part of the characters; and thirty thought it was done with both words and action. Question 5 on identifying a response to the situation was answered in the positive by thirty-five persons. Two thought a response was not identified for the viewer. The manner in which this identification was made was sought for in Question 6. "With words in the dialogue," said three; "With action on the part of the characters," said one; and thirty indicated, "With both words and action." To Question 8, "Is the psychological process which unites the situation with the response logically traced by the dialogue and action for the viewer?" there were thirty-two answers "Yes," and four answers "No."

There seemed to be some question in the minds of those answering the questionnaire about how clearly the theological message of the film was presented. But there was a general agreement on the fact that a theological message was present. Twenty-nine thought the situation was identified

theologically; seven thought it was not. (Question 3) Answering Question 4 on how a theological identification was made, seven said, "With words in the dialogue;" one said, "With action on the part of the characters;" and twenty-one said, "With both words and action." Twenty-seven persons thought the response offered to the situation was identified theologically; nine thought it was not. (Question 7) To twenty-nine the psychological process which unites the situation with the response was identified in terms of Christian motivation. To five it seemed that this identification was not made. (Question 9) Of those answering Question 10 on how this identification was made, four said "With words in the dialogue;" no one said, "With action on the part of the characters;" and twenty-seven "With both words and action."

A study of the third draft, mimeographed shooting script of this episode leads to a more detailed study of its theological content.

Anna and Carl Fischer identify their problem for the viewer and for Pastor Martin when they pay a visit to the minister.

ANNA

Carl wanted to give everything above the \$300 to Jack. But I couldn't understand why he should.

(pauses)

And I'm still wondering just what is the right thing to do. As we told you, Pastor, legally we have every right to keep the money.

CARL

(deeply concerned)

But, somehow, I can't get rid of the feeling that the money isn't mine. I just don't feel right about it.

ANNA

I can see that perhaps Jack did have some claim to a part of it -- if he had lived. But now this girl!²

The problem facing Carl and Anna is evaluated theologically by Pastor Martin in this same scene.

PASTOR

You know, Carl, sometimes we forget that Christian honesty is not merely a matter of doing what is the "best policy." It is rather a matter of living like a redeemed child of God in every circumstance -- regardless of the consequences. And a redeemed child of God will want to do what he knows to be the wish of his Redeemer.

(he turns toward Anna)

Christian honesty is much more than doing the legal thing. It's doing the right thing --

(places hand on Bible on desk)

-- according to the teachings of the Savior.

. . . .

ANNA

(an inner light is gradually dawning)

And all the while it seemed so clear to me that Carl had a perfect right to every penny of that money. It seemed so simple.

PASTOR

Sometimes it's simpler and more convenient to solve our problems the strictly legal way -- and to close our eyes to the deeper moral aspects. For a Christian it's not so much a question of "Can my behavior stand before the law?" as "Can my behavior stand before my Lord?"³

This adequately identified the situation theologically

²Ibid., pp. 31-32.

³Ibid., pp. 32-33.

for 81 per cent of those answering the questionnaire on this episode. Contributing to this opinion was the opening statement of Pastor Martin. His initial response to the problem of the Fischers' was, ". . . whenever I find a problem difficult to solve -- a problem of right or wrong -- I always ask myself one question: What would CHRIST do? . . . In other words, what would Christ want ME to do?" However, there is no further indication of what Christ would do, or has done, or even about who He is. Carl understands all this. He answers "quietly, but with firm conviction," "There can be only one answer to that."⁴ But the thinking that is going on in Carl's mind, and the background of Christian faith upon which Pastor Martin is drawing is never identified for the viewer.

Seventy-five per cent of those filling in the questionnaire thought that the scene just recounted and the giving of the check to Mrs. Bates identified a theological response to the situation. Carl tells the widow, as he gives her the money, "Legally I have every right to keep it. But because neither Jack nor I knew the real value of the property, I feel that morally he had a right to everything above the three hundred dollars."⁵ Even though he does not tell Mrs. Bates anything about what prompted his decision, the viewer

⁴Ibid., p. 31.

⁵Ibid., p. 36.

knows from previous scenes the careful spiritual deliberation through which Carl has passed, and the counsel of Pastor Martin upon which he has acted.

Eighty-five per cent of those answering Question 9 thought that there was evidence of true Christian motivation on the part of the Fischers in this episode.

Certainly what the Fischers did was beyond reproach. They promised to help Tom by loaning him money, and although Carl did not use the \$3,000 that was legally his for this purpose, he did keep his promise by borrowing "on the stock in the store" in order to raise the needed cash.

The Fischers were true to the confidence that Mrs. Bates had originally placed in the people of Middleburg by helping her in the time of her extremest need.

The only verbal evidence given in answer to the question, Why did the Fischers act this way? is to be found in Carl's response to his daughter Emily's surprise that he is going to borrow on his stock in the store, something he has always said he would never do for anybody. "Well, I never wanted to before. But, somehow, I don't feel so bad about doing it now."⁶

In the scene with Mrs. Bates, she asks searchingly, "I still can't believe it. For you to give me this money

⁶Ibid., p. 40

when you didn't have to . . . why?"⁷

Carl's humble reply is, "Well, the simplest way for me to explain it -- is -- er -- that I believe its's the right thing to do." The viewer then is to associate this confession of motive on the part of Carl with the earlier statement of Pastor Martin, ". . . a redeemed child of God will want to do what he knows to be the wish of his Redeemer." Carl never makes this assertion to Mrs. Bates. She knows only that for him it was the "right thing to do."

The theological strengths of the three elements of this episode seem to stand in almost equal proportions to each other. Perhaps in the final analysis it may be said that the film is at its theological best when Pastor Martin evaluates the problem for the Fischers, at the same time indicating the proper response. The viewer is forced to infer from various parts of the dialogue just what moved the Fischers to do and say what they did.

⁷Ibid., p. 38.

CHAPTER VII

COLOR BLIND¹

Carl Fischer gets some after-hours customers at his drug store. Mrs. Alverus Lamino has brought her son, Alverus, Jr., to receive medical attention for the cuts and bruises on his face. Carl learns that these are the evidences of a beating Alverus sustained at the Central Playground. It seems that some of the boys, conscious of his Filipino features, have abused Alverus because they "don't want any foreigner . . . playing ball on their team." Carl fixes up the lad and agrees with Grandpa Fischer that ". . . his eye's goin' to be all right -- but I don't know how Alverus's goin' to be."

Disturbed to the extend of doing something about this disgrace, Carl writes a letter to the editor of the Middleburg Citizen, calling attention to the dark incident, and urging the exercise of Christian love in contacts with people of other nationalities. The editor sends reporter Joe Turner to check with Carl about the possibility of a story behind the event. Joe isn't sold on the idea, considering the whole affair rather trivial. But he talks to Carl and in the course of the conversation inadvertently

¹"This is the Life," Episode XVII, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

reveals his own thinking on the matter. "Sometimes I think maybe a lot of our troubles are caused by all these foreigners. Sometimes I think they ought to go back where they came from." Needless to say, Carl is quite taken aback by this frank confession.

A new importance is attached to the experience for Carl when he learns from Freddie, his youngest, who saw the beating take place on the playground, that those responsible for it are Eddie Walsh and Bill Turner, reporter Joe's son. Carl now determines to see thing thing through to some positive conclusion. He makes an appointment with Joe, to give him a "good story."

Carl introduces Joe to Mrs. Lamino and Alverus. The reporter, feeling that he has been duped at first, is led to see that here is a story indeed. Mrs. Lamino is the widow of the late big league baseball pitcher and winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor, Sergeant Alverus Lamino, killed at Heartbreak Ridge. Joe promises to return the next day with a photographer to take pictures for the paper.

On the way home Carl challenges Joe's ability as a reporter. "Didn't it ever enter your mind to question WHO were the boys that beat up Alverus?" Joe sheepishly admits that he "missed the boat." It's a real shock to find out that his own son, Bill, is one of the culprits. With this as an opening, Carl takes the opportunity to remind Joe of the Christian concept of brotherhood and how the practice

of "what is right religiously will be the best for Middleburg."

A new appreciation of this truth inspires Joe to expand his original story into a series of widely read and generally applauded articles on "The Christian Approach to Brotherhood." They bring results. Joe sees them first of all in his own family. It's his son Bill who excitedly reports, "Hey Dad! Alverus's gonna pitch on our team."

The spiritual content of this episode, summarized and published by the Television Committee for use with advance publicity, reads as follows:

This is a story on brotherhood. It is a beautiful approach to the problem of race relations. It is the story of a Filipino widow and her eight-year-old son who have moved to Middleburg and who have experienced difficulty in being accepted by the citizens. Particularly one citizen, a newspaper reporter, Joe Turner, expresses the thought that Middleburg would be better off if "all foreigners would stay where they came from."

The Christian attitude toward this problem is exemplified both by nine-year-old Freddy Fischer, who befriends Alverus Lamino, and by Carl Fischer, who speaks words of rebuke and exhortation to Mr. Turner.

Carl Fischer reminds Mr. Turner that "in God's sight there is no such thing as a foreigner." He reminds him that Christ died for all men regardless of race or color and that every man, regardless of the pigmentation of his skin, is entitled to the full measure of the Christian's love, consideration and respect.

Some of the most moving scenes in the story are those involving little Freddy Fischer, who in his affection for little Alverus is indeed "color blind."

An interpretation of the questionnaire answers given

with reference to this episode shows that there is general consent to the opinion that the experience presented is genuine and realistic. All twenty-eight showed a "Yes" to Question 1, "Is the situation (the problem that confronts the personalities in this episode) adequately identified for the viewer?" One thought this identification was made with words in the dialogue; one thought with action on the part of the characters; and twenty-six thought it was done with both words and action. (Question 2) Question 5 on identifying a response to the situation was answered in the positive by twenty-seven, with one indicating that he did not think a response was identified for the viewer. The manner in which this identification was made was sought for in Question 6. "With words in the dialogue," said three. "With action on the part of the characters," said one. Twenty-three said "With both words and action." To Question 8, "Is the psychological process which unites the situation with the response logically traced by dialogue and action for the viewer?" there were twenty-six answers "Yes" and one answer "No."

Such specific agreement was not evident in evaluating the theological content of the film. Twenty-one thought the situation was identified theologically; seven thought it was not. (Question 3) Answering Question 4 on how a theological identification was made, six said, "With words in the dialogue;" no one said, "With action on the part of

the characters;" and fifteen said, "With both words and action." Twenty thought the response offered to the situation was identified theologically; seven thought it was not. (Question 7) To twenty-one the psychological process which unites the situation with the response was identified in terms of Christian motivation. To six it seemed that this identification was not made. (Question 9) Of those answering Question 10 on how this identification was made, 5 per cent said, "With words in the dialogue;" no one said, "With action on the part of the characters;" and sixteen said, "With both words and action."

The scenes which gave rise to these opinions may be studied more closely in the third draft mimeographed screenplay script for this episode.

It is Carl Fischer who identifies for the viewer the real problem under consideration, the problem of Joe Turner.

CARL

(deeply serious)

Joe, I don't know why you drifted away from the Church -- but if you remember anything you learned there, you must know that in God's sight there just aren't any "foreigners."

. . . .
Whether a man's skin is black or red or yellow -- he's just as much a creature of God as you and I -- and entitled to just as much respect and consideration.

JOE

(lamely)

Maybe you're right, Carl. But that's a lot easier said than done.

CARL

I know it's not always easy, Joe. And that's where you need the power of a real Christian faith. A faith which I'm afraid you've lost.

JOE

(still lamely on the defensive)

But I haven't lost my faith. . . .

CARL

(musingly)

I wonder!²

This is Carl's attempt to show Joe the worth of each individual as a creation of God, regardless of the color of the skin. But Carl goes much further by pointing out to Joe that his lack of appreciation in this matter of race relations in the last analysis stems from his lack of faith in God. His attitude toward God will determine his attitude toward fellow members of the human race. If in God's sight there are no "foreigners", then in the sight of those who are in fellowship with God there will be no such thing as a "foreigner."

Seventy-two per cent of those answering the questions on theological content thought that thus the situation was adequately identified theologically.

Carl continues in the scene following that quoted above to impress upon Joe what the response of a true child of God will be to the situation in which he is called upon to deal with the member of another race. Seventy-four per cent of

²Ibid., p. 40.

those filling in the questionnaire thought that this response was identified theologically.

CARL

(then appealing)

Look, Joe. At one time you believed the Bible when it said that "Christ loved the world" -- and that he gave His life to save every member of the human race -- not just a certain class -- or a certain color.

You believed that he died to save all men of every race and every nationality. No man who believes that will ever shut out any member of the human family from his love, his concern and his respect.

A man who really believes that Christ is the Savior of all men can't do anything else but respect and love every man he meets -- no matter WHO he is. Anything else would be a denial of his faith.

JOE

To tell the truth, Carl, I hadn't given the religious angle much thought. I was just thinking -- (he realizes how silly this is going to sound, pauses, then continues sheepishly) -- I was just thinking what would be best for Middleburg.

CARL

Then don't you think that whatever is right re-
ligiously will BE the best for Middleburg?

JOE

(awkwardly but sincerely)

I've been a blind fool, Carl. Thanks for opening my eyes.³

Since Joe's real problem is a lack of faith, Carl's piece of conversation is neatly to the point. Faith in Christ, who died to save every member of the human race, thus proving his love for every man of the human race, connects the believer with that same love. The believer's

³Ibid., pp. 41-42.

concern and respect for his neighbor, regardless of color, is dictated by the Lord Jesus who dwells within his heart by faith. We are all one in Christ Jesus.

That Carl Fischer himself was moved by the love of Christ was the opinion of 78 per cent of those filling out the questionnaire; 76 per cent of these thought this Christian motivation was evident from both words and action. Although Carl never says that he himself feels that the love of Christ constrains him to act in service to those of another race, this certainly is implied in the way he presents the entire case with such conviction of purpose to Joe Turner. Another manifestation of Christian love is seen when Freddy Fischer defends Alverus before Eddie Walsh and Bill Turner, when they threaten him with another beating if he doesn't leave the playground, but the opportunity is just never presented to Freddy to tell why he sides with Alverus against Eddie and Bill.

In summary, then, it may be said that the episode "Color Blind" excellently identifies the proper Christian response to the problem of race relations. It also adequately places the problem in its true theological perspective. That the characters of this episode are moved by the love of Christ is never verbally stated, but strongly implied.

CHAPTER VIII

OURS, BUT NOT TO KEEP

When Peter Fischer learns that Larry Smith, youth director of the family's church, will not be rehired because of lack of funds, he suggests that twelve of the young people get after-school jobs and within the five weeks limit each earn \$50 to make up the \$600 needed. The other young people accept the challenge, get their jobs, and the project is under way.

Pete religiously sets aside his \$10 a week for the first three weeks, with two weeks to go in saving the total of \$50. In the meantime, however, he has been captivated by Celia Adams, a "pert, cute young thing,"¹ a newcomer to town, with an obviously more expensive taste than that to which Pete has been accustomed. The grand climax to their friendship is to be the formal dinner party to which Celia invites Pete, casually requesting, ". . . wear your tuxedo, will you?" Their phone conversation is cut short by an interruption at the gas station where Pete is working, and he isn't quite sure what Celia had said, but he answers hastily, "Yeah, sure, sure. 'Bye."

Then, as Pete moves away from the phone to his customer,

¹"This is the Life," Episode XIX, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms), p. 8.

the full force of the word stops Pete "dead in his tracks." TUXEDO! He doesn't have one. He tries on his dad's and Grandpa's old one, but neither fits. He must have a tux, though, and there is only one way out. Pete uses the money he has been saving for the Larry Smith Project.

The morning after Pete's dinner party the Fischer family is deeply disturbed to learn that next Friday, just five days away, the Finance Committee will be compelled to recommend to the Board of Trustees that they let Larry Smith go because four of the young people, and Pete is one of them, have not fulfilled their pledges of \$50 each.

Pete, brought to realize the seriousness of his failure in this important obligation, is determined to right his wrong. He arranges an auction to be sponsored by the young people for the purpose of raising the \$200. Shedding himself of Celia's influence, Pete renews his old friendship with Betty, and together they set about making the auction a success.

The spiritual content of this episode, printed in summary by the Television Committee for use in advance publicity, reads as follows:

This is the story on Christian stewardship. It is the story of Pete Fischer's first pay check and what he does with it. In his youthful exuberance and thoughtlessness he squanders his hard earned money. He is utterly oblivious of his obligations to the local congregation.

In a moving scene at the breakfast table both Carl Fischer and Grandpa Fischer have a heart to heart

talk with the boy, pointing out that in the strictest sense his first pay check was really not his to keep; it was a trust from the Lord, for the administration of which he would be held accountable. In his folksy way, Grandpa picks up an orange from the table, and points out that, while men may plant orange trees and water them, the trees themselves and the oranges they produce are a gift of God. "He's only letting us use them." So, too, our pay checks are gifts of God -- "He's only letting us use them."

Those answering the questionnaire were assured that this story presented a genuine realistic experience. Forty-six answered "Yes" to Question 1, "Is the situation (the problem that confronts the personalities in this episode) adequately identified for the viewer?" There were no negative answers. Two thought this identification was made in the words of the dialogue; three thought with action on the part of the characters; and forty-one thought it was done with both words and action. Question 5 on identifying a response to the situation was answered in the positive by forty-six. Everyone thought a response was identified for the viewer. The manner in which this identification was made was sought for in Question 6. "With words in the dialogue," said five. "With action on the part of the characters," said two people. And thirty-nine indicated, "With both words and action." To Question 8, "Is the psychological process which unites the situation with the response logically traced by dialogue and action for the viewer?" there were forty-one answers "Yes" and five answers "No."

Answers to the questions on theological content

evidenced less agreement. Thirty-six thought the situation was identified theologically; ten thought it was not.

(Question 3) Answering Question 4 on how a theological identification was made, twelve said "With words in the dialogue;" no one said, "With action on the part of the characters;" and thirty-five said, "With both words and action." Thirty-five thought the response offered to the situation was identified theologically; eleven said it was not.

(Question 7) To thirty-one the psychological process which unites the situation with the response was identified in terms of Christian motivation. To fifteen it seemed that this identification was not made. (Question 9) Of those answering Question 10 on how this identification was made, seven said, "With words in the dialogue;" two said, "With action on the part of the characters;" nineteen said, "With both words and action."

Now we turn to a study of the third draft screenplay mimeographed script for this episode. We see that the situation in which Pete finds himself is best identified by his father, Carl Fischer. Carl says to his son:

I hope you'll try to understand what you have done, son -- You not only fell down on your promise -- but you made your own selfish interests the most important part of your life. You had your choice between helping others through your gift to the Church -- or taking Celia to a party Any fun you have at the expense of others -- or at the expense of your Christian obligations isn't really much fun, is it, son? . . . It seems there's a lot of young folks in the congregation who haven't learned to carry their part of responsibility.

Always ready to take -- but never ready to give.²

A more specific theological evaluation is made of the situation by Grandpa:

. . . You see, Pete, most people never stop to think just where their money and all their other possessions come from -- You know what I mean, son. It's just that you've forgotten. But it's something we just can't afford ever to forget -- that all that we are -- and all that we have -- comes from God.

Take this orange, for instance. Where'd it come from? (Peter, with a shrug: "From an orange tree.") That's right. And if a man waters and takes care of a tree, he gets a good crop. But he didn't make the tree in the first place, did he? . . . Orange trees were here on earth before we came -- and they'll be here after we leave. But they're here for us to use -- a gift from the Creator. And that's the way it is, Pete, with everything we have. Everything! Everything we have really belongs to God. He's just letting us use it.³

In the minds of 78 per cent of those answering the questionnaire, this adequately identified the situation theologically. However, if the purpose of the episode was to present Christian stewardship, it must be noted that without faith in Christ there can be no proper evaluation of the problems of stewardship. Because the Christian knows the love of God in Christ Jesus, and because he believes in Christ Jesus as his personal Savior, he is constrained by his love for the Savior to view all that he is

²Ibid., pp. 30-31.

³Ibid., pp. 32-33.

and has as a trust from God. This fact has not been made clear in this episode.

A proper response to Pete's problem, and 76 per cent of those answering the questionnaire thought this response was identified theologically, is made in contributions by Carl Fischer, the father, and Grandpa Fischer.

Says Carl:

What Grandpa was leading up to, Pete, is that the \$135 you earned during the past six weeks really weren't yours in the first place; that money was -- er -- a sort of trust -- for which you and you alone were accountable -- not merely to your mother and me -- but to the Lord, who had a purpose for letting that money come into your hands.

PETER
(puzzled)

A purpose? What purpose?

CARL

Any one of a dozen or more -- The Church? The Gospel? The spread of the Christian message? Larry Smith?

GRANDPA

That's right, son. If our money belongs to the Lord, and if we always keep that in mind, we're just naturally goin' to use a good portion of it for HIS purposes. It just CAN'T be otherwise. And, what's more, we'll be much happier for having whared with HIM.⁴

Thus two aspects of the Christian's stewardship life are hinted at, but not discussed. One has to do with cause, and the other with result. Carl points out that God has a purpose for entrusting us with certain gifts.. This purpose should motivate a proper use of the gifts. And Grandpa

⁴Ibid., pp. 33-34.

reminds that an accurate use of the gifts will result in happier living.

His father and grandfather have now encouraged Pete to respond to similar situations regarding the use of money by asking himself the questions about cause and effect. For what purpose has the Lord given me this money? What will be the ultimate best result for others and myself when I use the money? Missing from the discussion is an explicit statement of the deeper motivation in the heart of the Christian, namely, the love of Christ.

This brings a consideration of the final question: What evidence is there that the characters of the story act from true Christian motivation? Sixty-seven per cent of those answering the questionnaire thought that there was such evidence.

Those answering Question 9 positively were influenced to their decision most strongly by the sincere treatment that is given the problem at hand by Pete, his father, and grandfather at the breakfast table. Although a specific statement about why they are so concerned with the problem is not forthcoming, it is to be inferred by the viewer from their very language that the seriousness of the matter is determined by their attitude about and relationship to God. The distinctively Christian truth that this relationship to God is in its correct dimensions only through faith in his son Jesus Christ receives no verbal attention here.

What conclusions may now be made? Theologically speaking, it may be said that the episode "Ours, But Not to Keep," makes its best contribution in the response that Pete should have made to his particular situation concerning his handling of money. The episode is much weaker as it attempts to evaluate Pete's problem in terms of the Christian conscience. Most questionable of all points is whether the episode shows that the Christian is motivated in his life by the love of Christ the Savior.

The scene opens through the curtains with Roger, who is alone here and seems troubled to think in the better part of which not to make a change. He does not like certain characteristics that he sees in Roger, the powerful, drift-
ing business executive. "He seems all wound up in his work. I wonder if he ever relaxes."

Later the scene shifts to a dinner at the Beverly Hills Hotel, where Roger meets with his associates. Finally passing that business acquaintance have departed him. Politely inquiring about the situation with Roger and his business arrangements, Mrs. Brewster expresses a hopeless dissatisfaction with his attitude toward their sons and marriage. She has tried to speak with her husband about maintaining a regular life, but she has failed to reach him.

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CHAPTER IX

TOO BUSY TO LIVE¹

Roger Brownlee and his wife are former, old time friends and fellow church members with Carl and Anna Fischer. Roger has offered Carl a flattering, well paying position with his rapidly expanding firm. But because it involves selling his drug store and travelling away from home quite a bit, Carl is hesitant about accepting the new job. Through his contacts with Roger, Carl becomes more and more inclined to think it the better part of wisdom not to make a change. He does not like certain characteristics that he sees in Roger, the forceful, driving business executive. "He seems all wound up in his work. I wonder if he ever relaxes."

Carl and Anna are invited to a dinner at the Brownlee home, but Roger never makes his appearance, finally phoning that business appointments have detained him. Noticably unhappy about the situation with Roger and his business preoccupations, Mrs. Brownlee expresses a hopeless dissatisfaction with his attitude toward their home and marriage. She has tried to speak with her husband about maintaining a balanced life, but she has failed to reach him.

¹"This is the Life," Episode XXII, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

Carl and Anna gradually come to the decision that for the sake of their family and for their own welfare Carl will will not go into business with Roger, even though Roger continues to plead and even to offer more financial security with the new position.

An unforeseen development in the Brownlee household is Mrs. Brownlee's decision that she "simply can't stand it any longer" living "in a vacuum." She tells Anna that she is going off by herself someplace for a few days to think it over. "Perhaps if I'm not here, Roger might pause long enough to think about it, too."

Roger does think it over as he begins to feel keenly the loss of his wife. Then one day when Carl is visiting him in his office Roger receives a package marked "Urgent-Private." In the package is a can opener with the tag, "Cook's Cabins." Now Roger knows where his wife is. But more than that he knows that she wants him to be with her at the same place where they had spent their honeymoon.

Roger joins his wife, shares his conviction with her that he has been "starving for the things that really matter," and determines that they are going to start all over again, trying to keep first things first.

As the Television Committee has published it for use with advance publicity, this is a brief summary of the spiritual content of this episode:

This episode is a dramatization of the doctrine:
"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, . . . and all

these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6:33

Mr. Roger Brownlee, a successful business man, offers Carl Fischer a splendid opportunity for advancement. Mr. Fischer is very much interested at first, but when he sees that Mr. Brownlee, in his eager pursuit of riches, has lost all sense of spiritual values, he becomes progressively less interested in Mr. Brownlee's offer.

At a climactic moment in the story, Mr. Fischer has an opportunity to tell Mr. Brownlee why he is declining the offer. Mr. Fischer has decided to keep "first things first." Among the "first things" he is seeking to preserve are his own personal faith, the faith of his family, and the spiritual nurture of his children.

This episode should prove an effective antidote to the crass materialism and the general acquisitiveness of today.

That this episode presented a genuine realistic experience was quite evident from the answers of those who filled in the questionnaire. Thirty-four answered "Yes" to Question 1, "Is the situation (the problem that confronts the personalities in this episode) adequately identified for the viewer? There was one negative answer. Four thought this identification was made in the words of the dialogue; three persons with action on the part of the characters; and twenty-seven thought it was done with both words and action. Question 5 on identifying a response to the situation was answered in the positive by thirty-five. Everyone thought a response was identified for the viewer. The manner in which this identification was made was sought for in Question 6. "With words in the dialogue," said one person. "With

action on the part of the characters," said four. And thirty indicated, "With both words and action." To Question 8, "Is the psychological process which unites the situation with the response logically traced by dialogue and action for the viewer?" there were thirty-two answers "Yes," and three answers "No."

A greater divergence of opinion was registered when it came to answering the questions about theological content. Twenty-nine thought the situation was identified theologically; six thought it was not. (Question 3) Answering Question 4 on how a theological identification was made, twelve said, "With words in the dialogue." One said, "With action on the part of the characters." Sixteen said "With both words and action." Twenty-one thought a response offered to the situation was identified theologically; fourteen said it was not. (Question 7) To twenty the psychological process which unites the situation with the response was identified in terms of Christian motivation. To fifteen it seemed that this identification was not made. (Question 9) Of those answering Question 10 on how this identification was made, two said, "With words in the dialogue;" one said, "With action on the part of the characters;" and seventeen said, "With both words and action."

A detailed examination of the fourth draft mimeo-

graphed shooting script of the episode reveals how the situation facing the Brownlees is progressively identified for the viewer. In the dinner scene with Carl and Anna Fischer, Mrs. Brownlee is heard to say, "It's Roger. He's so absorbed with business that he hasn't time to think about anything else He's changed In many ways."² Roger and his wife used to share things together -- dream together of the day when their ship would come in. Well, it's as if their ship has come in and Roger's so busy unloading it, he no longer has time for living. There are many men who are bigger successes than Roger and they've retained their spiritual balance and their family life. But Roger, well, "he's sort of out of control."

Facing up to her husband himself, Mrs. Brownlee makes a further identification of his problem when she says, "You're a great success, Roger -- at making a living. But you've made an awful failure -- of living. Making money's become a disease with you."³

The problem is placed within its proper theological framework -- and to 83 per cent of those filling in the questionnaire this theological identification was adequate -- in the scene of Roger's visit with Carl at the Fischer home.

²Ibid., pp. 14-16.

³Ibid., p. 21.

CARL

Roger, I appreciate what you're offering me -- but I can't see any advantage in making the change . . . I've made up my mind to keep first things first Naturally I want financial security for my family, but I believe I have that now You probably won't understand this, Roger But as a Christian, I've been trying to keep certain spiritual values uppermost in my life. The spiritual welfare of my family, the religious training of my children, the inner peace and contentment that comes from knowing I've put GOD first in all things. To me, there's nothing greater or more important than that.

BROWNLEE

Are you trying to tell me it's wrong to try to better yourself financially?

CARL

Certainly not. But if you do so at the expense of your spiritual security -- or that of your family -- then that's not for me.

BROWNLEE

Nonsense!

CARL

(through narrowed eyes)

No?

(he levels off)

Every day of your life you've been breaking the very FIRST of the Ten Commandments.

BROWNLEE

(a little impatient)

Oh, come, now!

CARL

(persuading)

"Thou shalt have no other God's before Me."
Roger, you've been worshipping the Almighty Dollar so long, you've forgotten there IS a God.⁴

Having made this evaluation, Carl continues in this scene to offer, though indirectly, a response to Roger's problem. Sixty per cent of those answering the questionnaire

⁴Ibid., pp. 31-33.

felt that this response was identified theologically.

CARL'S VOICE

(continuing, relenting somewhat)

When have you been in church last? How long has it been since you and Betty have prayed together -- the way I know you used to do? How long since you could take time to think about the things in life that really count? -- your own soul and the souls of your children? Those are the things that Anna and I have clung to throughout the years, Roger -- and we've decided that no matter what the price, those are the things we want to keep clinging to.⁵

From this and Carl's previous speeches the inference is to be drawn by the viewer that since the real problem is an improper attitude toward God and His demands upon man's life, the solution to this problem is getting back into the correct relationship with God. If the relationship with God is in a healthy state, then the evidences of that healthy state will be church attendance, worship and prayer. However, it is never said for the viewer's benefit that God declares that man to be in the desired relationship with Him as the Heavenly Father only when he comes to faith in His Son Jesus Christ. This is, of course, the essence of the Christian message, and the core of the Christian life.

That final sentence in Carl's speech above probably gave rise to the opinion of 57 per cent of those filling in the questionnaire that the episode identified true Christian motivation. Carl has said that the motivating factor in the lives of the members of the Fischer family is that they want

⁵Ibid., p. 33.

to keep these matters of the spirit uppermost in all that they do. The inner springs of contentment and peace flow refreshingly from total commitment to God. "I've put GOD first in all things."

The dramatic climax that is missing from the episode is the declaration that it is God Himself who makes possible this commitment by energizing man with his own Spirit, that man might act freely in the love of Christ, whose indwelling by faith changes a heart of stone to a heart of flesh.

In recapitulation then, it may be said that the film's best efforts are set toward identifying Roger's problem theologically. This is done clearly and rather happily. But the episode falls disappointingly short in presenting a theological response to this situation and in showing that the power that moves a Christian's life is the love of Christ.

CHAPTER X

THE PARKER FAMILY¹

Eddie Parker, a bright-looking teen-ager of about 18, is planning a surprise for his parents' twentieth wedding anniversary. He has had an enlargement made of their wedding picture, and he has had it framed in sterling silver. An anniversary card, lying on the desk in front of him, is waiting for Eddie's signature. But the card never feels the touch of Eddie's pen. As he sits there, wondering just how to sign the card, he becomes the unwitting listener to a squabble his parents are having. It's serious. That's evident from Mrs. Parker's emphatic final words. "And I'm not going to stay in Middleburg." Weary and tired of constant bickering, Mr. Parker shrugs and turns away. "That's up to you."

Meanwhile, Pete Fischer is waiting for Eddie to pick him up for the ball game. The two of them are mainstays on the Middleburg High baseball team. When Eddie is overdue, Pete decides to go over and see what's keeping him.

Pete finds Eddie packing for a trip. He says he's going to join the navy -- or something. His parents are going to get a divorce and he's only in the way. Pete

¹"This is the Life," Episode XXIX, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

pleads with him to stick it out, but only succeeds in getting Eddie to promise that he'll pitch the game for the championship that afternoon. After that's over, he's "shovin' off."

While Eddie dresses for the game, Pete runs over home to tell his parents about Eddie's predicament. They decide to invite Eddie to dinner after the game. That may give them enough time to think of some way in which to help Eddie and his mother and dad.

The game is a "jim dandy," and it's Eddie Parker's pitching and fielding that spells victory for Middleburg. He is the hero of the hour as he joins the Fischers for their evening meal. After the meal, Eddie experiences for the first time participating in a family devotional period. He is visibly touched by the Bible's injunction that we are not to be bitter, wrathful and angry, but rather forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us. Eddie decides to stay at home.

An opportunity for Mrs. Fischer to express her own Christian convictions about marriage and the family comes during her visit to collect a Red Cross contribution from Mrs. Parker. Mrs. Parker is set to some serious reflection.

It's some time later, as his mother is helping Eddie to pack for college, that she discovers the wedding picture and the anniversary card they had never received because of their quarrel. This token of affection is the final impetus

given by Eddie to draw his parents together again. This inspires them to gather all their thoughts on love and marriage and family into the determination to make it all over "into something new and better."

The following summarized spiritual content of this episode has been printed by the Television Committee for use with advance publicity:

In this episode we have a striking contrast between two families -- the Parker Family and the Fischer Family. Each family has an 18-year-old son: Eddie Parker and Pete Fischer.

Because of incessant quarreling and general "incompatibility," the senior Parkers have consulted their lawyer about a possible divorce. Eddie Parker has overheard a conversation between his parents in which they discussed their plans for separation. He is overcome by a filling of insecurity and sadness.

In the course of events he is at the Fischer home for dinner. For the first time in his life he participates in a family devotion. This impresses him deeply. In a subsequent scene we see him telling his mother about his experience at the Fischer home and expressing the wish that they, too, could have such devotions.

Weeks later Anna Fischer stops off at the Parker home while canvassing for the Red Cross. Mrs. Parker, cool at first, gradually warms up to Mrs. Fischer and the two engage in a discussion on marriage and divorce. The story ends with an indication that the Parker Family will stay together.

The questionnaire results concerning the episode give the opinion that it presents a genuine realistic experience within an intelligible theological framework.

Forty-six said "Yes" to Question 1, "Is the situation (the problem that confronts the personalities in this

episode) adequately identified for the viewer" There were no negative answers. Four thought this identification was made with words in the dialogue; one thought with action on the part of the characters; and forty-one persons thought it was done with both words and action. (Question 2) Question 5 on identifying a response to the situation was answered in the positive by all forty-six. Everyone thought a response was identified for the viewer. The manner in which this identification was made was sought for in Question 6. "With words in the dialogue," said four; "With action on the part of the characters," said one; and forty-one indicated, "With both words and action." To Question 8, "Is the psychological process which unites the situation with the response logically traced by dialogue and action for the viewer?" there were forty-three answers "Yes" and three answers "No."

Thirty-eight thought the situation presented in this episode was identified theologically; eight thought it was not. (Question 3) Answering Question 4 on how a theological identification was made, eighteen said "With words in the dialogue;" one said, "With action on the part of the characters;" and twenty-one said "With both words and action." Thirty-eight thought the response offered to the situation was identified theologically; eight thought it was not. (Question 7) To twenty-seven the psychological process which unites the situation with the response was

identified in terms of Christian motivation. To nineteen it seemed that this identification was not made. (Question 9) Of those answering Question 10 on how this identification was made, five said "With words in the dialogue;" no one said "With action on the part of the characters;" and twenty-three indicated it was done "With both words and action."

A study of the third draft, revised shooting script for this episode is necessary in determining exactly what gave rise to these questionnaire opinions.

In this particular episode the theological identification of the problem and the identification of a theological response to the problem seem to be dependent upon each other for clarification.

It is no secret that the Parkers are involved in an unhappy marriage situation. That's the fundamental problem discussed in the episode.

ELISE

(exploding)

. . . If your father hadn't left you his old lumber mill -- we wouldn't be buried in a place like this. We'd still be in Chicago having good times!

HARVEY

(with a trace of contempt)

Good times? What? -- card parties -- the races and night clubs? Humph!

(then to cut it short)

Look -- why can't you be happy in Middleburg? Why don't you stop sulking and pouting? -- and feeling sorry for yourself. Frankly, I'm getting sick of it.

ELISE
(flaring)
Oh, are you? Then why don't you do something about it?

HARVEY
(with emphatic finality)
Elise -- I'm NOT going to sell the lumber mill.

ELISE
(just as emphatically)
And I am NOT going to stay in Middleburg.

HARVEY
(wearily)
That's up to you.²

There is no attempt to evaluate this problem theologically until Anna Fischer, at the time of her Red Cross call on Mrs. Parker, offers her simple description of marriage. In doing this, Anna is also offering a solution to the problem of an unhappy marriage, although indirectly.

ELISE
Mrs. Fischer, I suppose you think I'm terrible for wanting a divorce.

ANNA
(with evident sympathy)
I think I understand.

ELISE
(surprised)
Then you -- agree?

ANNA
(smiles)
No, I'm afraid I don't.

ELISE
Well -- er -- what do you mean?

ANNA
You see, to me -- marriage is something sacred.

²Ibid., pp. 6-7.

Something none of us is free to break -- unless for reasons clearly stated in the Bible. For me marriage has been a lifetime career - a lifetime responsibility, not only to my husband -- but to my children.

ELISE

But doesn't that responsibility work two ways?

ANNA

(she nods)

Yes. But, if there is love and respect on both sides -- and a willingness to understand and meet each other half way -- usually things have a way of working out.

ELISE

(ruefully)

Somehow, it just hasn't worked out that way for us.

ANNA

(diffidently at first)

Mrs. Parker -- I don't know if I should say this --
(then warming up)

But -- do you really think you're doing the right thing if you deprive Eddie of the security of a home? ³ of the guidance and companionship of a father?

The conversation is interrupted here and Mrs. Fischer is deprived of the opportunity to explain in more detail just how God looks upon marriage. But the seed of thought that she has planted is watered by later circumstances and finally bears fruit in a moving closing scene.

ELISE

(constrained)

Harvey -- this divorce -- maybe it really doesn't have to happen.

. . . .

(haltingly)

I -- I just haven't been able to sign those papers.

³Ibid., pp. 41-43.

Not after what Mrs. Fischer said the other day.
 (then noting his quizzical expression)
 I didn't tell you -- but she was here one day
 last week -- and she said something I haven't been
 able to forget.

. . . .
 We really have no right to a divorce. Marriage
 is a sacred thing. A lifetime responsibility.

. . . .
 We shouldn't deprive Eddie of the security of a
 home.

(sincerely; contritely; haltingly)
 Harvey, why can't we start over.

HARVEY

(happily; deeply moved)
 I've been hoping to hear you say that.

. . . .
 Let's make our marriage over -- into something
 new and better.⁴

This is the only theological treatment of the episode's
 basic problem.

A problem closely related to that of the Parker's con-
 templated divorce receives somewhat greater theological
 attention in the episode. This problem involves Eddie and
 his relationship to his parents.

Eddie is bitter and grim when Pete discovers him pack-
 ing his clothes, getting ready to leave town. His problem
 is identified for the viewer in this scene:

EDDIE

(deciding to let Pete in on it)
 I guess you'll hear about it anyway. Mom and Dad
 are getting a divorce.

. . . .
 Soon, the whole town'll know about it. I'm gettin'
 away before I'll have to face the gang. I'll join
 the navy -- or something.

⁴Ibid., pp. 49-50.

PETER

But, Eddie -- you can't just pack up and go like this. What'll your folks say?

EDDIE

(bitterly)

What do they care? They're just waitin' for me to be out of the way. They've only stayed together this long on my account anyway.

PETER

(curiously)

How do you know?

EDDIE

I heard them say so.

PETER

Maybe you got it wrong.

EDDIE

(cynically)

Yeah?

PETER

(fumbling)

But -- er -- well, it still isn't right for you to walk out like this!⁵

Pete does not continue here to tell why it is wrong.

That remains to be done, not directly, but by inference, in a later scene at the Fischer home. This scene accomplishes both a theological evaluation of Eddie's problem and an identification of the proper theological response to the problem.

EDDIE

Thanks for the dinner, Mrs. Fischer. It was sure good.

GRAMPA

(quietly)

We'd like to have you join us in our devotions, Eddie.

⁵Ibid., pp. 16-17.

EDDIE
(mechanically)

Yea. Sure.

CARL

Well, then, today's reading is from Ephesians, Chapter 4, verses 31 and 32.

• • •
"Let all bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice."

• • •
"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you."

• • •

(reading from booklet)

In this text, God tells us that we are to forgive our fellowmen -- even as He has forgiven us. We are always to remember that it was the tenderheartedness of God which moved Him to send His Son into the world, to suffer and to die, that all our sins might be forgiven.

• • •
Once we have learned to forgive others, as God has forgiven us, we shall be able to remove all bitterness, all malice, and all unrighteous anger from our hearts.

• • •
And when we forgive, let us remember that to forgive is to forget -- even as God, for the Savior's sake -- has cast all our sins behind His back and has promised to remember them no more.

• • •
If we learn to love all those with whom we live, and to cover their faults with the mantle of sweet charity -- we shall find love flowing back into our lives -- and we shall be the happier.

• • •
Indeed, by our own EXAMPLE of loving kindness, we may influence others to come closer to Him who is their only Lord and Savior. May God enable us to be examples of Christian love and kindness among those with whom we live.

(he pauses)

Let us pray.

• • •
Dear Father in Heaven, who hast covered our faults with the blood of Christ, create in us a spirit of forgiveness great enough to forget the sins of

all who do us wrong. Amen.⁶

The viewer of this episode is to draw the inference, together with Eddie himself, that the real reason for his bitterness is his inability to love and forgive his parents. The devotional message has ligh-lighted the fact that this bitterness can be overcome. First of all, Eddie is to recognize that God has forgiven him in Christ, even though he is guilty of just as many offenses as his parents. As God has forgiven him, so does God give the strength to forgive his parents. And as Eddie learns to forgive his parents, he shall be able to remove the bitterness from his heart. Since it is possible by faith to become an example of loving kindness, Eddie is encouraged to influence by gentleness also his parents, that they may come closer to their only Lord and Savior.

Eddie's response to this stimulating experience is identified in the scene where he tells his mother that he has decided not to leave after all. She asks him what happened to make him change his mind. This is Eddie's answer:

The devotions they had -- after dinner.
 (struggling with his words)
 You know -- Mr. Fischer -- he reads from the Bible
 and from a little book. It said that -- we should
 forgive each other -- and love what's best in each other.⁷

⁶Ibid., pp. 27-30.

⁷Ibid., p. 32.

This statement by Eddie is the one statement of the episode which comes closest to identifying a true Christian motivation. This does not necessarily mean that at this point Eddie himself is moved to be forgiving by the love of Christ. But this witness, following closely on the heels of Eddie's previous contact with the Fischers during their devotions, does help the viewer to define Christian motivation.

Perhaps the love of Christ is also implied in Anna Fischer's: "For me marriage is a sacred thing." Otherwise there is no verbal evidence to the fact that the characters of this episode are moved by the love of Christ.

A study of the theological strengths and weaknesses of this episode has shown agreement with the tabulated results of the questionnaire.

Eighty-three per cent thought the situation was identified theologically.

Eighty-three per cent thought the response was identified theologically.

Fifty-nine per cent thought true Christian motivation was identified.

CHAPTER XI

THE BEGINNING OF THE RAINBOW¹

A new acquaintance has been added to the list of Emily Fischer and her boy friend, David Wainwright, with the arrival in Middleburg of Duke Elliot. He has been dating Marion Evans, who works at the library with Emily, and Marion is convinced "he's everything I've ever dreamed of . . . a man who likes to go places and do things."

When she comes back from her vacation Marion springs the surprise news that she is Mrs. Duke Elliot, and the newly married couple invites Emily and Dave to a celebration at their new apartment. Emily accepts and counters with an invitation for them to hear Edward Brandon give a review of his book The Beginning of the Rainbow. That strikes an especially responsive note in Duke, because during the war Brandon was a newspaper correspondent who visited their sector a number of times and of whom the boys thought a great deal.

Duke and Marion fail to make the book review, though, and apparently it's because they are having another one of their big parties. But Emily thinks that Brandon's message is one that Duke and Marion should hear so she invites them

¹"This is the Life," Episode XXXIII, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

to a barbecue at which the Fischers are entertaining Mr. Brandon. Duke accepts, primarily with the intention of rescuing the tough, salty war correspondent from a dull evening with the old-fashioned Fischer family.

Duke is in for a rude awakening. Mr. Brandon, the same Mr. Brandon for whom the boys in his sector had so much respect, is a serious thinking Christian who expresses his conviction that "man's only true happiness lies in the Gospel of Christ as we have it in the Bible."

Duke has been looking for happiness, in fact he has been pursuing it. But real happiness has escaped him, and this fact has been made bold by the words of Mr. Brandon.

Driving home that night, troubled in his mind and involved with his thoughts, Duke speeds and is arrested. The result: \$200 fine or thirty days in jail. Marion goes to Duke's boss for help, but he fires Duke. Mr. Fischer finally loans Marion the money to bail Duke out. Marion promises to sell the car to pay the money back.

With Duke out of a job and with no prospect of a job in sight because of the arrest incident, Marion goes back to work at the library. Brandon's book The Beginning of the Rainbow pops up again and this time Marion determines to take it home and read it. While she is out to lunch, Duke stops by and Emily suggests that he take it along home with him for his wife. Deflated and discouraged, Duke wanders on home with the book under his arm.

That night, in a long session with Brandon's book, Duke thrills to its contents, and joins in a hearty endorsement of Brandon's last chapter. "Of all the joys which the human heart can experience, none is greater than the joy of a Christian faith."

That's the landmark for which he and Marion have been searching. They have found it -- the beginning of the rainbow.

The Television Committee has summarized the spiritual content of this episode for publicity purposes and printed it as follows:

This story depicts the joy of the Christian life. It refutes the idea that a consistent Christian is a man with a sour face, a dark suit, and a big umbrella.

For a while Emily Fischer finds herself moving in a fast set. She soon sees that she is out of her element and withdraws. The fact is, her fast moving friends are happy to drop her from their set.

Emily continues on her cheerful way, unperturbed by the fact that she has, in effect, been ostracized by her "friends," particularly by a young couple with whom she had been rather chummy, Duke and Marion.

During the ensuing months, Duke's happiness turns to ashes on his lips. Both he and Marion hit upon difficult days. They turn to Emily. Through Emily, as well as through others, they learn that the greatest joys in life are not to be found in an endless round of pleasure but in the assurance which God has given us through faith in Christ the Savior.

The title of this episode is related to a book which Emily came across in the library and which she shares with Duke and Marion. This is a book by a Christian author who speaks of the Christian life as "The Beginning of the Rainbow."

The questionnaire results on this episode show substantial agreement both on the genuineness of the experience and its theological treatment.

Thirty-nine answered "Yes" to Question 1, "Is the situation (the problem confronting the personalities in this episode) adequately identified for the viewer?" There were no negative answers. Three thought this identification was made in the words of the dialogue; one thought by the actions of the characters; and thirty-five indicated that it was done with both words and action. Question 5 on identifying a response to the situation was answered in the positive by thirty-eight; one indicated he did not think a response was identified for the viewer. The manner in which this identification was made was sought for in Question 6. "With words in the dialogue," said seven; no one said, "With action on the part of the characters;" and thirty-one indicated, "With both words and action." To Question 8, "Is the psychological process which unites the situation with the response logically traced by dialogue and action for the viewer?" there were thirty-eight answers "Yes" and one answer "No."

Thirty-five thought the situation was identified theologically; four thought it was not. (Question 3) Answering Question 4 on how a theological identification was made, twelve said, "With words in the dialogue;" no one said, "With action on the part of the characters;" and twenty-three

thought it was done "With both words and action." Thirty-four thought the response offered to the situation was identified theologically; five said it was not. (Question 7) To thirty-four the psychological process which unites the situation with the response was identified in terms of Christian motivation. To five it seemed that this identification was not made. (Question 9) Of those answering Question 10 on how this identification was made, eight said "With words in the dialogue;" no one said "With action on the part of the characters;" and twenty-six indicated that it was done "With both words and action."

The problem facing Duke and Marion is not seen in its bare truthfulness until it is viewed in retrospect. This is evident from a closer study of the third draft, corrected shooting script of the episode.

Marion tells Emily, after Duke has been fired:

I'm really getting worried about Duke. This come-down has been awfully hard on him. He doesn't seem to have anything to cling to. And all this happiness we've been chasing has blown up right in our faces.²

Duke himself says:

Frankly, Emily -- I'd sort of considered you Fischers old-fashioned. But I'd never thought of Brandon being that way --

(pauses)

But now I'm beginning to wonder if maybe it's me that's out of step.³

²Ibid., p. 38.

³Ibid., p. 39.

Duke is showing signs of having reflected on Mr. Brandon's words on that night of the barbecue. It was at this point that Duke's problem was pointed up in its true theological perspective, and 90 per cent of the questionnaires on this episode indicated that this evaluation of the problem was theologically adequate.

CARL

(to Brandon)

You say in your search all over the world you've been watching men frantically seeking happiness in many ways?

BRANDON

(reflectively)

Yes -- and when I started writing this book, the pattern became self-evident. The men I'd seen seeking happiness in the pleasures of this earth -- hadn't found it. They had found many so-called pleasures -- but they hadn't found happiness. They were still searching for that.

Especially right after the war -- I saw so many young soldiers who had seen so much hate and destruction -- try to erase it from their minds in countless ways -- I saw these men turn to physical pleasures -- to excess in most cases -- but the harder they tried to find happiness - the more it eluded them.

And then I saw another thing. I saw other people -- all over the world -- rediscovering what had been discarded or ignored by so many. The fact that man's only true happiness lies in the Gospel of Christ as we have it in the Bible.

And those who had discovered this fact were basically happy in spite of everything life had dealt them. You know -- I wasn't exactly a religious man when I first became a war correspondent -- but I finally came to the conclusion -- as I stated in my book -- that the beginning of everybody's rainbow was the moment they realized that Christ was the answer to all their problems -- and that his way of life was the guide that leads across the rainbow -- into eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

.....

A lot of boys who were so restless at first have sort of settled down to this same way of thinking.⁴

If Duke finds himself in a situation where he lacks happiness because he lacks faith in Christ, then the proper theological response to this situation would be that Duke come to realize his error, retreat from his former walk of life and come to know the Savior. These are the exact steps through which he goes and 87 per cent of those filling in the questionnaire were of the opinion that the film thus indicated a proper theological response to the situation.

This scene takes place the morning after Duke has sat up reading Brandon's book.

DUKE

(quietly)

This makes sense, Marion. A lot of sense.

Let me read you something. Let's see. Here it is.

The more I see of this troubled world, the more I realize that the Royal Road to Happiness is one word - Christ. There's no hang-over to the joy of a Christian life. There's no let-down after the build up -- no bankruptcy after the pleasure. The bliss of the believer-in-Christ transcends everything evil that life can throw at him.

Doesn't that make sense to you? I guess this guy Brandon must know what he's talking about. Listen to this.

I have seen men in this world lifted out of their darkest hours by the joyful assurance that through Christ their blackest sins have been forgiven and

⁴Ibid., pp. 26-28.

that, through Him, they have been assured of eternal life with God in heaven.

. . . .
And here's the way Brandon ends that chapter.
(reading from the book)

Of all the joys which the human heart can experience, none is greater than the joy of a Christian faith. A personal faith in Jesus Christ -- the Son of God -- and Savior of the world.

. . . .
(deeply thoughtful)
When a scribe like Brandon can write something like this -- I guess I must've been chasing the wrong kind of rainbows.

MARION
(nodding)

Maybe we've both been chasing the wrong kind of rainbows --

(pauses)
I've been doing a lot of thinking, too, Duke, and --

DUKE
(cuts in)

Since last night -- I've done a lifetime of thinking. About things I've been running away from for years.

. . . .
You know, it's a funny thing -- but while I was reading and thinking -- and beginning to understand what Brandon was driving at -- I began to feel the same way I did once before --
(then reminiscently)

I was flying home after a mission -- all alone -- and I was lost and nearly out of gas. Then, suddenly the weather cleared just enough and I spotted a landmark -- and at that moment I knew I was going to make it. The excitement, and yet relief, that I felt at that moment, was the way I felt this morning -- after reading Brandon's book.
(pauses)

I know I'm putting it badly -- but do you get what I mean?

MARION
(softly)

Yes, Duke -- I think I do.

DUKE
(brightening)

I've been flying blind, Marion -- but last night I spotted a landmark.

MARION
(smiles)

Maybe you saw the beginning of the rainbow?

DUKE
(smiles)

Yeah, Marion, that's it -- the beginning of the rainbow.⁵

One question remains yet to be answered in this study. Does the episode identify true Christian motivation? Eighty-seven per cent of those who filled out the questionnaire said that it does.

This would be the inference drawn from such statements by Mr. Brandon as: ". . . man's only true happiness lies in the Gospel of Christ as we have it in the Bible." "Of all the joys which the human heart can experience none is greater than the joy of a Christian faith."

Although she never articulates the love of Christ as the mainspring in her life, Emily confides her heart's convictions to her father; when he asks her how she feels about being a Christian or striving for the happiness of Duke and Marion, she makes this simple confession, "I wouldn't trade with them for a million."⁶

In review, then, it may be said, a fact to which the questionnaires also agree, that the theological content of this episode receives adequate attention in the three areas

⁵Ibid., pp. 41-43.

⁶Ibid., p. 16.

delineated by this study. To say which area is stronger in its presentation, the theological evaluation of the problem or the identification of a theological response, would be most difficult. Slightly weaker than these two is the effort at identifying true Christian motivation.

CHAPTER XII

A SUMMARY EVALUATION

In making a summary evaluation of the theological content of THIS IS THE LIFE it might be of advantage to consider first the computed final results of the questionnaires in terms of sheer numbers. A total of 1,003 questionnaires is involved. This means that on the average each film was viewed and evaluated by forty students at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. The group did not always contain the same forty students.

The following table shows cumulative tabulations:

(Cf. Appendix A)

1.	Yes	99%	6.	a.	13%
	No	1%		b.	5%
2.	a.	9%		c.	82%
	b.	4%	7.	Yes	74%
	c.	87%		No	26%
3.	Yes	79%	8.	Yes	88%
	No	21%		No	12%
4.	a.	27%	9.	Yes	79%
	b.	3%		No	21%
	c.	70%	10.	a.	19%
5.	Yes	98%		b.	4%
	No	2%		c.	77%

This table seems to indicate that in the opinion of the seminary students who filled out the questionnaires THIS IS THE LIFE is strikingly successful in its attempts to present to the television audience a message of healthy theological proportions. There is no doubt whatsoever about the fact that THIS IS THE LIFE presents genuine, believable situations, taken from the mills of life, with

which the viewer may easily identify himself. This means a vicarious participation is possible on the part of the viewer in a wholesome dramatic experience, for the most part a religious experience.

According to the final tabulations THIS IS THE LIFE, as a series of programs, is of almost equal strength in the three theological areas of study suggested in this evaluation. A total of 79 per cent of the questionnaires voiced the opinion that the situations in the series were theologically evaluated for the viewer. That the responses offered to the situations considered in this series were identified theologically was the opinion expressed in 74 per cent of the questionnaires. The matter of identifying true Christian motivation was adequately treated in this series, according to 78 per cent of the questionnaires.

From this it is apparent that if a film is considered adequate in its theological development, all three elements of the situation, response and motivation have been handled to the satisfaction of the student-viewer. If, however, the episode seems weak, theologically speaking, it is usually because the student-viewer feels that none of the three areas receives proper theological attention. The very slight variation in opinion of not more than 5 per cent shows that these three elements are interdependent and will rise or fall together. The religious director of a dramatic television series, such as THIS IS THE LIFE, may then be

reassured in his own thinking, that if somewhere in his script, the story itself will make a theological evaluation of the situation in which the characters are involved, there will be ready opportunity to offer through the episode itself the proper theological response to the situation. As the process from situation to response unfolds itself, the interaction called for on the part of the personalities concerned will inspire natural settings for the definition, with both words and action, of true Christian motivation. If the first step is missing, that of a proper theological evaluation of the situation, it would seem most difficult to introduce realistically the elements of response and motivation in such a way that the viewer will be able to distinguish the experience as peculiarly Christian.

The questionnaires also show the decided conviction that mere actions in a story are not sufficient to identify Christian experience. The small number of students (3%; 5%; 4%) who answered Questions 4, 6 and 10: "With action on the part of the characters" is accented in significance by the greater number of students (27%; 13%; 19%) who answered: "With words in the dialogue." It is self evident, of course, since Christianity is a way of life, that more students (70%; 82%; 77%) felt that they were sold on the theological content of an episode when both words in the dialogue and action on the part of the characters were used to channel to the viewer an interpretation of the Christian religion.

That a verbal treatment of the subject is necessary somewhere in the development of the plot of the story is a fundamental truth that cannot be avoided.

The ten episodes which present the strongest theological message, according to the results of the questionnaires, are listed in Appendices B through K of this evaluation. Nine episodes which present an adequate theological message, but on which there is less uniform agreement among the students who filled out the questionnaires, have been studied more thoroughly in Chapters III through XI. The remaining six episodes, according to the questionnaire results, are least satisfying when it comes to theological content. They are listed in Appendices L through Q.

What subjects seemed best for illustrating the tenets and expressions of the Christian faith? From Appendices B through K and Chapters III through XI come the following:

1. The problem of an unforgiving spirit.
2. Disappointment and its effect on faith.
3. Marriage relationships.
4. Death and the world to come.
5. Thanksgiving.
6. Guilt complex.
7. Prayer.
8. Worry.
9. Honesty -- the higher law of love.
10. Race relations.
11. Stewardship.
12. Materialism vs. "First things first."
13. Church membership.

It is interesting to note that the subjects of those episodes which are lacking, theologically speaking, according to the questionnaire results, are all taken from the area

of Christian ethics and not doctrine. It would seem, then, that this area presents the greatest problem and challenge to the religious producer of television programs. From Appendices L through Q these subjects have been culled:

1. Resisting bribes.
2. Child training.
3. Family "togetherness."
4. Good neighborliness.
5. Combatting gossip.
6. Community service.

The listing of these subjects, from "guilt complex" to "race relations" to "combatting gossip" also serves to show the many facets of living touched upon by THIS IS THE LIFE. This in itself is a hearty endorsement of the general overall value of this series of programs, produced by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. It is indeed a strikingly successful and eminently courageous venture.

APPENDIX A

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Theological students at Concordia Seminary were asked to underline one answer to each of the following questions with regard to the television episode which they had just viewed:

1. Is the situation (the problem that confronts the personalities in this episode) adequately identified for the viewer? Yes No
2. If yes, then how is this identification made?
a. With words in the dialogue. b. With action on the part of the characters. c. With both words and action.
3. Is the situation identified theologically? In other words, is the situation evaluated for the viewer in terms of God's law and will for man? Yes No
4. If yes, how is this identification made?
a. With words in the dialogue. b. With action on the part of the characters. c. With both words and action.
5. Is a response to the situation identified for the viewer? Yes No
6. If yes, how is this identification made?
a. With words in the dialogue. b. With action on the part of the characters. c. With both words and action.
7. Is the response identified theologically? In other words, is it clear to the viewer that the response has been offered explicitly because it is suggested by God in His Word? Yes No

8. Is the psychological process which unites the situation with the response logically traced by dialogue and action for the viewer? Yes No
9. Is the psychological process which unites the situation with the response identified in terms of Christian motivation, so that the viewer realizes that the impulse to action on the part of a Christian comes from a heart moved by the love of Christ, Who bought us to be His own? Yes No
10. If yes, how is this identification made?
 - a. With words in the dialogue.
 - b. With action on the part of the characters.
 - c. With both words and action.

APPENDIX B

AS WE HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN¹

Spiritual Content as published by the Television Committee:

The unforgiving spirit is all too prevalent throughout the world today -- not only among the unchurched and unconverted but also, alas, among those who profess a faith in Christ the Savior. The purpose of this episode is to exemplify the grace of Christian forgiveness. While the story makes definite reference to forgiveness on the vertical level (from God to man) it stresses chiefly the necessity of forgiveness on the horizontal level (from man to man). The story shows how a Christian family (the Fischers) in a period of weakness fails to exercise the grace of mercy and forgiveness. At a climactic moment the Fischers hear a sermon on the theme: "Let us forgive as we have been forgiven." Having been reminded of the infinite love of God who, for the sake of the Savior, has forgiven all our iniquities, the Fischers repent of the unforgiving attitude and bring forth fruit meet for their repentance. They forgive their erring brother-in-law and welcome him into the intimate fellowship of their family circle.

¹"This is the Life," Episode IV, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

Questionnaire Results on Episode IV:

1.	Yes	51
	No	1
2.	a.	2
	b.	3
	c.	46
3.	Yes	51
	No	1
4.	a.	18
	b.	1
	c.	31
5.	Yes	52
	No	0
6.	a.	3
	b.	4
	c.	45
7.	Yes	51
	No	0
8.	Yes	48
	No	3
9.	Yes	50
	No	2
10.	a.	8
	b.	2
	c.	41

APPENDIX C

THE FLICKERING FLAME¹

Spiritual Content as published by the Television Committee:

This episode deals chiefly with the problem of disappointment and disillusionment in the life of the Christian. How can a God who is a God of love and mercy permit calamity to enter into the lives of those who believe and trust in Him.

In this story calamity enters the life of a pillar of the Middleburg congregation, the church's organist. His only son, for whom he had high hopes, is killed in an airplane accident. For a period of weeks our organist seems to have lost his faith in God and God's providing care. In fact, we see him approach the brink of absolute despair.

As the story reaches its high point, our organist is brought back to his faith in the scriptural assurance that "all things work together for good to them that love God." It is true, he cannot understand the reason for his heart-piercing bereavement, but he is willing to leave the reason in God's hands. In this story we have a modern counterpart to the problem posed in the book of Job: the eternal "Why?" of human suffering.

¹"This is the Life," Episode XI, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

Questionnaire Results on Episode XI:

1.	Yes	40
	No	0
2.	a.	2
	b.	1
	c.	37
3.	Yes	40
	No	0
4.	a.	8
	b.	1
	c.	31
5.	Yes	40
	No	0
6.	a.	1
	b.	4
	c.	35
7.	Yes	35
	No	5
8.	Yes	40
	No	0
9.	Yes	37
	No	3
10.	a.	1
	b.	2
	c.	34

APPENDIX D

AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE¹

Spiritual Content as published by the Television Committee:

The purpose of this story is to show that one of the requisities of a happy marriage is a common faith in Christ the Savior. In this episode we see a Christian girl being swept off her feet and in a moment of high emotion being married to a personable but unbelieving young man -- by a justice of the peace.

During the ensuing months the great cleavage between the two in matters of religion becomes apparent. The Christian girl is exceedingly unhappy over the course of their married life. For this, as well as for other reasons, there is a temporary separation.

At a climactic moment the young man happens into a church as the pastor is performing a Christian wedding ceremony. The pastor is speaking on the text: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." He points out the supreme importance of a common faith in Christ the Savior as the basis of marital happiness. The young man is impressed. In a closing scene we witness a reconciliation between the two young people and we hear from the lips of the young man his determination to learn more about the Savior and to share with the young wife the blessings of her faith in the Christian Gospel.

This episode is an effective presentation against the pitfalls of a mixed marriage.

¹"This is the Life," Episode XX, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

Questionnaire Results on Episode XX:

1.	Yes	43
	No	0
2.	a.	1
	b.	1
	c.	41
3.	Yes	42
	No	1
4.	a.	4
	b.	0
	c.	38
5.	Yes	43
	No	0
6.	a.	1
	b.	1
	c.	41
7.	Yes	41
	No	2
8.	Yes	41
	No	1
9.	Yes	42
	No	1
10.	a.	2
	b.	2
	c.	38

APPENDIX E

PORTALS OF JOY¹

Spiritual Content as published by the Television Committee:

This episode deals with the Christian's assurance of everlasting life through faith in Christ. Jane Brown, an orphan, lives alone with her invalid grandfather, William Brown. She is his sole support, as well as his pride and joy. Theirs is a beautiful friendship. But the day comes when her young suitor, Walter Lange, proposes marriage.

Jane hesitates to accept his proposal, knowing how it might affect her grandfather. Finally her heart wins out and she accepts. Hurrying to her grandfather's bedroom to break the news, she finds that he has died in his sleep.

The thought of a wedding soon after the death of her loved one is unthinkable to her. A few days later, Carl Fischer reads the will of her departed grandfather in which he makes a beautiful confession of his faith in the Savior and his assurance of eternal life. In his will he asks that there be no tears, no mourning, no interruption of the normal flow of life.

Encouraged by her Grandfather's beautiful confession, Jane proceeds with the plans for her marriage.

¹"This is the Life," Episode XXI, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

Questionnaire Results on Episode XXI:

1.	Yes	39
	No	0
2.	a.	6
	b.	2
	c.	31
3.	Yes	38
	No	1
4.	a.	9
	b.	0
	c.	28
5.	Yes	39
	No	0
6.	a.	4
	b.	1
	c.	34
7.	Yes	36
	No	1
8.	Yes	39
	No	0
9.	Yes	38
	No	0
10.	a.	7
	b.	3
	c.	28

APPENDIX F

GIVING THANKS ALWAYS¹

Spiritual Content as published by the Television Committee:

This is the Thanksgiving episode. While the episode is set in the framework of the Fischer family and their preparations for the holiday, the climax of the episode is the Thanksgiving service at the Middleburg church.

In his Thanksgiving sermon, based on Ephesians 5:19-20, Pastor Martin develops the thought that anyone who has experienced the love of God in Christ Jesus will be thankful for all his spiritual and material blessings. He takes this opportunity to remind his congregation of the unspeakable blessing which God has given us through our salvation in Christ and of our assurance of eternal life in heaven. Having received this greater gift, we shall receive also every material gift in an attitude of gratitude and perpetual thanksgiving.

¹"This is the Life," Episode XXIII, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

Questionnaire Results on Episode XXIII:

1.	Yes	34
	No	1
2.	a.	3
	b.	2
	c.	29
3.	Yes	33
	No	2
4.	a.	5
	b.	0
	c.	28
5.	Yes	34
	No	1
6.	a.	5
	b.	1
	c.	28
7.	Yes	33
	No	1
8.	Yes	35
	No	0
9.	Yes	35
	No	0
10.	a.	3
	b.	1
	c.	31

APPENDIX G

THE TRUE GUILT OF RICHARD LUDWIG¹

Spiritual Content as published by the Television Committee:

This episode deals with the problem of personal guilt and its only solution through faith in the atonement of the Savior.

Richard Ludwig, a science teacher at the Middleburg High School, has carried with him a personal guilt for a number of years. He is haunted by a misdeed in his earlier life which he has never revealed to anyone. As a result of this gnawing sense of guilt, his entire personality has been disintegrating more and more every passing day.

His daughter Ruth, seriously concerned about his condition, confides her concern to Emily Fischer. Through the Fischer family Pastor Martin is brought into contact with Mr. Ludwig. In an intimate and moving scene Pastor Martin speaks to Mr. Ludwig not only concerning his sin but also concerning his Savior from sin. In this scene the American public will hear the Christian answer to the problem of guilt.

¹"This is the Life," Episode XXIV, Lutheran Television Production, produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

Questionnaire Results on Episode XXIV:

1.	Yes	42
	No	0
2.	a.	4
	b.	2
	c.	36
3.	Yes	41
	No	1
4.	a.	15
	b.	1
	c.	25
5.	Yes	40
	No	2
6.	a.	13
	b.	1
	c.	25
7.	Yes	40
	No	2
8.	Yes	41
	No	1
9.	Yes	38
	No	4
10.	a.	12
	b.	2
	c.	23

Questionnaire Results on Episode XXIV:

1.	Yes	42
	No	0
2.	a.	4
	b.	2
	c.	36
3.	Yes	41
	No	1
4.	a.	15
	b.	1
	c.	25
5.	Yes	40
	No	2
6.	a.	13
	b.	1
	c.	25
7.	Yes	40
	No	2
8.	Yes	41
	No	1
9.	Yes	38
	No	4
10.	a.	12
	b.	2
	c.	23

APPENDIX H

THE GREATER PARDON¹

Spiritual Content as published by the Television Committee:

This episode, too, deals with the problem of human built and divine forgiveness. The problem is identical to that in Episode XXIV but the dramatic treatment is entirely different.

Sharon Bauers, a young woman of approximately 30, is very unkind to her father-in-law, Gus Bauers, who lives with her and his son. When her treatment of him becomes unbearable, Gus finally leaves, not telling anyone where he is going.

The old man, having been injured in a traffic accident, becomes the victim of amnesia. His family is finally summoned to Chicago where they find him in a hospital. There follow months of remorse, during which Sharon is overcome by a crushing sense of guilt and by her inability to "get through" to her father-in-law to assure him of her sincere regret. Ultimately Sharon comes close to a state of nervous collapse.

At a climactic moment, she confides her inmost feelings to Anna Fischer. Anna tells her, simply but eloquently, of the love of God who has assured her of forgiveness through faith in Christ the Savior. In Anna's simple witness the American public will hear the Christian answer to the problem of human guilt.

¹"This is the Life," Episode XXV, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

Questionnaire Results on Episode XXV:

1.	Yes	32
	No	0
2.	a.	4
	b.	1
	c.	27
3.	Yes	29
	No	3
4.	a.	9
	b.	0
	c.	20
5.	Yes	30
	No	2
6.	a.	3
	b.	1
	c.	26
7.	Yes	29
	No	3
8.	Yes	32
	No	0
9.	Yes	31
	No	1
10.	a.	6
	b.	1
	c.	24

APPENDIX I

THE PRAYER OF HARRIET RICHARDS¹

Spiritual Content as published by the Television Committee:

This episode deals with the doctrine of Christian prayer -- particularly, the submission of the Christian's will to that of a loving Father in Heaven.

On the week before her contemplated wedding, Harriet Richards, Emily Fischer's cousin, is seriously injured in an automobile crash. She is confined to a hospital for a period of eight to ten weeks. During these weeks we see her faith alternately burning bright and flickering low. In fact, she lives through moments of dark and deep depression. She is visited both by Emily Fischer and by Pastor Martin each of whom reminds her of the privilege of Christian prayer.

There comes a moment during her eighth week in the hospital in which her faith has reached its lowest ebb. It is at this moment that Pastor Martin reminds her eloquently of the love of her Heavenly Father, of the redemption which was wrought by Jesus her Savior, and of the prayer which he himself once prayed. "Thy will be done." Harriet Richards is greatly strengthened by the Pastor's reassuring words, and as the story closes she is given opportunity to see tangible proof of the fact that the Heavenly Father did have reasons for leading her through this painful experience. She agrees, "God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform."

¹"This is the Life," Episode XXX, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

Questionnaire Results on Episode **XXX**:

1. Yes 39
No 0

2. a. 1
b. 1
c. 37

3. Yes 39
No 0

4. a. 2
b. 0
c. 37

5. Yes 39
No 0

6. a. 6
b. 1
c. 32

7. Yes 39
No 0

8. Yes 39
No 0

9. Yes 39
No 0

10. a. 6
b. 0
c. 33

APPENDIX J

FORGOTTEN FAITH¹

Spiritual Content as published by the Television Committee:

This episode is a dramatization of the truth in the story of Christ's stilling the storm. Matt. 8:23-27.

Carl Fischer is seriously disturbed and greatly worried about his business at the drugstore. He is so disturbed that the family notices a sudden change in his usual cheerful attitude. He cannot sleep at night, and during the day he gives the impression of a man who is carrying all the problems of the world on his shoulders.

Both Mrs. Fischer and Grandpa Fischer are troubled by the sudden change in Carl. On a certain evening at the dinner table Carl reads the story of Christ's stilling of the storm, but he reads it perfunctorily and without too much thought. Later that evening Grandpa asks Carl if he had paid any attention to what he had read; and then in his own way Grandpa speaks to Carl about the Savior who is bigger than all the storm of life and who will find a way to see us through our affliction.

¹"This is the Life," Episode XXXI, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

Questionnaire Results on Episode XXXI:

1.	Yes	43
	No	0
2.	a.	3
	b.	1
	c.	39
3.	Yes	41
	No	2
4.	a.	16
	b.	0
	c.	25
5.	Yes	43
	No	0
6.	a.	6
	b.	1
	c.	36
7.	Yes	40
	No	3
8.	Yes	41
	No	1
9.	Yes	37
	No	6
10.	a.	6
	b.	0
	c.	31

"This is the life," episode LXXXV, Barbara Leland's
 production, produced by Felix Film, Hollywood, Calif.
 (misographed 54).

APPENDIX K

BUILDING THE BETTER LIFE¹

Spiritual Content as published by the Television Committee:

This episode is a dramatization of a number of reasons for "going to church."

Al Mason, an expert cabinet maker, is a careless and indifferent man in matters of religion. He attends no church and feels none the worse for his non-attendance.

Through Carl Fischer, Mr. Mason is given the job of making a new lectern for the church and doing some minor woodwork in the chancel. While working in the church, Mr. Mason becomes acquainted with Pastor Martin and has an excellent opportunity to observe Pastor Martin at work. (Pastor Martin's office adjoins the church)

On the evening before the lectern is completed, Carl Fischer visits Al Mason in his workshop. Al Mason tells Carl that he has found this assignment a real challenge. In the intimacy of the Mason workshop the two men engage in a heart to heart discussion of just why Carl Fischer goes to church.

On the following Sunday Mr. Mason goes to church for the first time "to find out how the folks like the lectern." But he finds out much more. In Pastor Martin's sermon he finds the way of salvation for him and his family.

¹"This is the Life," Episode XXXIV, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

Questionnaire Results on Episode XXXIV:

1.	Yes	34
	No	0
2.	a.	6
	b.	0
	c.	28
3.	Yes	31
	No	3
4.	a.	5
	b.	0
	c.	26
5.	Yes	34
	No	0
6.	a.	3
	b.	0
	c.	31
7.	Yes	34
	No	0
8.	Yes	34
	No	0
9.	Yes	34
	No	0
10.	a.	7
	b.	0
	c.	27

"This is the life," Episode 34, Inman Television
 Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California
 314 (rephotographed 4/14)

APPENDIX L

THE SHIELD OF FAITH¹

Spiritual Content as published by the Television Committee:

Why go to church? Why insist that our children cultivate regular church-going habits? What good is a Christian faith in the life of the adolescent? This story gives a dramatic answer to these questions by showing how a Christian faith helped one boy to resist temptation and how the lack of a Christian faith caused another boy to yield to the same temptation.

As the story develops we see how the faith of 18-year-old Peter Fischer is an "armor" against the temptations of life. (Eph. 6:13) His early training, his regular attendance at church and Sunday School, his deep Christian faith, all combine to give him the necessary armor against a great temptation which comes his way -- the temptation to accept a bribe and to "let down" in his efforts to win an important high school basketball game. The boy who did not receive a Christian training does yield to this temptation and finally comes to grief.

Does it really pay to attend Sunday School, Bible class, and church? The answer given by this episode should make a deep impression upon the hearts of all parents who have neglected to cultivate the spiritual life of their children.

¹"This is the Life," Episode XII, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

Questionnaire Results on Episode XII:

1.	Yes	55
	No	4
2.	a.	4
	b.	1
	c.	50
3.	Yes	43
	No	16
4.	a.	15
	b.	3
	c.	25
5.	Yes	54
	No	4
6.	a.	6
	b.	1
	c.	47
7.	Yes	32
	No	26
8.	Yes	54
	No	5
9.	Yes	36
	No	23
10.	a.	6
	b.	3
	c.	24

"This is the life," episode XII, "The
 Production, Produced by Family Film, [unclear]
 [unclear] (micrographed by).

APPENDIX M

AS THE TWIG IS BENT¹

Spiritual Content as published by the Television Committee:

In this episode we see sharp contrast between two attitudes toward parental responsibility. Mr. Stone, the indifferent father, insists that he does not want the minds of his children to be cluttered with all sorts of inhibitions and religious bugaboos. He wants his children to be "clear-eyed, resolute, and unafraid." He does not want his children to be prejudiced by "man made ideas about religion."

Grandpa Fischer, on the other hand, tells Mr. Stone that God expects us not merely to feed and clothe the bodies of our children but that he expects us also to nourish their souls. In fact, says Grandpa to Mr. Stone, "Some day we are going to have to give an account to God for the way we have trained our children."

The story depicts a continued conflict between these two contrasting attitudes. In the closing scene Mr. Stone agrees that "as the twig is bent so the three inclines," and he determines, even at this late date, to give his children the benefit of a Christian training.

¹"This is the Life," Episode XIII, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

Questionnaire Results on Episode XIII:

1.	Yes	54
	No	2
2.	a.	1
	b.	1
	c.	51
3.	Yes	38
	No	18
4.	a.	10
	b.	2
	c.	26
5.	Yes	53
	No	2
6.	a.	6
	b.	3
	c.	43
7.	Yes	25
	No	30
8.	Yes	52
	No	3
9.	Yes	20
	No	34
10.	a.	1
	b.	2
	c.	17

APPENDIX N

THE SOLITARY EMBER¹

Spiritual Content as published by the Television Committee:

This is a story of family "togetherness." Eighteen-year-old Peter Fischer lives through a brief period during which he begins to gravitate away from the center of the family circle and begins to associate with company not entirely to his parents' liking.

At a strategic moment, Grandpa Fischer has a heart-to-heart talk with the boy, in which he tells us that God has placed us into a Christian family so that by our mutual encouragement, guidance and correction we might keep each other in the paths of faith and righteousness.

Grandpa points to a separated ember in the fire in the family barbecue pit. As the separated ember begins to lose its glow and its warmth, so the separated member of the family is in danger of losing those spiritual values which are preserved by the family circle.

¹"This is the Life," Episode XVIII, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

Questionnaire Results on Episode XVIII:

1.	Yes	54
	No	0
2.	a.	1
	b.	4
	c.	48
3.	Yes	21
	No	34
4.	a.	4
	b.	2
	c.	15
5.	Yes	51
	No	3
6.	a.	7
	b.	5
	c.	39
7.	Yes	15
	No	36
8.	Yes	46
	No	5
9.	Yes	16
	No	38
10.	a.	1
	b.	1
	c.	13

APPENDIX O

"DO UNTO OTHERS"¹

Spiritual Content as published by the Television Committee:

This episode dramatizes Christian love in action. While the Fischer family is making plans for a vacation at Yellowstone Park, they become aware of the desperate plight of one of their neighbors. Mr. Larson is out of work and Mrs. Larson, who is expecting a baby, is seriously ill.

For a number of days the Fischer family "takes over" at the Larson household, Mrs. Fischer taking the lead. A few days before the scheduled vacation of the Fischer family, the question comes up: What about the Larsons? They are in need not only of financial assistance but also of personal encouragement and help.

After a family discussion, the Fischer family decides to forego their vacation. Owing to a number of unexpected developments, however, the Fischers find it possible to follow through on their original vacation plans -- although they can go "only half as far" and "for only half the time." The point of the story lies in the fact that the Fischers were willing to forego their personal pleasure had this become necessary.

¹"This is the Life," Episode XXVII, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

Questionnaire Results on Episode XXVII:

1.	Yes	39
	No	0
2.	a.	5
	b.	2
	c.	31
3.	Yes	18
	No	21
4.	a.	6
	b.	2
	c.	10
5.	Yes	36
	No	3
6.	a.	5
	b.	1
	c.	30
7.	Yes	17
	No	20
8.	Yes	36
	No	2
9.	Yes	12
	No	27
10.	a.	2
	b.	1
	c.	9

"This is the Life," Episode XXVII, Barbara Television Production, Produced by Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed etc.)

APPENDIX P

THINK NO EVIL¹

Spiritual Content as published by the Television Committee:

This story is a dramatization of the positive requirements of the eighth commandment, particularly the injunction to "put the best construction on everything." Harriet Richards, a niece of Carl and Anna Fischer, a fine Christian girl, is the secretary of Mr. Steele in the Middleburg Plastic Factory. Mr. Steele, a fine, respectable citizen, is happily married.

Mrs. Clark, a neighbor of the Fischers, sees Mr. Steele bring Harriet home from work at a late hour. She begins to put the worst construction on everything. She starts a rumor which soon gets out of control. So widespread and so vicious does the rumor become that Mrs. Steele finally believes the rumor. Utterly crushed, Harriet resigns her position as secretary to Mr. Steele.

During the final moments of the episode Mrs. Clark is confronted by Mrs. Fischer who points out to her the dreadful consequence of uncharitable thinking and uncharitable gossip. The episode concludes with Pastor Martin giving the audience the Christian motivation for "putting the best construction on everything."

¹"This is the Life," Episode XXVIII, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

Questionnaire Results on Episode XXVIII:

1.	Yes	44
	No	0
2.	a.	4
	b.	2
	c.	38
3.	Yes	16
	No	27
4.	a.	1
	b.	3
	c.	12
5.	Yes	44
	No	0
6.	a.	4
	b.	1
	c.	39
7.	Yes	4
	No	40
8.	Yes	36
	No	7
9.	Yes	7
	No	37
10.	a.	1
	b.	1
	c.	5

"This is the Life," Episode 117, International Brotherhood of Production, Produced by Family Films, Hollywood, California, via micrographed reel.

APPENDIX Q

MEN OF GOOD WILL¹

Spiritual Content as published by the Television Committee:

This episode dramatizes the influence of a consistent Christian upon the people of his community. It is a practical demonstration of a Christian trying to be a light, a salt, and a leaven.

There is a strike at the Middleburg Plastic Factory. The strike continues for weeks, resulting in hardships and hunger. Ultimately the strike flares up into violence. Carl Fischer, a member of the Middleburg Chamber of Commerce, suggests that the Chamber appoint a committee -- not to settle the difference between the strikers and employees, but to establish an atmosphere of good will which will make it possible for both sides to discuss their difference calmly and objectively.

The Chamber of Commerce appoints a committee and, to Carl's surprise, makes him chairman of the committee. Carl is somewhat at a loss. He goes to Pastor Martin who tells him that the church, as a church, can take no sides in the purely technical aspects of such a dispute. He tells Carl, however, that he as an individual Christian has a duty to let his light shine and to do all in his power to bring about an atmosphere of good will between the disputing parties.

Carl calls a meeting of representatives of the two groups and appeals to them to meet each other in a spirit of honesty, fairness and mutual good will. He succeeds in accomplishing his purpose. In the concluding frame Grandpa Fischer tells the audience that ever since that day Carl has been doing a better job of "letting his light shine" and "spreading his salt" by participating in community activities.

¹ "This is the Life," Episode XXXV, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed ms).

Questionnaire Results on Episode XXIV:

	1.	Yes	35
		No	0
Miller, William B. "The April 13, 1955."	2.	a.	6
		b.	2
Kirner, James B. "The New York Times"		c.	27
	3.	Yes	18
		No	16
	4.	a.	8
		b.	0
		c.	10
	5.	Yes	32
		No	3
	6.	a.	12
		b.	1
		c.	19
	7.	Yes	18
		No	16
	8.	Yes	26
		No	7
	9.	Yes	17
		No	18
	10.	a.	5
		b.	4
		c.	8

----- Episode IV.

----- Episode III.

----- Episode III.

----- Episode III.

----- Episode III.

----- Episode IV.

----- Episode III.

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- . Episode IV.
- . Episode XI.
- . Episode XII.
- . Episode XIII.
- . Episode XIV.
- . Episode XV.
- . Episode XVI.

"This is the Life," Episode XVII, Lutheran Television Production, Produced by: Family Films, Hollywood, California (mimeographed manuscript).

- . Episode XVIII.
- . Episode XIX.
- . Episode XX.
- . Episode XXI.
- . Episode XXII.
- . Episode XXIII.
- . Episode XXIV.
- . Episode XXV.
- . Episode XXVI.
- . Episode XXVII.
- . Episode XXVIII.
- . Episode XXIX.
- . Episode XXX.
- . Episode XXXI.
- . Episode XXXIII.
- . Episode XXXIV.
- . Episode XXXV.