

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

April 16, 1991



EVANGELISM

*The
Heartbeat
of the Church*

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Light on the Way

Bear Ye One Another's Burdens

One of the crying needs of the Church today is that the brethren might demonstrate a loving readiness to reach out to a needy sister or brother in Christ. Prayerfully consider Galatians 6:1-3. Here we are told how to help a brother in need. We are admonished to restore the one who has been overtaken by some temptation. The great danger here is when mature Christians are not sensitive to the need of the brethren or simply ignore them. A young convert might lose one spiritual struggle after another, but too often nothing is done to help that one back to a life of joy and peace with God.

Paul, the Apostle, tells the brethren to restore such a one in the spirit of meekness. Do not come in a spirit of pride and authority, but in meekness, love and genuine concern. The one hurting will immediately sense the right motive and attitude.

I am so thankful for the Christians who took me under their wing, so to speak, when I was first saved. They expressed their joy over my salvation, verbally and in deed. How patiently they encouraged me to take part in their fellowship. They helped me learn how to share what Jesus meant to me and to participate in prayer meetings. This was hard for me to do at first, but their loving encouragement never ceased.

Sometimes I sense that gentleness is missing among the believers today. We act much like the believers whom Paul admonishes in I Corinthians 11 and 12. Cliques or separate groups should not characterize the Lord's Church. We as God's children need to show as much love and patience to the struggling brother just as God in Christ graciously molds our own lives. It has been said that the Christian army is the only

army in the world that will forsake their wounded. How sad. Let us not fall into that position.

Rather, let us be alert, sensitive, tender-hearted and encouraging young and old in the Lord. We must take time to share the Word of God together and pray with and for one another. Helping one another in so many practical ways is also vital. Let us not be found with a critical spirit. Instead, may our concern and understanding towards our fellow believers be so evident that others will be drawn to our fellowship. Everyone will grow together as the Holy Spirit is allowed to work in the individual heart and life.

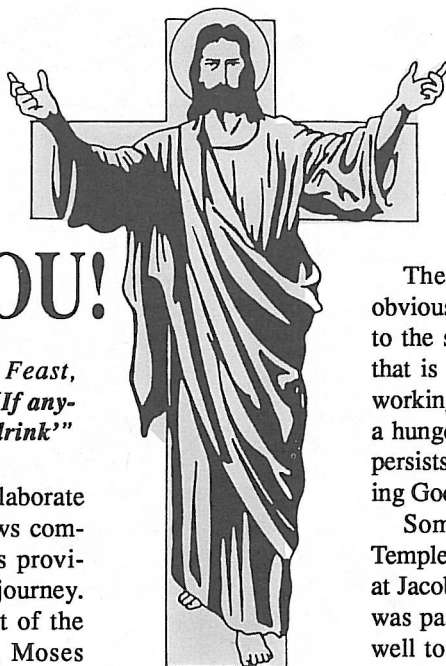
When we are admonished to restore a brother in meekness, it is because we need to consider that we might fall into the same temptations or problems. Many believers struggle with discouragement. Some even doubt their relationship to God because they have fallen in a time of weakness. Remember it is Satan's desire to keep the Christian in that position. This is the time for the brethren to bring the Word of God to the individual to help restore the peace and joy of the Lord.

Each one of us needs to be on guard for our own spiritual welfare as well as being sensitive to our brothers' needs. May God give us a real burden, concern and love for the family of God. Let us lift up, rather than push down.



—by Rev.
Alvin Larson

COME, HE'S CALLING YOU!



**“What is your
condition,
dear friend ... ?”**

“On the last and great day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said with a loud voice, ‘If anyone thirst, let Him come to Me and drink’” (John 7:37).

The Feast of Tabernacles was an elaborate eight-day celebration when the Jews commemorated the Lord’s miraculous provision for them during their wilderness journey. One of these provisions was water out of the riven rock. Under command of God, Moses struck the rock with his rod, and as he did, refreshing water came forth to satisfy this dry and thirsty multitude. In remembrance of this miracle, a special ceremony was observed during the Feast. Every morning, water was brought from the Pool of Siloam in a golden pitcher. This was poured out in the Temple amid shouts and sound of trumpets.

On the temple steps, however, a compassionate voice is heard above the noisy throng. This, from One who speaks tenderly, yet with a sound of authority, said: **“If anyone thirsts, let Him come to Me and drink.”** Many in the crowd simply ignored Him, but others appeared to be more interested in this Man’s message than in the temple festivities. **“If anyone thirsts ...”** says He. Does His discerning eye detect a deeper need within men’s hearts? A need that persists? That will not be content with mere ceremony and celebration? Is there a **“thirst”** within the human heart that cries out for more?

An old soldier, a veteran of several wars, once said: **“We know nothing of thirst here in a land with convenient water taps at our elbows. I knew nothing of thirst,”** said he, **“until I was with the troops of the Spanish-American War in a camp where dust filled the air night and day. We ate dust, drank dust, slept dust and dreamed dust. There was no water anywhere fit to drink. You know nothing of thirst until every pore in your body cries — Water! Water! Water! When the whole desert seems to be inside you. The lips swell, and every desire and thought is concentrated in a burning fever for a drop of cooling water. This is far more than a casual desire, this is thirst.”**



— Rev. Jay G. Erickson
Plymouth, Minnesota

The term **“thirst”** used in our Scripture is obviously a figure of speech. Jesus is speaking to the spiritual need within man’s soul, a need that is awakened in the human heart under the working of the Holy Spirit, manifesting itself in a hunger and **“thirst”** after God. It’s a need that persists, crying out for fellowship with the living God through Jesus Christ.

Sometime prior to this appearance at the Temple Feast, we find an interesting encounter at Jacob’s Well near the city of Sychar. As Jesus was passing through Samaria He paused at this well to rest. A Samaritan woman arrived at the well to draw water. At once our Lord detected within this woman a deeper need than well-water. He proceeded to direct the conversation in a manner that soon revealed her deeper need. He said to this woman: **“If you knew the Gift of God, and Who it is that speaks to you, you would have inquired of Him about living water.”** Now, her curiosity led her to inquire further about His reference to **“living water.”** Presently an awakening was taking place in this woman’s heart and she began to discover her real need. Listening intently as Jesus addressed her sin problem and how she could believe and be forgiven of her sins, she ultimately reached out to Him saying, **“Give me to drink.”** Her own water jar was set aside at the well as she returned with excitement to her city and began sharing her new-found faith. She invited her neighbors and friends, saying, **“Come, see a Man who has told me all things I ever did!”**

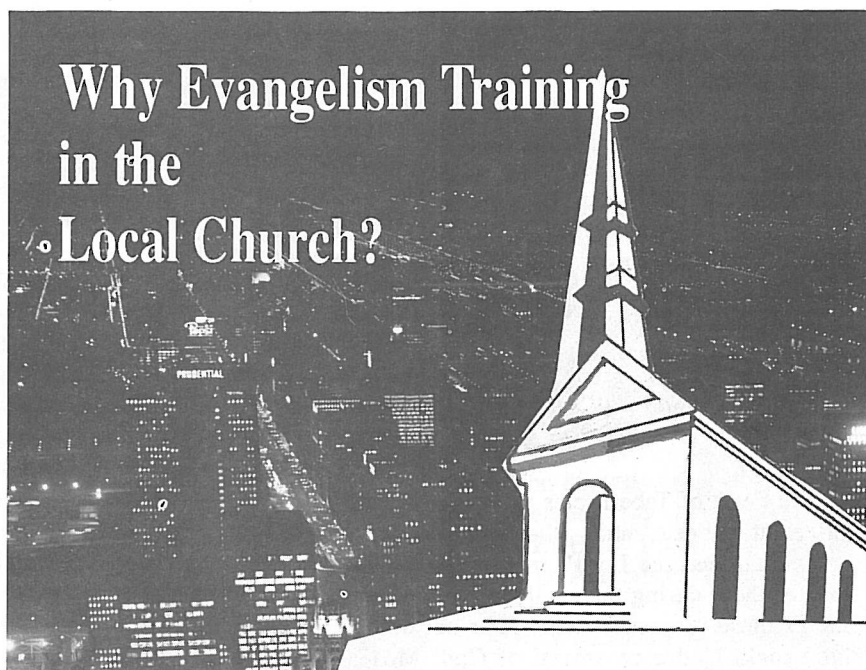
One of the alarming signs of our time is the seeming absence of **“thirst.”** Could it be that we resemble the people of Jeremiah’s day of whom the Lord says, **“My people have committed two evils, they have forsaken me, the Spring of Living Water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that hold not water”** (Jeremiah 2:13). What is your condition, dear friend, even as you read these lines? Do you find within you a thirst for the things of God? Or are you content with **“broken cisterns”** of your own making? Broken cisterns abound today. But there can be no real peace apart from Christ, the source of Living Water. The One who hung upon the cross, saying, **“I thirst,”** gave His very life in the process in order that you and I may ☩

Paul, the old experienced missionary and church planter, said to one of his young pastors, "You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (II Timothy 2:1-2).

The church needs to ask: What is ahead for us in this new decade? The national and international businesses in this world have set goals and mapped out objectives for this final decade of the 20th century, because they want to make an impact on their business world. Shouldn't the church make an impact on society at the local level, and then on the national and international levels? Is this what Jesus meant when He said to His disciples that they were to be light and salt in the world?

We are told that the world's population is multiplying, but the churches are only adding a few members, so we are losing ground. What will move us from addition to multiplication? The answer is found in the Holy Spirit's command through the Apostle Paul as we read above: "... the things you have heard ... entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." This means to "equip the saints (members) to do the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ (the church)" (Ephesians 4:12).

Has God changed His plan and command to the church? No, because it is His will for all to hear, for faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17). It is still His will for all to be saved and



come to the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4).

God wants to use every Christian to be a witness for Christ, not just by their lives, but also by their lips. Christ's great commission was given to all believers in Jerusalem, just before He ascended into heaven. Luke tells us there were about 120 of them, but they were all faithful (men and women) to go out into the streets and homes of Jerusalem and share their faith in the risen Saviour.

Does God expect you to be a witness? John 15:5 reads: "... He who abides in Me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit." Verse 16 continues: "I have chosen you ... that you should go and bring forth fruit." It is

also interesting to note that Jesus' first and last command to His disciples was that they should be fishers of men or witnesses (Matthew 4:19 and Acts 1:8).

But is it really important for me to witness to my friends and neighbors? There are many verses in both the Old and New Testaments that answer this question. Ezekiel 33:8-9 state: "... nevertheless, if you warn the wicked to turn from his way and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your souls." Note also Daniel 12:3b, which says, "... they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." Finally, Jesus said it plainly: "... you shall be witnesses unto Me" (Acts 1:8b).

COME

drink of the Water of Life and be satisfied. All He asks of you is to **come!** He who stood at the temple steps in Jerusalem and cried, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink," is beckoning to you. Come to Him as you are. Confess your sin. Tell him your need. Say with the Samaritan woman, "**Give me to drink.**"

Should you find, upon examining your heart, little evidence of "thirst" for the things of God, then it behooves you to earnestly pray, imploring God to come with convicting, quickening power into your cold, indifferent heart. Be not content in your present condition. Procrastination can be disastrous. The Bible informs us of

one who began to experience thirst, but it was too late for mercy. Though he cried for but a drop of water to cool his burning tongue, his request was denied. He was already among the eternally lost. Come now, He's calling you!

Come to Calvary's holy mountain,
Sinners, ruined by the fall.
Here a pure and healing fountain
Flows to you, to me, to all.
In a full perpetual tide,
Opened when our Savior died.

(Pastor Erickson, who retired from parish ministry in 1987, is the field representative for the Hauge Lutheran Innermission Federation.)

What happens to those who die without accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord? "A hundred thousand souls a day are passing one by one away," to an eternity of torment and darkness, wrote a great soul winner of the past. Revelation 14:10 speaks of torment "with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb." Certainly there is no second chance, for Hebrews 9:27 tells us, "It is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment."

The only hope for any sinner and for all sinners in this world is to hear the Gospel and believe. The Gospel is "... the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16).

It has well been pointed out that our first involvement with the lost is on the prayer level. Prayer is foundational. "Pray the Lord of the harvest ..." (Matthew 9:38). Evangelism is not a violation of personalities, but it is confrontational. Prayer opens hearts and homes, but they must be entered by those who are prepared lovingly and clearly to present the way of salvation. "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth ..." (Jeremiah 1:6). The Lord says that we shall receive power from the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). We all have a fear of witnessing, so preparation is essential in order to be an effective witness (see II Timothy 2:5).

Pastor, congregation, would you like to multiply in this last decade of the 20th century? Then set goals for growth, and mobilize your entire membership to receive these goals. The Holy Spirit is among us and in us; He has given gifts to be used to train the church, to "equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ."

This is His will, His program. Let's reach out for it, or, as modern day youth might say, "let's go for it!"



— Rev. John H. Abel
Missionary-
Evangelist

Evangelistic Meetings Changed our Parish

"Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:46,47).

For the past two years, we here at the Message of Hope Parish, Bagley, Minnesota, (Grace, Rice and Alida Lutheran Congregations) have had what we call an "I Care" crusade. And as I write this, we are in the final planning stages for our 1991 "I Care" crusade, beginning on April 14. Our plans are to go at least eight days, but we are leaving the closing of the crusade to the Holy Spirit. We are ready to continue as He leads.

We believe that the very heart of the church is evangelism. It was the heart of the early church in Acts, and the heart of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The conversion of souls takes man from the wide road of the world that leads to eternal destruction to the narrow road that leads to life eternal. Also, evangelism is the building of faith in the believers so they may share their faith at every opportunity. Evangelism educates and leads the young tender hearts in the ways of the Lord. We have crusades like "I Care" so that we might all come closer to the Lord, giving us the strength and the enthusiasm to continue evangelizing.

When we made it known that we were going to have meetings for seven or eight nights, some asked the question: "Who will come that many days"? However, we often fail to recognize the working of the Holy Spirit, and at our past crusades, we have had a full house every night.

Music is an important tool in evangelism, not only to draw people, but to prepare our hearts for worship. We use a variety of music each night from our congregations and from the outside as well. Our music begins thirty minutes before the opening of the meetings. We also include a sing-along time each night.

What have the results been? Each night people have come to the altar for prayer. We have never had a night when there were great numbers seeking salvation.

However, today, I can look at each of the congregations and see people who have come to faith during an evangelistic meeting. Husbands and wives have come together to receive the Lord as they were touched by the Holy Spirit.

I sat by a hospital bed talking to a very sick person. I asked: "Are you ready to meet Jesus in death"? The answer brought tears to my eyes and a joy to my heart when I heard, "Yes, Pastor, no problem there. That has all been taken care of." And my thoughts went back to one night of a crusade when this person came and knelt at the altar. With the help of a counselor there was prayer, repentance and victory. There have been many conversions like this. We thank God for every one of them.

The Holy Spirit has spoken to the Christians, too, and they have been able to deal with things in their lives. Many problems have been solved.

But all of the results of the crusades have not been at the altar alone. We have seen our people come closer together by working together.

These evangelistic meetings have strengthened the prayer life in the church as we pray each Sunday of the year for our coming crusade and for other events in other churches as well as ours. We do not put a lot of emphasis on counting commitments. Only heaven will have all of the results. We are looking to Jesus for the final accounting. But we emphasize every born-again Christian being an evangelist according to their calling. That is why we call our crusade "I Care."

Our evangelistic crusades have made a great difference in our churches because they have changed lives. And for this we thank God!

— by Lay Pastor Lyle Twite
Bagley, Minnesota

(Pastor Twite is the chairman of the AFLC Commission on Evangelism.)

It Could be F.R.A.N.tastic

a focus for evangelism in the 1990s

Evangelism is alive and well in America today! But the decade of the nineties may see less emphasis on some of the traditional methods of evangelism, such as city-wide crusades and annual special evangelistic meetings in our local churches. A recent Gallup poll reported that 64.5 percent of Americans are more interested in religion now than they were five years ago. But the problem is that congregations find it difficult to attract prospects to evangelistic services.

Dr. Elmer Towns makes a distinction between **front-door evangelism** and **side-door evangelism**. The first refers to reaching out into the community in order to bring people into the church to hear the Gospel; the second finds Christians reaching out in everyday life to their friends and neighbors.

It was the goal of one AFLC congregation, Helmar Lutheran Church of Newark, Illinois, to try and combine the two through a concept called F.R.A.N. Days.

These letters stand for the "circles of concern" that each Christian has: Friends, Relatives, Associates, and Neighbors. Surveys reveal that eight out of ten people who join a church were first brought there by a friend or relative. Another survey showed that only six out of 100 visitors to a church are the results of organized visitation programs, while 86 out of 100 come at the invitation of a friend or relative.

The F.R.A.N. Days program is a simple plan to make our church people aware of these natural circles, as well as to have opportunity for a Gospel witness to some who may never have visited our church before.

Helmar Church chose to have her F.R.A.N. Days on the first four Sundays

Do We Aim at Nothing and Hit It?

Preparing for Special Meetings

Why? Why do we hold special meetings? Is it just to hold services? Is it a tradition to have them each year? What is our purpose for holding these special meetings?

How? What do we do to prepare for these special meetings? Do we just announce them and leave it at that?

Meetings have been held in AFLC churches where there was not even an announcement of the coming meetings in the bulletin a week before they were scheduled to begin.

These special meetings are important for the spiritual life of the congregation. These services are the time for decisions for the Lord. These decisions can either be first time commitments or re-commitments to Jesus Christ.

Here are suggestions for your preparation for special meetings in your congregation.

Committee 1, Prayer — Without prayer, nothing of a lasting value will come from the meetings. This committee should plan the many ways we can prepare for these meetings in prayer. Cottage Prayer Meetings, prayer at our services and all organizational meetings should be planned. A prayer reminder card can be printed and given out to all members. A prayer vigil can be set up. This is a vital committee.

Committee 2, Publicity — We want as many people as possible to know about these meetings and be invited to them. Newspaper articles and ads, announcements on radio or TV stations should be used to publicize the crusade. The entire membership should be made aware of these meetings. Short "Temple Talks" at the morning worship services can be given a week or two before the meetings begin.

Committee 3, Counseling — Here is an opportunity to take part in the training of counselors, putting together materials to be used in counseling and enlisting praying, committed Christians, with a real burden for souls and a basic knowledge of the Bible, as counselors. Training classes should be organized to meet several weeks prior to the crusade.

Committee 4, Youth — This committee can be made up of youth, youth advisors, and any others who are interested. The youth can take

days of March. The Sunday School was seen as central to the program, and the teachers were encouraged to get excited themselves about the potential for outreach and to pass their excitement on to the children and teens. The rest of the congregation was enlisted through the church newsletter and announcements on the previous Sundays. God's people were called to prayer.

The response was good. Probably the experience of each congregation would be a bit different, but the biggest Sunday for Helmar was the second, as the sanctuary was packed almost to capacity with relatives and other guests. The Sunday School children responded the best on the first Sunday, with almost forty guests in attendance.

Associates Day saw the smallest number of visitors in attendance ... perhaps because this circle concept

may have been somewhat unclear (business and school), or due to the overlapping with friends and neighbors. Attendance increased again for Neighbors Day, but there was a sense that the program lost some steam after four weeks.

How can we measure the impact of F.R.A.N. Days at Helmar? The simplest way would be in terms of attendance: a comparison with the previous four Sundays showed an average increase of 51 people per worship service.

Another measurement might be the effect on the lives of our members. The self-perception of Helmar Church is that we are a rural congregation of inter-related people. F.R.A.N. Days helped us to see the special circles that connect us to a multitude of others, some of whom might be interested in further contact with our church ... and

with the Lord whom we proclaim. Many witnessed to a real excitement and encouragement received through these Sundays of outreach.

The final measurement, of course, is still to come. Some unchurched people worshiped with us during our four F.R.A.N. Sundays ... will they be back? Or will our contact with them only be a one-shot connection? Have our members really grown in their awareness of the opportunities to invite others from their "circles of concern" to come to church with them?

It could be F.R.A.N.tastic!

— RLL

(Resource packets for a detailed program based on the F.R.A.N. concept, or for a one-Sunday "Friend Day" outreach, are available from: Church Growth Institute, P.O. Box 4404, Lynchburg, VA 24502, or call 1-800-553-GROW.)

part in one or more services with devotions and music. They can help distribute flyers or posters telling of the weeks events. One evening can be Youth Night. A Youth Fellowship Supper could be held one night before the service.

Committee 5, Music — This committee will plan for special music at the services. Music by choirs, solos, duets and other special music numbers should also be planned. Congregation singing is also important and a song leader should also be picked to lead the singing.

Committee 6, Calling — This committee can set up ways to invite and contact people about the meetings; by telephone or house-to-house visitation. This calling can be done both before the week of meetings and during the week. There is nothing like a personal invitation to get people out to the services.

Committee 7, Ushers — While the regular ushers will be basically responsible for ushering during the week, this committee can recruit others to help each evening in the important work of ushering.

Committee 8, Hospitality — This committee will make arrangements for housing and meals for the guest speaker while he is here. Enlisting invitations for noon lunch or supper in homes will be one responsibility of this committee. Refreshments served after the service on one or more nights could be part of this committee's function.

Committee 9, Transportation — There are people who do not have rides to the services. Older people, shut-ins and others, would welcome an invitation to ride with someone to church. This committee will be responsible for seeing that anyone who wants to come will have the transportation needed.

Committee 10, Nursery — A nursery for small children, to allow parents to attend the meetings and not be distracted during the services, is important. This committee will plan for volunteers to take care of a nursery each evening. They will also find ways to let everyone know a nursery is available.

Committee 11, Follow-Up — This committee will be responsible for the follow-up of all who visited the church during this week and any who make some commitment during these meetings. This is often neglected after a week of meetings.

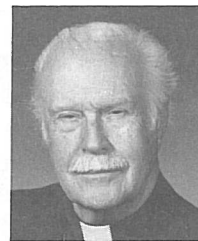
With this type of preparation, you can expect people will come and that decisions will be made. When this preparation is done with prayer, we can expect eternal results from a week of meetings.

(Pastor Udden, a member of the AFLC Commission on Evangelism, is the former director of the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement. He presently serves Medicine Lake Lutheran Church, Plymouth.)



— Rev. Laurel M. Udden
New Hope, Minnesota

The Progress of the Pilgrim



—by Dr. Howard B. Franzen
Hastings, Nebraska

Through Temptation

In this article, based on John Bunyan's book, "Pilgrim's Progress," we find that "Christian," Bunyan's prime character, has come upon a fellow believer, who is also a Pilgrim. Like "Christian," he is passing through life from Lost to Saved.

As they compare notes, this fellow-believer, named "Faith," recounts a conversation he had with "a very aged Man." This old Man told Faith that he had "three Daughters: The Lust of the Flesh, The Lust of the Eyes, and The Pride of Life, and that I should marry them all if I could."

Faith then tells Christian that at first he was inclined "... to go with the old Man ... but looking at his forehead as I talked with him, I saw there written, Put Off The Old Man With His Deeds."

One of the great issues in Christianity is the question, "What is a Christian like"? We are given a basic answer by the Apostle Paul, who tells us in II Corinthians 5:17, that anyone who is in Christ "is a new creature: old things are passed away: behold, all things are become new."

I am the privileged owner of a 1966 Ford Mustang. My little "horse" is getting old and sort of worn out. My trusty auto mechanic tells me that he will do major repair work this spring, and that "she will run like new." But he also reminded me that my Mustang still had a lot of old parts in her.

When I became a Christian many years ago, I "ran like new." With

Christ in me, I had a new life. I had new attitudes. I had new goals. I ran like new. But I soon found out, that like my Mustang, I had some "old parts." I was experiencing what Paul talked about in Romans 7:19: "For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."

The Three Daughters, The Lust of the Flesh, The Lust of the Eyes and The Pride of Life, equal Temptation. Every Christian deals with temptation. The issue is so great that Jesus dealt with it in His prayer: "... and lead us not into temptation."

In that very insightful hymn, "I Need Thee Every Hour," there is the beautiful statement, "Temptations lose their power when thou art near." The question then emerges: "How old is the old Man, and how new is the new Man"? Our Lutheran Church does not teach sinless perfection, but it teaches that within the Christian the Old Natural Man is not dead!

Satan's unique title is the Tempter. Satan tempted Jesus, who "... was in all points tempted like as we, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Yet, when the Tempter tempts us in thought, word and deed, we hang in a moral and ethical balance. We stand on the thin edge. Yes, temptation faces us with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

Dr. Karl Ermisch, a Professor at Augsburg Seminary, used to say to us students: "Gentlemen, there are five

dangerous temptations for the Christian. They are Sex, Money, Power, and Compromise, and Gossip."

But, must we fall for temptations? No! It is not one of the requirements of life that we submit and succumb to every temptation that presents itself to us. "There hath been no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will, with the temptation, also make an escape that you may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

Christian struggled with temptation. We meet it on our Pilgrim Journey through life. No one can avoid it. Jesus, with His forgiveness and love, was Christian's constant companion. So with us, temptation and defeat are not synonymous.

The world offers us temptations. But the Christian is the victor over temptations' destructive capabilities.

John, in his first letter, states that "... whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this the victory, that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4).

Yes, Jesus, temptations lose their power when you are near. But, when we fall, You are there to forgive, to help us put our lives back together and to help us start again. Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul!

from a
counselor's
study

"There hath been no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will, with the temptation, also make an escape that you may be able to bear it."
I Corinthians 10:13

Worry is an old man with bended head, carrying a load of feathers which he thinks is lead.

— Billy Graham on Psalm 37:1

The LEM Today

The Lutheran Evangelistic Movement has a rich history of promoting evangelism within Lutheran congregations since its beginning in 1937 by Pastor Evald J. Conrad. Evangelistic series, Bible camps and conferences, and the well-loved Mid-Winter Conference are all a part of so many of our memories. The evangelists that LEM provided were used by God to bring many into a personal assurance of salvation. For these memories the LEM Board thanks God, but we also thank Him for a renewed concern and commitment to evangelism by Lutheran people today.

This renewed concern has brought a restructuring of LEM as well as a new "nickname" — Lutherans for Evangelism. Today we seek to train and equip congregations, pastors and people, to be about the God-given calling of evangelism. No longer do we have a long list of full-time evangelists to complete this task. God led us to Pastor Jack Aamot who serves as our Director and he has assembled a list of over 25 pastors who serve as "colleagues in ministry." These men are available for special meetings on evangelism, renewal and growth. Pastor Aamot states that LFE serves as a clearinghouse for like-minded Lutherans who are concerned about evangelism in the church at large.

Pastor Aamot also leads Pastor Retreats and Seminars, and offers to meet with evangelism committees to brainstorm and develop specific plans

A Heritage of Evangelism

The AFLC has its roots in the former Lutheran Free Church. The founder of that body was Georg Sverdrup. The days during which the Lutheran Free Church came into being were marked by bitterness and strife. It is surprising, therefore, to read that the time was also marked by religious awakenings. Though it was a time thought to be inopportune from the human point of view, it became a wonderful time of visitation from the Lord.

A factor that played a great part in this renewal was the preaching of Georg Sverdrup. John Evjen describes Sverdrup's preaching as characterized by a strong emphasis on awakening, conversion, justification and sanctification.

Sverdrup wrote: "The aim of the work of the Lutheran Free Church is to regenerate membership and emancipation of all of our congregations. The Lutheran Free Church seeks to accomplish this purpose by its education of ministers and by an awakening evangelistic preaching of the Word of God in congregations, and by employing other means which may contribute towards obtaining the desired result."

Dr. T.O. Burntvedt was president of the Lutheran Free Church, the longest of any president, serving from 1930-1958. He spoke to the 1949 Annual Conference of the Church on evangelism. These were his words:

"In our church this year we are endeavoring to concentrate on giving our congregations a vision of the divine purpose for their existence by uniting them in an evangelistic crusade to bring the unsaved, within and without the organized church, to a vital personal relationship with Christ and sending living witnesses into the respective communities to seek the lost. I have made an appeal to every pastor and congregation in our Church to join in prayer, sacrifice and labor to make this year a year of soul-winning."

Dr. Burntvedt went on to say, "There is one phase of the program of evangelism which I especially would like to call to the attention of pastors and congregations. I have reference to the training and sending forth of lay witnesses into the congregations and communities. We have spoken not a little about living congregations and lay activity, but we have been slow to employ new methods and techniques even when the old ones no longer have proven effective. I believe that planned personal evangelism by confessing Christians, members of the congregation, has great potentialities both for the upbuilding of the congregation and the extension of the Kingdom."

I would like to pick up Dr. Burntvedt's challenge to the church in 1949 and make it a challenge to all of us in the AFLC today. I make the appeal to every pastor and congregation in our Church to join in prayer, sacrifice and labor to make this year a year of soul-winning.

— Richard Snipstead

to be implemented within local communities. Another new venture is that of hosting banquets for seminary students to acquaint them with the ministry of LFE. The Bible camp ministry at Koronis in Minnesota, Lake Geneva in Wisconsin, and the camps on the East Coast continue to thrive.

The LFE Board of twelve is comprised of members from the ELCA, TAALC, CLB, LC-MS and the AFLC.

Mr. Dick Askvig, Emmaus Lutheran, Bloomington, and Pastor Gary Skramstad, Osakis, Minnesota, represent the AFLC.

The resource of the LFE are available by contacting the LFE office at 2717 East 42nd Street, Minneapolis, MN 55406, or by calling (612) 721-4804.

— by Rev. Gary Skramstad
Osakis, Minnesota

Congregation in Pine City, Minnesota, Organizes

The afternoon of February 24, 1991, marked the official beginning of another AFLC congregation in Minnesota.

Following the Sunday morning service and a fellowship dinner, 49 charter members of Abiding in the Vine Free Lutheran Fellowship of Pine City, met together for an organizational meeting in which they adopted a constitution, elected a full slate of officers, and conducted other necessary business relating to the formation of a new congregation. As they expressed their commitment to one another in this Christian fellowship, they were keenly aware of the fact that it was the Holy Spirit of God who had called them into existence and unto the seeking of His will for them as they responded in obe-

dience to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

The congregation began Sunday school classes and worship services last September at the Pine City High School, meeting in the board room with approximately 35 in attendance. The Lord blessed them with growth and it wasn't long before they outgrew that facility and moved to the auditorium of the Pine Technical College. Presently they have five different Sunday School classes with about 40 in attendance, an active youth group of ten to fifteen, which meets every Sunday afternoon, and an average attendance of between 45-55 at the Sunday morning worship service. Many of the members are active in ministry to the community, especially through nursing home ser-

vices, but also through other Christian organizations and individual witness. The congregation is applying for Home Mission aid and prayerfully considering the possibility of calling a full-time pastor this coming summer or fall.

Please pray for this new congregation. And if you know anyone who lives in the Pine City area who would be interested in attending Abiding in the Vine, please send their names to the chairman of the congregation, Mr. Vince Merrick, Route 3, Box 446, Pine City, MN 55063 or to Prof. Ralph Tjelta at The Association Free Lutheran Seminary, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441, who is currently serving the congregation. To God be the glory!

— submitted



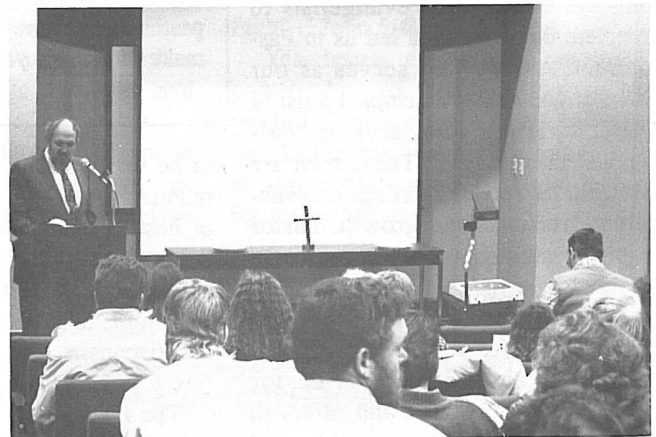
The youth group.



Sunday School teachers.



Temporary home of the new congregation.



The sanctuary.

Missionary Outreach through Personal Sharing

One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He found first his own brother and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' ... and He (Jesus) found Philip and said to him 'Follow Me.' ... Philip found Nathanael and said to him 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote'" John 1:40, 41, 43 and 45 (NASB).

From the beginning of Christ's ministry, we see that the growth came not from massive promotions, but rather from personal contact and sharing by Jesus and His disciples. Many evangelistic outreach programs have been developed over the years, but this one remains supreme, that of personally testifying to someone else one's own experience of faith in Jesus.

In Vitoria, Brazil, where the church's growth from 30 participants to now over 170 has been mainly due to new conversions, this principle has been most evident. A gathering for worship is really a spiritual family reunion with the presence of some who are already spiritual "great-grandparents" because of their sharing, even though they may not even have biological children of their own.

A case in point is Clerio (24). Some years ago he knocked on a new door and shared Christ with Janete. She accepted Jesus and later brought her spiritist neighbor, Levi, to hear about Christ. Some months later, Levi invited her son, Rosemar, to Bible Camp and there he made a decision to follow Jesus. Rosemar is today active in the home visitation ministry of the church, having led many to faith in Christ. "Great-grandfather" Clerio just graduated from seminary in Campo Mourao and is serving as pastor in Curitiba.

This is the program Christ gave to His church — each individual believer sharing with others the good news of Jesus. It is a program that brings about growth by spiritual "multiplication" due to the witness of each member of the body. It comes from letting the Holy Spirit use us as we are.

Jose Klein has a small trucking business. He is a man with limited formal education, but has a big smile and love for Jesus and others. Because of this love, he has seen God multiply his life over and over again. One day, as he was walking up the hill by the church, he met an old business acquaintance, Edson. Edson, who once managed a large chocolate factory, was now, due to illness, operating a small bar and ready to give up on life. Jose sat down and shared with him about Jesus and the hope He gives. That afternoon, Edson turned his life over to Jesus and things started to change. God improved his health as he also became a personal evangelist. Last year, at the age of 50, Edson moved his family to Campo Mourao to study in the Seminary, where he is now involved in helping develop a new work in that city. Every year he sends Jose a card on Father's Day. It's nice to have spiritual children!

Penha Patricia, a young receptionist, who heard of Jesus through her neighbor, now has two spiritual daughters — her own two sisters.

This is what we have tried to develop in the mission work in Brazil. This

is what cannot be lost in the Lord's work in any country. What are the results? There are both gains and losses. Christians who are reproducing are happy Christians. They have a good vision as to the need of the world and their own spiritual need of daily guidance and reliance on the Holy Spirit. The whole church gains numerically and spiritually because of them.

The losses come, because many times, as God begins to use these lives, they may feel His call into other fields of service. Vitoria has had such losses. We lost two "sons" who were just ordained into the ministry, Clerio and Iran. We have lost two older families who are now at Seminary, Edson and Aristeu. We've lost a "daughter" who works in the Bible School office, Margarida. We are going to lose two more "sons" and "daughters" as they are preparing for full-time Christian service.

It's hard to see these children leave. They leave a gap that needs to be filled with more "new births." But that is the way the Lord wants His church to be. We've got to keep on "multiplying!"

— Rev. David Abel
Vitoria, Brazil

First Impressions of an Intern and his Wife in Brazil

As our plane descended into Sao Paulo, Brazil, we began to feel a nervous anticipation of what lay ahead. Soon we were standing inside the airport, amazed at how much the similar clothing styles and the variety of races reminded us of the typical U.S. international airport. It was not until we arrived in Curitiba that we realized we had seen only the middle and upper classes, estimated at 25% of the population. There in Curitiba we got a taste of how the other 75% live, which made this "poor" seminary couple feel rich in comparison.

In the time that we have been here, we've found that no matter what the economic status, the Brazilian Christians are warm, friendly and very enthusiastic about their life with the Lord. We've been impressed with the quality of the leaders of this church who, though young, are powerful examples of sincerity and zeal for the work of the Lord. Though we only have five months here, we look forward to working with them and gaining a better understanding of what world missions is like, as well as a deeper desire to participate with the AFLC in taking the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth.

— Todd and Barb Schierkolk

Colorado '91 UPDATE

Youth Seminar held

A "Win Teens" Seminar was sponsored jointly by AFLC Youth Resources, Maranatha Free Lutheran, Glyndon, Minnesota, and St. Paul's Free Lutheran, 1603 North 5th Street in Fargo, North Dakota. The Seminar began at 8:30 a.m. on March 9, at St. Paul's, ending at 4 p.m. the same day.

Dr. John Collins, a clinical psychologist at Southeast Human Services Center in Fargo, was the main speaker. He spoke on the topics of "Understanding Teens" and "Troubled Teens." Dr. Collins attends St. Paul's in Fargo.

Rev. Keith Quanbeck, Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, a member of the AFLC Youth Board, spoke on the topic "Opening Communication" with teens. He gave pointers on meaningful communication with youth.

Rev. Dennis Gray, AFLC Youth Resources Director and pastor at United Free Lutheran in Greenbush, Minnesota, led the group in the topic "Ownership of the Youth Group." He dealt with getting youth interested and keeping them coming.

Mr. Barry Durkee, currently ministering to teens through the Fargo "Youth For Christ," spoke on "Being a Teen's Parent." He spoke of the importance parents have in the lives of the teens in their families.

Over 50 people attended the Seminar. The sponsoring congregations in cooperation with Rev. Dennis Gray will sponsor another Seminar in October of 1991 or March of 1992. Among other topics for the next Seminar will be a topic dealing with changes in behavior, which a helping professional or youth worker will notice in the lives of teens.

Living Word Lutheran Church of Eagan, Minnesota, will host a similar conference in September or October of 1991. A planning meeting will be held during the last week of April. All congregations of the Minneapolis area are urged to participate. Write Rev. Dennis Gray at Box 68, Greenbush, MN 56726, or contact Rev. Marlin Kruse at Living Word in Eagan.

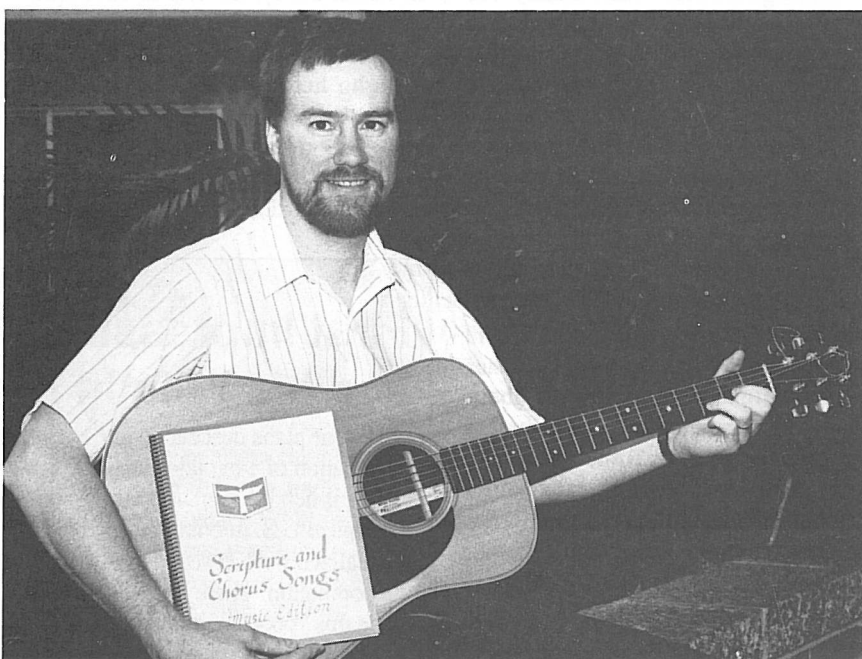
"Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in Your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear Your name" (Psalm 86:11).

July 15-19 is coming quickly. Your National Luther League Board hopes you are anticipating the 1991 LLF Convention in Estes Park, Colorado, as much as we are. Please watch the future *Lutheran Ambassador* issues for continued updating of needed information.

Youth — Please register by June 1. Note the higher registration cost after April 1 is \$175 (not including transportation). Send \$25 to Mr. Bob Halvorson, 8443 2nd Ave. South, Bloomington, MN 55420. The remainder can be paid at Estes Park. Remember your Bible, notebook, baseball glove, etc. Normal temperatures range from the 40s to 70s.

Parents, Pastors, Advisors — If you want to stay near the camp that week, call the Estes Park Referral Center soon, at 1-800-44-ESTES. Only those on the counseling staff will be able to stay on site due to space limitations. If you are interested in counseling, contact Mr. Mark Johnson, 610 Cleveland Ave. SW #9, New Brighton, MN 55112, (612) 639-9657. Please do not arrive at Estes Park and plan on staying at the Convention site unless you have previously been assured of being on the counseling staff. When you know who your chaperones will be, please contact Rev. Terry Wold, 417 20th Street NW, East Grand Fords, MN 56721, (218) 773-2357. If there is room, we will certainly house as many adult chaperones as possible. Of course, if you do stay elsewhere, you will be able to attend all sessions, activities and meals if you desire. Please feel free to ask questions. Above all, pray for the Convention.

— Rev. Terry Wold



Pastor Tim Carlson (Wheatland, Iowa) is shown above, holding the recently completed music version of the National Luther League Federation's *Scripture and Chorus Songs*. These books are presently being used in over 100 AFLC congregations for youth group activities, pre-service worship times, praise services, home Bible studies, and during family devotion times. This music version contains guitar chords as well as piano music. The book consists of 80 Scripture and chorus songs, some of which are familiar favorites from the 1970s and 1980s, and some have been written by Pastor Carlson. The music version sells for \$10 and the words only version for \$1.50. Any orders should be placed with Pastor Carlson at P.O. Box 337, Wheatland, IA 52777. Orders should include a \$2 shipping charge.

Spotlight on Youth

—Interviewed by her pastor
Rev. James Johnson
Reva, South Dakota

Tell me about your home and family:

My dad works on our farm located about eight miles from Bison (a typical small town of not quite 500 people). My Mom is the Home Ec. teacher at the high school. I have a sixteen-year-old sister and a nine-year-old brother.

What is a typical school day like?

Is there such a thing? I usually get there as late as I possibly can, and go through the classes and everything. And after school I have cheerleading practice until 6 or 6:30 p.m. and with "Annual" meetings and other things, I sometimes don't go home till even later than that.

You're very involved in extra curricular activities. Explain them a little more.

I'm editor of the "Annual" and I do a lot with FHA (Future Homemakers of America). But cheerleading is the main thing. I cheer for football, girls' basketball, and boys' basketball, and we practice every night. During the fall there is a football game every weekend and usually two basketball games a week, so I'm always on the bus or in the gym.

Then we participate in the state cheerleading tournament in January. That takes even more time because we practice longer.

Can you tell me about your relationship with God? How did it begin and where is it going?

I guess I don't really remember when it actually began because my parents have always taken me to church, even when we were in between churches we'd have Sunday School at home. I can't remember when I didn't have a relationship with God. But I think I've really grown now through Luther League and other things. I've learned so much more.

As far as where it's going, I don't know. I'm looking at a lot of Christian colleges, so I think that will help me keep growing!

What is it like being a Christian in high school?

It's tough! Most people aren't Christians, it seems, and you don't want to be that different from everybody else. You want to fit in, but you can't because your beliefs are so different from other people's, and you can't do what they're doing all the time.

What are some of the blessings of being a Christian? Does your Christianity help you in your situation?

Mostly there is the peace of knowing you have a right relationship with God. I know He's going to take care of my life. Somehow He's going to get me wherever I'm supposed to be next year.

What would you say to other youth (Christians) who are in situations similar to yours?

Hang in there. It gets better. It has to get better.

What would you say to pastors and youth leaders? What can they do to help youth?

I think you have to make youth group fun so that they don't look at going to church as, "Oh, go to church, listen to a sermon, maybe fall asleep, go home." If they find youth group is fun, then they look forward to going and they enjoy it, and that just keeps them coming back and eventually that relationship with God will come.

Mesa, Arizona — The Fellowship Dinner planned on Monday, February 11, at the King's Table in Mesa, was well attended. Seventy-two friends and members of the AFLC registered, coming from throughout the nation.

A delicious dinner and time of fellowship was enjoyed.

Pastor John Strand centered his brief meditation on the need of a clear understanding of the Law and Gospel.

Reservations were made at the King's Table to meet on February 10, 1992, for dinner and fellowship.

Pastor Robert Giles closed with a word of thanks and prayer to God for the time of fellowship.

Boscobel, Wisconsin — Rev. and Mrs. Harold Mastad, Morris, Illinois, will be singing, preaching and teaching during a "Life in Christ Crusade" at Trinity Lutheran Church from April 7-11. Pastor Mastad is currently serving an interim ministry at Grafton, North Dakota.

Thief River Falls, Minnesota — Our Saviour's Lutheran Church has voted to install an elevator this summer.

AFLTS Interns — The 1991-92 seminary interns have received their assignments:

Mr. Alan Arneson to Lake Stevens, Washington.

Mr. Jim Haga to Boscobel, Wisconsin.

Mr. James Molstre to Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

ABOARD THE ARC

Schedule at the Association Retreat Center — April-May

April 5-6 — Baptist Impact Ministries — Men's Retreat

April 12-13 — Way of the Cross — Women's Retreat

April 19-21 — Church of the Nazarene — Senior Adult Ministries

April 23-25 — Conservative Congregational Christian Conference — Pastors and Wives Retreat

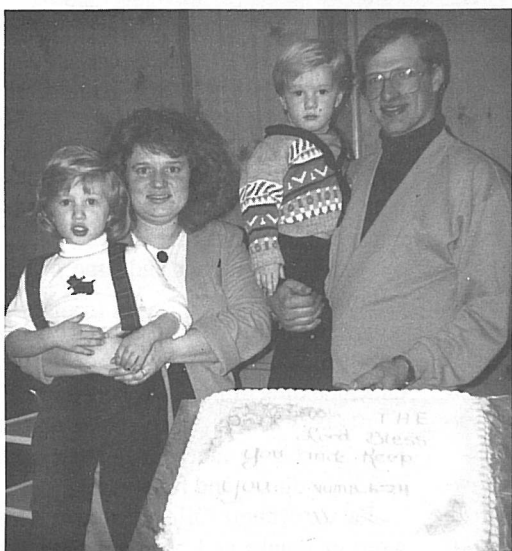
April 26-28 — North Heights Lutheran — Men's Retreat; Baptist Impact Ministries — Women's Retreat; Hudson Trinity Lutheran — Staff Retreat

May 3-5 — AFLC Women's Retreat; Church of St. Paul — Adult Retreat

May 5-7 — Baptist Impact Ministries — Pastors and Wives Retreat

May 17-19 — Evangelical Retreat

May 24-27 — AFLC Memorial Day Weekend Work Retreat



Tioga, North Dakota — On February 21, Norman Lutheran Congregation, rural Tioga, hosted a farewell party for Mr. and Mrs. Brian (Karen) Rice, Tiffanie and Jeremy, who have now left this community to make their home at Balsam Lake, Wisconsin. Brian is a life-time member of Norman Church. Karen is from Balsam Lake. The couple met when they both attended AFLBS.

Brian has filled in as a substitute lay pastor many times during the past few years. The family will be greatly missed by the congregation and their many friends in the area.

Rise Up and Build Campaign Report

"And I told them of the hand of God which had been upon me for good, and also the words which the King had spoken to me. And they said, 'Let us rise up and build,' so they strengthened their hands for the good work" (Nehemiah 2:18).

At the 1989 AFLC Annual Conference held in Minot, North Dakota, the Coordinating Committee presented several resolutions to the Conference. Resolution #6, after being amended by the Conference, reads as follows:

"WHEREAS, there is an urgent need for an Administration Building at headquarters,

"AND WHEREAS, the schools are interested in purchasing the present office and chapel facility for \$100,000,

"BE IT RESOLVED, that the Annual Conference approve the starting of construction of the new headquarters office facility as soon as three fourths of the funds are raised through cash or pledges and securing financing for the 25%, contingent on retiring the \$70,000 debt (on the ARC)."

This resolution passed overwhelmingly with 79% voting yes.

In the fall of 1989, the Coordinating Committee appointed a fundraising committee for this project and the "Rise Up and Build Campaign" got underway.

God blessed the AFLC in this project and for this we are truly thankful. The debt on the ARC has been paid, we have received \$335,638 through cash and pledges, and financing has been secured for the 25%.

This means that we currently have \$435,638 towards the building of the new Administration Building. (\$335,638 from cash and pledges and \$100,000 from the sale of the present building to the schools.) It is estimated that the total cost of this project will be somewhere between \$600,000 to \$650,000, depending on how much volunteer labor and material cost reductions are received from AFLC members. Based on these figures, about \$200,000 more is needed to

The AFLC Administration Building You Can Help

"Unless the Lord builds the house its builders labor in vain" (Psalm 127:1).

Actual building could start as early as the end of May!

The Building Committee is very enthused about the idea of getting more AFLC members involved, and at the same time, reduce costs by using as much volunteer labor as possible. Although the exact details regarding dates and times have not been fully worked out yet, it seems appropriate to let you know about this opportunity so that you can start to make plans accordingly. The types of volunteers needed are many: general contractor, carpenters, concrete workers, electricians, sod layers, sheet rock installers and tapers, laborers (willing to do most anything), construction superintendent, heating and A/C contractors, brick/block layers, plumbers, roofers, painters, and cooks (to feed other volunteers).

You might even want to consider organizing a work project that would involve your entire congregation. Our intent is to provide room and board at the Bible School during the summer months for all of the volunteers.

There is also the possibility that many of you work in construction related businesses, or have contact with people in construction related businesses, that may be willing to sell the AFLC construction materials at a reduced price. Some of the construction materials we will need are: wood, plumbing fixtures, windows, cement blocks, ready mix cement, roof shingles, landscape trees and shrubs, floor tile, ceiling tile, bricks, carpet, doors, general hardware items, paint, nails, electrical fixtures, and construction equipment (use of or rental).

(It is our intent to use the Lord's money as wisely as possible and, therefore, if two or more sources are found for the same item, we will pursue the most advantageous situation.)

Even though the exact details have not been fully worked out, we would like to get some idea if you can help in any of the areas mentioned above. **It is critical that we find out about any construction materials contacts as soon as possible.**

You may drop a note to the Building Committee at AFLC Headquarters with this information, or call Pastor Galland at the headquarters in the afternoons (612) 545-5631.

— AFLC Administration Building Committee

THE HEARTBEAT OF THE CHURCH

The heartbeat of the church is evangelism. There is no more reliable barometer of spiritual health than a burden for souls. The opposite is also true; the absence of this burden is a symptom of spiritual sickness. A church without a heart for evangelism is afflicted with a fatal heart disease.

The AFLC has been served by two official church-wide evangelists, Rev. David Molstre and Rev. Kenneth Pentti, during our lifetime as a fellowship, and currently Rev. John Abel devotes six months a year to this ministry under the auspices of our Commission on Evangelism.

But we have also been blessed through the ministry of many gifted pastor-evangelists whose congregations have shared them with the whole church. Rev. Herbert Franz, whose calling as an evangelist has reached into his retirement years, is the first one who comes to mind, and more recently, we remember Rev. David Barnhart and his Abiding Word Ministries. Evangelists from outside of the AFLC have also ministered among us.

There are other pastors, too, who accept evangelistic speaking invitations once or twice a year with the consent of their congregations, and it would be difficult to name them all. Often they do not see themselves as evangelists, but the Lord prospers His Word through their preaching, too. The lost are found, and the found are renewed, all to the glory of God.

But evangelism is more than special meetings with guest speakers. Every pastor and lay person in our congregations is called to be a witness to the saving power of the Gospel. A heart for evangelism will not tolerate an annual tip-of-the-hat to outreach. Evangelism needs to be happening through all aspects of our church life all the year long.

I am grateful that the Commission on Evangelism has encouraged Pastor Abel to offer evangelistic training as he travels among our congregations; my own church has already experienced some of the blessings of this program. Evangelism must be moved from the pulpit to the pew ... and then out of the church doors into the world.

But it has sometimes been said that evangelism must become a passion before it can be a program, and so we return to the place where we began. How is it with your heart and mine? People without Christ will enter a lost eternity unless they are won. The love of Christ constrains us to care and to share the Good News with them before it is too late.

Give me a heart like Thine, dear Lord!

POWER FAILURES

Life on the edge of town here in northern Illinois includes regular power failures, it seems. A few weeks ago, the reason was a severe ice storm, and now spring has sprung with a vengeance, complete with thunder and lightning, which create a new source of problems for our power lines.

How dependent we are on electricity! A power failure not only means no lights, but also no heat or water, and even the plumbing cannot function. How relieved we are when the power is restored!

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witness ... (Acts 1:8).

The question is not an original one, but it deserves to be asked again: if the Holy Spirit suddenly removed Himself from your church, would anything change? In other words, is there anything that we are doing which could not continue in our own human strength and wisdom? Is there anything that would abruptly stop if the Spirit of God was absent?

The answer to this question may be a convicting one. Perhaps our power failure is more drastic than we ever dreamed. Let our response be to repent, and to learn a new reliance on the Holy Spirit in all areas of our church life.

He still waits to meet our human power failures with His divine empowering.

totally complete the project, but the pressing need right now is for \$50,000 to meet the conference requirements so that the actual building can be started.

The Building Committee is proceeding with the necessary plans and paper work to get approval from the City of Plymouth to go ahead and build. This is being done now because of the length of time it takes to get approval and the fact that it is cheaper

to build in the summer rather than the winter. No actual building will take place until 75% of the cost is raised as outlined by the 1989 Annual Conference.

Let us continue to thank God for what He has done and pray that He will touch the hearts of many people to help with the completion of this project.

If, after prayerful consideration,

you feel that you can help out with this immediate financial need, please send your check for the "Rise Up and Build Campaign" to AFLC Headquarters, 3110 Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441, or put it in your Sunday offering designated for the "Rise Up and Build Campaign."

Thank you for your past and future support.

— Rise Up and Build Committee

THE RENEWAL OF THE HUNGARIAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Introduction

As a follow-up to the December 25, 1990, issue on Eastern Europe, Pastor Szell Bulcsu of Budapest, Hungary, was asked to write an article for *The Lutheran Ambassador* giving his assessment of the situation relative to evangelization and church growth.

Pastor Bulcsu is a member of EKE, the fellowship of Lutheran pastors for evangelism and church renewal in Hungary.

—Rev. Don Richman
Bloomington, Minnesota

THE RENEWAL OF THE HUNGARIAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Hungary is experiencing great changes. The old social order is gone and we are now in a new economical, social and political situation.

Just as the economy is slow to change, so is the renewal in the churches. People remain the same inspite of the external changes. People still need to repent and be converted. They need to orient their minds of Jesus Christ.

Formerly the open disbelief was the enemy and sometimes it was easier to recognize and fight against it. Now with the new freedom, all kinds of movements have received free rein, including the occult and eastern religions. The enemy has become more dangerous as these groups also say they pray, believe in God and represent spiritual life. People who were closed to any religion, now are easily opened to false religious movements because they cannot distinguish the Truth. Previously, it was easier to argue against open disbelief and materialism.

Nevertheless, the opportunities of the church are great and we must take advantage of this. The question is: who will reach the people first and have a lasting affect on them? We need a clear evangelical and biblical view with

much power and wisdom from Christ.

Our own congregation is a part of the Hungarian Lutheran Church. This stands between the large Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed Church. We are a small historical church with a lot of nominal Christians in it. We have about 300,000 members, or three percent of the population. There are about 240 pastors serving our congregations.

The Hungarian Lutheran Church needs a renewal. This can only be achieved by preaching the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ seriously and powerfully. This has been recognized by some of us pastors and we have met regularly in past years for Bible study, prayer and fellowship in Christ. From this fellowship, a group was formed, called EKE — meaning plough. EKE is the abbreviation of Hungarian words meaning Fellowship of Lutherans for the Gospel. EKE has a membership of 15 pastors and 20 laymen, saved men who have declared themselves to be ready for the service of the Lord before all things. The purpose of the group is to start evangelizing and to connect the believers in service.

My family and I came to our congregation, located in a suburb of Budapest, nearly two years ago. We came from a village with one of the most alive congregations, to this one, where it was barely surviving with 20 people in attendance. We understand that the Lord called us here so it is easier to stand firm among the difficulties. Our mission is evangelizing, gathering the adults and young people and

developing the true fellowship. We are seeing God bless the ministry with more members and meetings. It is great joy to see people, one by one, receive new life in Jesus Christ and then things begin to change in their lives. In all these things the glory goes to God alone. He still works mightily today! Probably we will have to build new buildings soon, if we have the resources for it.

We do not want to be realizing our own visions, but we pray that the Lord will show us the area and content of our service day by day. Then the Lord's blessing will rest on it.

Please, brothers and sisters, be praying with and for us to fulfill our task. May our Lord bless you all, too!

—Rev. Szell Bulcsu

YELLOW PAGE HEADING

Notice — To all congregations using the US West Yellow Page Directories. A new heading has been established for AFLC congregations. The new heading reads as follows:

CHURCHES LUTHERAN - AFLC

Use of this heading is free of charge, however, the congregation must request that the church name be placed under this heading. If no congregation from a given area makes a request, then the heading will not appear. Contact your local US West representative as soon as possible to make this year's deadline.

—Robert Maurer
Tucson, Arizona