



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

April 19, 1994



You Will
be My
Witnesses



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

April 19, 1994 • Vol. 32, No. 8

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

is published biweekly (except for the first issue of July and the first issue of August) by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441.

CONTENTS

What is Evangelism	p. 3
Sharing the Joy of Salvation	p. 4
Why Care	p. 6
Me? An Evangelist?	p. 6
Baltic Bulletin	p. 9

Subscriptions: \$15.00 year, U. S.
\$18.00 year, International

Write to:

The Lutheran Ambassador
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Send all communications concerning this magazine to: Solveig Hjermstad, Assistant to the Editor, Box 423, Faith, South Dakota 57626. Phone (605) 967-2381. Fax (605) 967-2382.

USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413

Second-class postage paid at Minneapolis, Minnesota, and additional mailing office.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *The Lutheran Ambassador*, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441.

Rev. Craig Johnson, Editor
Mrs. Wayne Hjermstad, Assistant to the Editor

Editorial Board:

Rev. John Mundfrom
Dr. Craig Jennings
Mrs. Oryen Benrud

Light on the Way

Your Savior Comes!

The Lord has made proclamation to the ends of the earth: "Say to the Daughter of Zion, 'See, your Savior comes'" (Isaiah 62:11a). That incredible good news, that our Savior has come, is our focus as we continue to meditate on the many beautiful names and titles Isaiah gave to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

At least eight times in Isaiah, God is called "Savior." Only this one time is the title used of the Messiah (and this is not agreed upon by all). While the verse may not **have** to be understood in a strictly Messianic sense it is certainly not incorrect to do so, for the Bible makes clear that the Messiah came to be the Savior. Indeed, his name "Jesus" means just that: "... you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

"See, your Savior comes" — *and He is the only Savior!* Isaiah repeatedly emphasized this fact. Perhaps it was stated most clearly by God Himself in Isaiah 45:21b-22: "And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me. Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God; and there is no other." This fundamental reality is unchanged in the New Testament. Peter, for one, couldn't make it more plain; "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Our only hope for salvation from sin, death, and the power of the devil is in the one true God, specifically in Jesus His Son, who is one with Him (John 10:30).

"See, your Savior comes" — *and He is the Savior of all!* The salvation the Messiah brought would be sufficient to save all peo-

ple, thus the **Lord** proclaimed it to the ends of the earth. Isaiah frequently emphasized this universal aspect of God's salvation: God's words "Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth" again come to mind. This emphasis, too, was continued in the New Testament. The Savior Himself commanded His followers to "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:16). Paul, who did his level best to do just that, wrote "And he died for all" (II Corinthians 5:15) and also "the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men" (Romans 6:18).

"See, your Savior comes!" He is the only Savior who can deliver from eternal death and His salvation is sufficient to save all people who will believe. For us who have believed in Him, the challenge comes to proclaim this good news to others. Our challenge is evangelism. Isaiah said that the **Lord** made proclamation "to the ends of the earth," telling that the Savior was coming. Now His people who know personally that Savior called Jesus must keep on proclaiming the wonderful news: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). May the proclamation continue to go forth from us to others, even unto the ends of the earth: *You have a Savior; His name is Jesus!*



— by Rev.
Jerry Holmaas

Our Lord gave the command to evangelize the world. Evangelism is at the heart of a "living" church. But what really is evangelism? At times, evangelism is thought of as being a very narrow part of a church's activity. At other times it is thought of as being anything or everything a church may do.

Christ was sent into the world by His Father and our God to redeem the world. Jesus sent His disciples out with these words: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20). They were to bear witness of Jesus. They were to be ambassadors for Christ. "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me'" (John 14:6).

The message of the early church, which Paul called "of first importance," is summarized in I Corinthians 15:1-8. No message is as powerful as the gospel to make men new. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Romans 1:16). As Paul preached at Philippi, the Lord opened Lydia's heart to respond to the gospel and she and her household were baptized (Acts 16:14-15). The Lord opened her heart through the gospel.

It is easy for the gospel to be replaced by motivational messages and messengers, and by centering activity on people and their reactions and responses. Satan tempted Christ to go that route (Luke 4:1-13). He refused. The Lord instituted the sacrament of the Lord's Supper that the church would "remember" Him. "Do this in remembrance of Me." He is always to be the center.

Our Lord said we bear witness of Him by baptizing and teaching. Baptism was at the heart of the early church's ministry. The book of Acts bears witness that seeking souls and their households were immediately baptized, at times even in the middle of the night. After the birth of the Church at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given, baptism was considered essential. "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved" (Mark

What is Evangelism?

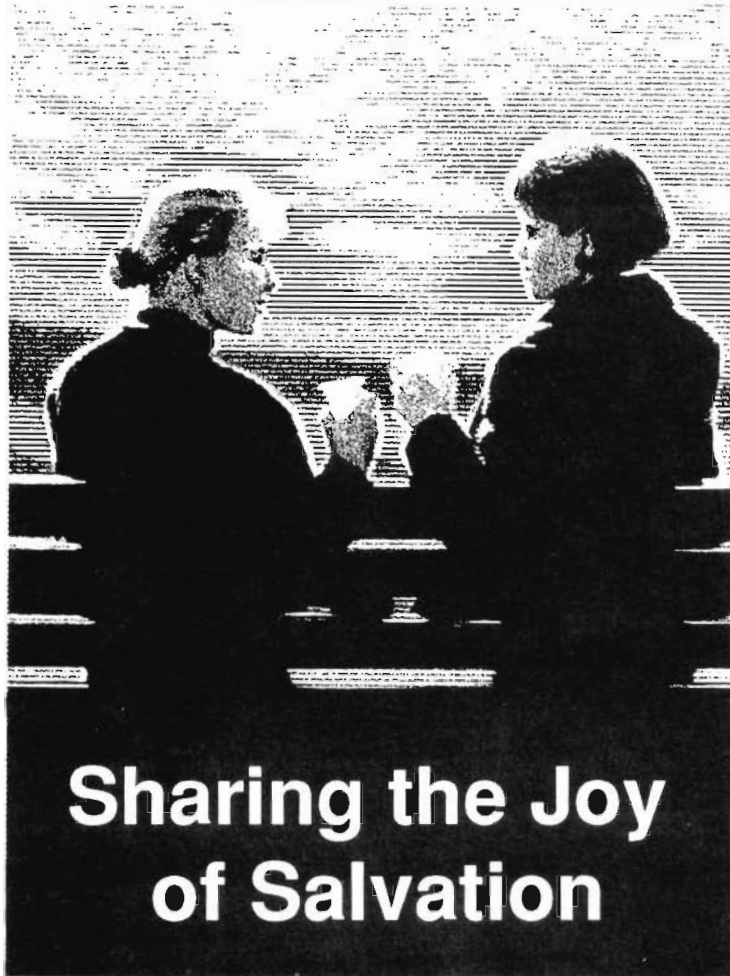
16:16a). This was the seekers "new birth" (John 3:1-8) and a confession of Christ before men.

Baptism is not a work of men but of God. God saves through baptism (I Peter 3:21). "For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:27). Baptism is pure gospel completely divorced from man's efforts. Baptism is evangelism, in obedience to our Lord's command. Some have a too nonchalant and cavalier view of baptism today. Of course, baptism must be followed by faith, Mark 16:16b declares: "but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned." (Children who die unbaptized through no fault of their own are left in the hands of a just God.)

Our Lord commanded that we are to teach. Believers do not always realize what they have in Jesus. From I John 5:13 we see that they can have faith in Jesus and not realize all that they have in Him. They may not even have assurance of salvation. Some may not realize that when they have Jesus they are free from the law that perhaps awakened them to see their need of a Savior. Seeing how far short they are of living a Christlike life, and knowing the condemnation of the law, the onslaught of the "old nature," and the accusations of the devil, they have no peace. They are not sufficiently aware of the robe of Christ's righteousness every Christian possesses. Looking inward they question their sincerity, their manner of coming to Jesus, thus questioning their faith. (After all, man can do nothing good. Our best works are filthy rags.) They need to see the Triune God's role in their salvation. He redeemed and sought them and gives the gift of faith through the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments. It is Jesus Who saves (Romans 7:21-25).

To teach repentant and believing sin-

"It is easy for the gospel to be replaced by motivational messages, and by centering activity on people and their reactions and responses."



Sharing the Joy of Salvation

EVANGELISM

ners the riches they have in Jesus is evangelism. To teach the Word so that believers grow in grace is evangelism. Teaching is essential (Hebrews 5:12-14). Jesus told Peter that if he loved Him, he would feed His lambs and sheep.

A high percentage of people in our day have never been evangelized. Many baptized may have fallen away from Christ and are lost. Some go lost because they are not adequately taught. Having no peace, they despair. What a tragedy. Although both are necessary, it is better to build a fence on top of the cliff than to put an ambulance on the bottom, because many who crash never return to the Lord. These all need to hear the gospel. Only the Holy Spirit through the means of grace can create saving faith in an unbeliever's heart.

"Do the work of an evangelist," Paul admonished Timothy in II Timothy 4:5. The word evangelist is used only three times in the Scriptures. It never refers to an office but always to a function: proclaiming the gospel.

It was one of those blustery gray days in early spring. The man was late and he hurried along the busy street with his head down and his collar turned up against the cold. Thinking about his missed appointment, he collided with a small boy who also was hurrying along on his way home from school. The two watched for a moment as the boy's schoolwork scattered in the wind; and then they both scrambled to pick things up. As they were putting the last of the papers and drawings back into the boy's school bag he looked up at the man, and with a child's genuine wonderment asked, "Are you Jesus?"

Often the little things in life have the greatest impact, both upon ourselves and others. A man stopping to help a child pick up his schoolwork will go unnoticed against the backdrop of world affairs — but not to the child who may even associate the act with the very goodness of God. The impressions our lives create speak louder than any protests to the contrary. And so when considering how to do evangelism for our Lord and His Church, we begin with the prayer that our personal witness be in harmony with the message we bring.

Strangely, some have more confidence in the Christ Who comes through preaching and teaching than the Christ Who comes through baptism. It is the same Jesus, with His great saving and shepherding power — no one can snatch anyone from His Hand. He is loving, gracious, forgiving, patient and merciful. He is truth. Those who reject Him will be forever lost.

The church is always to be the evangelist in which every Christian uses his gifts and opportunities to live and proclaim the gospel, bearing witness of Jesus and what He has done for them.



— by Rev. John Strand
Remer, Minnesota
AFLC President,
1962-78

Someone once speculated that the reason the priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan didn't stop and render aid to the wounded traveler was that they were hurrying to a meeting of the "Jericho Road Travelers Aid Association." Unfortunately it is also possible to spend so much time studying evangelism, that we never get down to the task of evangelizing. Be ready to seize the moment of opportunity. Speak, trusting the Holy Spirit to shepherd your words of witness or warning. It is better to give even a halting witness rather than none at all. We can take confidence that: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver" as we are told in Proverbs.

Sharing the joy of salvation is the bottom line of our witnessing. If at first we are ill prepared to speak up, then we should emulate Philip who invited Nathaniel to "come and see" Jesus. Believe it or not, in this bold age in which we live there are many who dread entering a "strange" church on their own — even when invited — but who would quite willingly attend if they had someone to bring them. Once they are there we have the pastor and the congregation to help us witness! After all, evangelism is the responsibility of the whole congregation working together, as well as each individual reaching out into his or her own place in the world.

Another way to invite others to share the joy of salvation is to have the printed Word to leave with them. For those who are absolutely too shy to speak up, it is an excellent way to witness without saying much at all. An example might be a fold-over calling card. The front could read **God Bless You** (even a dyed-in-the-wool skeptic should not be turned off at the thought of a blessing from God). Inside

could be printed **With God nothing is impossible** (for there are many around us who think life is nothing but a hopeless mess). As a reason for our hope we could add the text of John 3:16. On the back of the card could be your church name, address, phone and worship schedule. As a silent witness such a card might be left just about anywhere for anyone to pick up and read — and for the Spirit of God to use according to His will. But be sure to keep it clear, simple and concise. Something that appears so wordy that it is put away "to be read later" may not ever get the chance to make its point.

When we look at God's creation we cannot help but be amazed at how He provided for the continuation of the earth with lavish abandon. The plant world alone produces trillions of seeds for future crops — most of which never come close to germinating. They are there so that seedtime and harvest will be assured according to promise. And as God has been generous in His providence for the temporal world, so is He generous with His grace. "But when the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 2:4-7).

Such a generous approach on God's part should be our cue to sow the seed of the Word with equal abandon — witnessing to those who are outside the faith, or who have strayed, or who need reassurance — and to trust God's promise that His Word will not return to Him void.



— by Rev. Norman
E. Dornquist
Faith Lutheran
Weslaco, Texas



Sow the seed of the Word with equal abandon — and to trust God's promise that His Word will not return to Him void.



Why Care

Why care about evangelism? Before we can share about why we should care, we must understand what evangelism is. Evangelism is the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ to individuals in order that they may be saved. Let me share three reasons why we should care about proclaiming this life-changing gospel.

1. We as Christians are commanded by Christ to be evangelists. God's Word clearly commands us to proclaim the good news. Matthew 28:19 says: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." Acts 1:8 promises the believer: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses." Without hesitation, the Lord says "you shall be my witnesses." There is no room for wishing to be or if you would like to be a witness. Finally in II Timothy 4:2, we read: "Preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season."

2. Jesus Christ Himself was very concerned about evangelism. A quick look in Scripture reveals many examples of Christ's concern for the lost. A brief walk through the Gospel of John is an example. In the third chapter, we see Jesus' concern for Nicodemus, a religious ruler. Jesus explains to Nicodemus that he must be born again to enter the Kingdom of God. This new birth comes through believing in Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, whom He sent to save the world.

The fourth chapter records Christ's witness to the Samaritan woman, an outcast by her own people. Jewish law prohibited any communication with such a woman. Jesus came to her at the well and offered her Living Water, Himself. She accepted what Jesus had to offer and immediately went on to tell others. She cared; she became an evangelist.

In John 15, Christ uses the illustration of the vine and the branches to teach us

that apart from Himself, the Vine, we can do nothing but dry up and be burned.

These are only a few of the many examples of Christ's evangelism of the lost. It is His great desire that all men come to the knowledge of truth; thus it should be our great desire too.

3. Our world is filled with lost sinners in need of being evangelized. People of all ages, race and religion are traveling down a road that leads straight to hell. According to a study, 80% of the youth in the United States claim no religious background at all. Yet we call ourselves a Christian nation. In reality, we are in desperate need of revival. Our world would have us believe that it does not matter if we believe in Jesus Christ or not, because there are many ways to heaven. If you do not accept that, the argument

"There is no room for wishing to be or if you would like to be a witness."

Me? An Evangelist?

Evangelism ... me? I can't do that! Feelings of inadequacy and fear flooded my mind when asked to participate in an evangelism program at my church. However, I went home knowing I needed to do some soul searching. I prayed about it and talked with my husband. Despite my intense desire to decline, I had to accept this call. Jesus' first command was to follow Him and His last command was to make disciples.

In the early church everyone evangelized, not just the apostles (Acts 8:40). Despite tremendous persecution, this one-to-one evangelism prevailed for the next 300 years and resulted in the pagan Roman Empire becoming Christian. When Constantine declared the Roman Empire a Christian empire, the wide-spread personal evangelism efforts declined. The Christian Church became polluted with unbelievers who brought in their pagan superstitions and heresies. Clergy and laity argued about who was competent to evangelize. Eventually people accepted the idea that only a few trained individuals would be



is that God is a God of love and we will all get to heaven regardless of what we have done with Jesus.

Scripture states that we are all sinners. "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). In Romans we read: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," and "There is none righteous, not even one" (3:23 and 3:10). Because we are sinners, we are bound for death. "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

But there is good news! A lost sinner can get off the road to eternal death through Jesus Christ! Luke tells us: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (19:10). "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). Without Christ as our personal Savior we are

bound for an eternity in hell.

God has entrusted us with the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That is His command and His example. The need is all too obvious. In our caring, may we not make the deadly mistake of assuming that people are saved. Perhaps they are good people, church goers, baptized, old and know the way or young and could not have fallen away. And so we assume. We could be assuming someone right to hell because it was our responsibility to share the gospel with them and we did not because we assumed. If we are going to err, let us err on the side of knowing for sure where someone stands with the Lord today; not yesterday or ten years ago or even when they were baptized. May God give each of us a burden for the lost.



— by Rev. Tonnes Pollestad
Maranatha Free Lutheran
Coon Rapids, Minnesota

evangelists and the work of evangelism would be left to them. This must have been one of Satan's greatest victories. The majority of Christians now believed they were not capable to assist in the war for the souls of men.

The truth is that as Christians our lives are a testimony in themselves. We are living witnesses of the saving power of the Holy Spirit. We may not all want to be evangelists, but we all should be equipped to share the gospel message effectively. I Peter 3:15 says, "Be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."

I desired to be better prepared to explain the hope within me. I committed myself to a 16-week training ministry that taught me how I could share the gospel effectively, naturally and inoffensively. I learned in the classroom and from actual experience. Early in the training I learned to share my testimony by simply stating what Christ has done in my life and how God has been faithful. I discovered that people were interested and listened to my story of how God changed my life. My fears of the unknown gave way to security as I testified to the work of the Holy Spirit. Sharing became natural and exciting. I

was taught to listen and observe carefully to create an openness to share and eventually receive permission to explain the gospel. Then, two questions would open the door further: "Have you come to the place in your spiritual life where you know for certain that if you were to die tonight you would go to heaven? And suppose you were to die tonight and stand before the Lord and he were to ask you, 'Why should I let you into my heaven?' What would you say?" From the responses, I could go on and share the good news.

Prayer undergirded all our efforts in the congregation. Each of us who went out had two prayer partners. We were totally dependent on God to open closed doors and grant us victory over Satan. It was only by His amazing grace that my anxieties were replaced by a peaceful heart.

God has laid upon my heart the importance of sharing the gospel through personal evangelism. It is His desire for all to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4). Sharing the gospel with others is the most rewarding and productive thing I can do! Life is brief and only two things in this world are going to last into eternity: the Word of God and the souls of men.

— by Mary Lou
Mykkanen
Good Shepherd
Free Lutheran
Cokato, Minnesota

Spreading the Sugar

The owner of a boarding home looked with horror as a new tenant put five spoons of sugar in his coffee and drank it without stirring it. She became angry as she later saw the sweet thick syrup of coffee and sugar in the bottom of the cup.

The Commission on Evangelism, in looking for ways to promote evangelism in the Association, have often asked each other this question: "What do we want a evangelist to accomplish?" Our first thoughts are always the same: the winning of souls and bringing about a desire for revival that will not dry up and die.

The thought that I have for consideration and prayer is that we need evangelism to stir up the sweetness that has settled to the bottom of the cup which is doing no good at all. Much of, and in some places, everything that is needed to accomplish what we want in the local church and in the Association is already in our membership. But it needs to be stirred. It needs to be blended into our lives.

In Haggai, the first chapter, the building of the house of the Lord had been at a standstill for a long time. In the first verse we read: "The word of the Lord came by the prophet Haggai." In verse two, "Thus says the Lord of hosts. The people says, the time has not come, even the times for the house of the Lord to be rebuilt." But the Lord told Haggai He had different plans and it was time to go forward and get the job done. The results of Haggai's ministry we see in verse 14: "The Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the gover-

nor of Judea, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. And the spirit of all the remnant of people: and they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts their God."

The talent and everything that was needed to accomplish the will of the Lord was there; the sugar was in the bottom of the cup. Haggai was sent and he did stir it up: then things happened.

Spiritually we have the same need and the same solution. We need a Haggai to stir up what is within us. People must see their lost condition and churches must understand there is a need that

must be met for securing the eternal life of souls. We need a complete evangelism program and evangelist to stir the cup! The pastors of the congregations are doing their part. But much of their time is taken up with other parts of the ministry.

When the sweetness of Christ is well blended in our lives then we will see take place what we have been praying for in our Association! We can call this blend, revival.

— by Pastor Lyle Twite
Commission on
Evangelism Chairman
Bagley, Minnesota

BOOK REVIEW

*Inside the Mind of Unchurched
Harry & Marry*

by Lee Strobel
Zondervan Publishing House,
1993

An essential part of being an effective missionary is learning the language of the people with whom you want to share. Present-day America is a mission field. Many of our neighbors have had very little contact with a church in their entire life. Some who live near us have never heard a clear presentation of the gospel. We who are in the church often do not reach them because, in nonessential matters, we speak and act in ways that are very foreign to them.

Lee Strobel's book is written to help Christians learn how to communicate with people who are unchurched. It is intended to teach "how to reach friends and family who avoid God and the Church." He wrote the book "to help advance your understanding of unchurched people so that your personal evangelistic efforts and the efforts of your church might

become more effective." It is a worthy and important goal and Strobel does an excellent job of reaching it. Ellen Santilli Vaughn is correct in stating, "Lee Strobel's lively, practical book is a tremendous tool for equipping believers to better understand the heads and hearts of their secular friends, and to better articulate the timeless truths of Christ in concepts that connect in the 1990s." According to Joseph Stowell, "Understanding who the modern American is, how he thinks, and how he responds is a challenge to those of us who are committed to touching him with the good news of Jesus Christ. This book will help all of us learn from one who has made it a point to keep the gospel uncompromised and the methods culturally relevant."

Strobel challenges, enlightens and encourages his readers. He shares a message that those who are serious about communicating the gospel with the unchurched need to hear. His work is recommended reading for the pastor and layperson alike.

— C. Johnson

In times of great spiritual need, God has often used individuals who are willing to stand alone when necessary for the sake of His truth and the advancement of His Kingdom. It was to the prophet Ezekiel that God said: "And I searched for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land" (Ezekiel 22:30). One of the men whom God has found in Estonia today is Eenok Haamer.

God has given this man not only a deep concern for the spiritual awakening of his nation, but also has provided several practical avenues through which the great needs can be met. The centerpiece for this program of spiritual renewal is Tartu Theological Academy, located in an old university city in central Estonia.

Begun in February 1993, the academy now has 65 students in its four-year program. Although the original purpose of the school remains to train teachers of Christianity for the public schools, its goals are expanding to include the preparing of pastors, missionaries and Christian writers. Although it is a Lutheran school in orientation and teaching, it welcomes students from other Christian denominations.

The students come from all parts of Estonia for eight two-week sessions annually. These sessions are very intense as students may spend up to ten hours daily in the classroom. The academy has been blessed with an excellent faculty. Among them is Evald Saag, a long-time professor of Old Testament in the university theological department at Tallinn. There is an urgency on the part of the administration to tap the spiritual wisdom and experience of men like Saag for the benefit of the future generations.

Estonian School Meets Need in Post-Communist Era

There has been a great gap in terms of opportunity for a truly biblical theological education in Estonia because of the repression of the communist regime. There is currently a great shortage of pastors.

As soon as a man is accepted as a student in the seminary program in Tallinn, he is asked to serve at least one congregation during the years of his training. Eenok's three sons are all studying for the ministry. Two of them are serving congregations alone and the youngest assists his father.

During the 50 years under communism, the Estonian language and culture suffered deep setbacks in terms of understanding and appreciation. It is one of the secondary purposes of the academy to recover and restore the language and culture in the hearts and minds of the Estonian people. It is Eenok Haamer's conviction that the culture is closely intertwined with the spiritual heritage of the nation and that a renewal of love for one's culture can complement the main goal of working and praying for a true spiritual revival. Thus, one finds such courses as Estonian poetry or Estonian language among curriculum offerings of the academy. However, it is realized that the primary purpose of the academy can be accomplished only through the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the Word. Most of the academy's studies are focused on the study of the Bible and related subjects.

An exciting extension of the academy's ministry is the publish-

ing of a new Christian periodical. The first issue of the 48-page magazine (*Kodaline*) was sent out in December 1993. *Kodaline* is dedicated to restoring and nurturing Christian home life in Estonia. Its consecrated and gifted editor is a spiritual son of Eenok Haamer. There is a tremendous lack of Christian material for public reading. It is the prayer of academy leaders the *Kodaline* will help to fill that gap and be another means that God can use to bring spiritual restoration to this great land.

Other avenues of Christian outreach entrusted to Haamer, besides his regular pastoral work and academy administration include an ongoing ministry of teaching at the Coast Guard academy as well as at an agricultural college. He is also a frequent spiritual advisor and counselor for political leaders in Estonia.

God has found in Eenok Haamer a man who is willing to stand in the gap as one of His watchmen in Estonia. God is continuing to seek others here as well as throughout our needy world who will "stand in the gap" in the strength He so graciously provides. May you and I be among them, dear reader. May we be as Isaiah of old who responded: "Here am I, send me!"

— by Dr. Francis Monseth
AFLTS dean on a teaching
sabbatical to Latvia

Note: Lutheran-Estonian American Friends (LEAF) continues to prayerfully encourage and support the ministry of the academy. As an inter-Lutheran effort, LEAF numbers several AFLC pastors on its board including as one of its co-chairmen, AFLC President Robert Lee. Dr. Monseth travels from Latvia to Tartu regularly to teach systematic theology as well as New Testament courses.

YOUTH

Statement on Youth Work Policy

(From the 1973 AFLC Annual Report, p. 56-58.)

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations was organized in 1962 because of convictions concerning the work of the Christian church. The Association has always had a great concern for the youth of the church. Conscious of the errors of neo-orthodoxy, neo-pentecostalism, and neo-evangelicalism, and aware that youth often do not have Christian maturity to discern, the Association strives to minister in a helpful, understanding, and meaningful way. To give guidance in this youth concern, the Association has a Youth Board of five members. The members of the Youth Board are elected to five-year terms by the Annual Conferences of the Association.

One of the auxiliaries of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is the Luther League Federation. This Federation works among the youth of the Association congregations. The Federation has its own officers, elected at the

Federation bi-annual conventions. The officers of the Federation are to work under the guidance of the Youth Board so that the youth work of the Association will be in keeping with the concern and the purpose of the congregations of the Association.

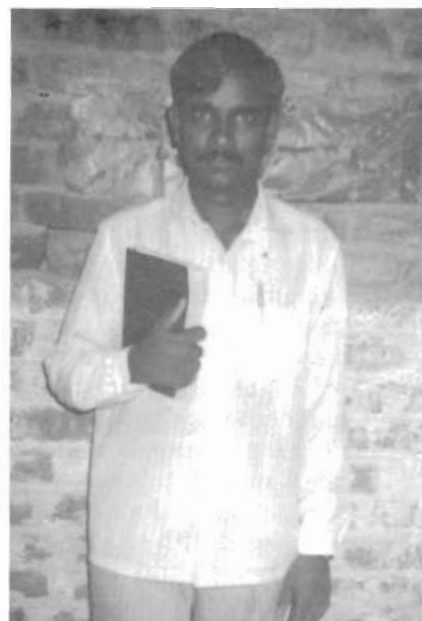
The youth of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations are to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Those who fall from their baptismal grace are to be brought back to Christ through the quickening preaching and teaching of the Word of God. This preaching and teaching is to lead young and old to the conviction of sin, that there may be repentance of sin and a turning to Christ in a simple, child-like faith. Young and old are to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. They are to be challenged to service in the Kingdom, particularly to be active and cooperative workers in their own congregations. They are to be prepared for a life of effective Christian witness by becoming grounded in the Word of God. They are to feed on the Word, not on experiences. They are to be faced with Christ's claim to their total lives, and to see that the fields are white unto harvest, but that the laborers are few.

The youth program of the Association is to always reflect the basic convictions of the Church.

The congregations of the Association are Lutheran, not liturgical, pietistic, evangelistic, and united in and through Christ. As Lutherans, they recognize that the Word and Sacraments are the means God uses to create and sustain faith. The Holy Spirit works through the means of grace, not through programming which is basically only psychological, emotional, human, novel, or esthetic. Only as youth work is truly Word-centered will it be effective. It is recognized as more important to do truly effective work with a few, than to become more involved with a more popular program which may have a greater appeal to the many. Evil can only be overcome by that which is good. Worldly means are thus rejected.

— *To be continued*

World Missions



Pictured is Samuel Bolledu who was recently appointed by the Executive Council to fill the vacancy created when one of the older gospel workers in India passed away. Samuel, his wife and two daughters have taken up the ministry in the town of Mangalagiri.

Youth Leadership Schools

July 8-9, 1994

Triumph Lutheran Church, Ferndale, Washington
Led by AFLC Youth Director, Rev. Dennis Gray

July 18-22, 1994

AFLBS Campus, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Theme for both sessions:
Foundations for Life, I Corinthians 3:11

Led by Rev. Dennis Gray, Mr. Bob Halverson,
Rev. James L. Johnson

For registration and more information, call
Bob Halverson, 612-545-5631 or Dennis Gray, 218-782-2249.

Campus Days Weekend Held

The Bible School hosted their largest ever Campus Days on March 4-6. The spring weekend is intended to introduce high school students to campus life. The 170 guests included young people from nearby states as well as others who flew in from Washington, Oregon, Texas and Long Island, New York.

According to Dean Donald Greven, the young people were "responsive and attentive. In spite of the crowded conditions and long lunch lines, we didn't have one incident of trouble." The Friday evening Gospel Team service was presented to a full chapel. The Saturday morning sample classes were well attended and approximately 75 young people sang in the Mass Choir. On Saturday evening, Professor Ralph Tjelta preached at the service. On Sunday noon, the campus returned to normal, leaving staff and students thankful for the opportunity of sharing campus life with so many.

Applications are already being completed for enrollment for the September 1994 quarter. The first student from Unity Lutheran Church, Massapequa, New York, is one of the early enrollees.

AFLBS to Host International Conference

During July 7-13 the Association Free Lutheran Bible School will host the Third International Lutheran Bible Institute-Schools Conference on the campus at 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd. in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Representatives from around the world are expected to attend the conference. There are 180 people and/or schools receiving information for the meetings to be held for the first time in the United States.

The AFLBS student body is

increasing in the percentage of international students. On March 15 a young man from China began taking classes. He left his course work at the University of Hawaii to begin his first formal Bible classes. He joins other AFLBS students from Canada, Brazil, Norway and Ethiopia, with indications that there will be more international students applying for the Fall Quarter of 1994.

AFLBS Conquerors End Season at Nationals

The Bible School Men's and Women's Basketball Teams headed to Oklahoma City on March 17, knowing they were in for a challenge. The Conquerors were the only two-year school headed for the finals.

The Lady Conquerors defeated Manhattan Christian College, 42-41 and went on to play Grace College of the Bible for the championship game. The women lost 64-55 and received a second place trophy.

The men went against Nebraska

Christian and lost 72-52. Nebraska Christian eventually took first place in the tourney. In their second game the Conquerors beat Arizona College of the Bible 76-47. The Conquerors played Minnesota Bible for fifth place and after a hard fought game, lost 72-60.

Individual players from AFLBS took many awards. Two out of the five players on the Women's All-Tournament Team were Conquerors. Tiffany Jacobsen of Dickinson, North Dakota was named to the All-Tournament Team along with being named First Team All-American in the NBCAA. Ann Schroeder of Valley City, North Dakota was named to the All-Tournament Team and Honorable Mention All-American. Stephanie Johansen of Bismarck, North Dakota was named an Academic All-American.

Several Conqueror men brought home awards. As it is with the women who were honored, all these men claim North Dakota as their home state! They are Shawn Adrian, Binford, Second Team All-Tournament; Jeff Cross, Minot, Honorable Mention All-American; Jeremy Larson, Buffalo, Academic All-American; and Nathaniel Olson, Valley City, Academic All-American.

Congratulations to these and all AFLBS Conquerors!



Rev. D. Martin Luther Shastri preaching at a gospel meeting in Kotipalli.

letters to the editor

To the Editor:

As a pastor I have been dissatisfied with my home visits because I feel I should have something more substantial to offer than a scripture, a comment and a prayer. As an evangelist, I have been frustrated when I see a household that is very open to my visits, but I cannot get them into the fellowship where they can grow.

In Acts 5:42 and 20:20 we read that the apostles taught not only publicly but also "from house to house." It seems to me that it would be beneficial to have prepared a number of short, simple Bible studies, so that each time I visit I would have something ready to teach as I go to the homes. This way the shut-ins, the inactive and evangelism prospects would be fed God's Word in their own homes, the hope and prayer being that they would grow and mature and develop a desire to meet together with the body. These studies could be used by mature lay people in home visitation as well as by pastors. It seems that this is why the Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons are so successful. When they find a home open to them, they keep returning and teaching until they get them into their gatherings.

The reason I share this with you is that I hope we can help each other in this area. If a number of you would be so gifted and motivated by the Spirit to write one or two such studies, and send them to me, I would be willing to edit and put them together in a form that would be available to all. I would suggest that they be on basic teachings of the gospel and Christian living, and simple and short (easily covered in 10-15 minutes). The Lord bless you all.

Rev. Don Voorhees
Rt. 1 Box 57
Dannebrog, NE 68831

To the Editor:

It was an encouragement to me to read Marty Johnson's letter in the February 22, 1994 *Lutheran Ambassador* and his whole-hearted concern for our youth and need of a full-time director. Please, read this letter again.

In these times of increasing worldly temptations and the prevailing spirit of disrespect for parental authority, parents must take time for devotions, preferably at a mealtime, so that the love of Jesus may be instilled in their hearts by faith (II Timothy 1:5). Parents should encourage their youth to attend activities led by the family night youth leaders. Community churches can plan crusades together. All this must be undergirded with daily fervent prayer, that revival from our God may result in the salvation of many lost sinners before the coming again of Jesus, or by death which claims so many. "Watch therefore, for you

know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming" (Matthew 25:13).

As we consider the overall work of our AFLC our appreciation increases for the faithful work of the World and Home Missions personnel; the Bible School and Seminary instructors; and pastor/evangelists. We must be sure to spend time in prayer for the men and women who have given their lives to these callings, including our Headquarter's family.

Nearer to us are our Bible camps where many of our devoted home folks, pastors and teachers give of their time, the home church where all should take responsibilities from the pastor, council, Sunday School superintendent, teachers and staff, Ladies' Aid, Women's Missionary Federation, Luther League, Kids' Klub, etc. All are important and in need of our daily prayers.

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9).

Harvey Dyrud
Newfolden, Minnesota

Fund Continues to Benefit Congregations

The Church Extension fund has borrowed 3.3 million dollars from 114 families or individuals, 34 congregations, and five AFLC departments or funds. These monies have been made available as loans to 34 AFLC congregations. Most of the loans were originally made to new Home Mission congregations. Because of their size, most Home Mission congregations are not able to make the down payment and principle interest payments which commercial lending agencies require, however, the lowered down payment and interest rate required by Church Extension makes it possible for new congregations to secure their own facilities during the early years of their development. The average size of loans being held by the 34 congregations is slightly over \$87,000 and the interest rate paid on the loans is 8%.

At the present time, Church Extension on five-year certificates is paying 6% interest and limiting loans from new investors to no more than \$50,000.

The fund does have money available to loan at this time and encourages congregations to make inquiry at the Home Mission Department if interested.

Church Extension is an investment opportunity but even more important it is an investment that bears fruit for the Kingdom of God.

— Pastor Elden Nelson, Director of Home Missions

Introducing Christ Evangelical Lutheran, Tulia, Texas

The congregation began in 1946 when a pastor, the Rev. Glen Osbern, a local Tulian, conducted a survey of the families in the community. The survey located a number of Lutheran families and a church was organized in January 1947, with 33 charter members.

Early meetings of the new congregation were at different locations in the community. For a time, Sunday services were held at a Seventh-Day Adventist church. It was not long, however, before a church building was constructed and on May 9, 1948, it was dedicated.

By the 1950s the congregation had increased to over 100 communicant members. A new location and a new building was constructed and dedicated on May 16, 1965. This continues to be our church building and currently we have 109 baptized members.

The congregation was on mission status with the LCMS until about 1979. The congregation had

decreased in size and the LCMS decided that a pastor could not be sent to them. In order to keep the doors open, the congregation felt they needed to become independent. After that decision was made, the Lord provided the finances to pay off the congregation's remaining debt from a man in the community, not a member of the church, who left his estate to the congregation. About that same time, a group of people came to the congregation from a nearby American Lutheran Church. **Together,**

the congregation was revived.

In 1980, Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church called a mission pastor from the Conservative Lutheran Association, also known as the Lutheran's Alert Movement. It remained in this fellowship until 1991 when the congregation voted to associate with the AFLC. The Lord has continued to bless His church here and we are excited as to what He has in store now that we are a part of the AFLC.

— Rev. Joseph Schultz



The AFLC at 30 GROWTH AND NEW CHALLENGES

A number of thirty-year anniversary books are still available.

You will discover having a copy in your home will be informative and helpful. The AFLC history is quite complete and it includes biographical information on, and pictures of our pastors.

You might be traveling or perhaps moving and would like to know if there is an AFLC church in the area. A picture and brief history of each is included.

The book is very attractive and well done. Order a copy from AFLC Headquarters, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441-3008. The cost is \$18 which includes postage.

— Aini D. Myking

Internship assignments announced for 1994-95

Free Lutheran Seminary has announced their new internship assignments to begin in June 1994. **Michael Hogan** will be working with the Home Mission congregation in Monroe, Washington. Monroe Free Lutheran Church has been served by Rev. David Hinrichs of nearby Everett with assistance from other West Coast District pastors.

Tim Johnson will be traveling with the AFLBS Summer Ambassador Gospel Team before moving to Lake Stevens, Washington, where he will work with Elim Free Lutheran Church.

Bruce Peterson will spend his year of internship at Living Word Lutheran Church, Eagan, Minnesota.

Academy administrator St. Paul's Academy

Qualified candidates are invited to apply for the position of Academy Administrator at St. Paul's Academy in Cloquet, Minnesota. The academy is a Christian school for pre-school through 12th grade with an enrollment of 100 students and six salaried teachers. This is a full-time, year-around position that serves as an administrator, principal and part-time teacher. The Academy Administrator reports to the Academy Council and the Senior Pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

Application: Send letter of application, complete resume, and list of three or more references to Rich Staffon, Chairman, St. Paul's Academy, 18th and Wilson, Cloquet, MN 55720; home phone 218-879-3186, no later than April 25.

PEOPLE and PLACES

Rev. Richard Gunderson, Lake Stevens, Washington, has submitted his resignation effective July 31 to Elim Lutheran Church where he has served since 1986, in order to serve with the World Mission Prayer League in Latin America. Pastor Gunderson and his wife, Clara, were missionaries in Bolivia and Mexico from 1967-83.

MISSION VEHICLE NEEDED

A vehicle is needed by the World Mission Department for use by Missionary Connely Dyrud for his short furlough during May-July, 1994. Call (612) 545-6472.

Bagley, Minnesota — the Message of Hope Parish is preparing for their 6th annual "I Care Crusade." The speaker for the May 1-8 meetings is Evangelist Wilmore Gunderson, Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

Book now available in English

Quiet Moments on the Way Home by H.E. Wisloff, translated by Rev. A.E. Windahl, is now available. The book is in its 22nd printing in Norway. Its English version may be ordered from Faith and Fellowship Press, 704 W. Vernon Ave. Box 655, Fergus Falls, MN 56538; phone 1-800-332-9232.

Maplewood, Minnesota — Victory in Christ Lutheran Church will burn their mortgage on May 1 at a special 3 p.m. service. AFLC President Robert Lee will bring the message.

The building was built in 1978 after the congregation had met in a home, shopping center and the community center of a housing project. Recently the adjoining property to the church has seen a development of about 20 houses built. Pastors who have served the congregation include: Francis Monseth, Ralph Rokke, Elden Nelson, Gary Skramstad, James Gerdeen, Harvey Carlson, Wayne Hjermstad and the current pastor, Laurel Udden. All former pastors as well as members and friends of the congregation are invited to share in this milestone of Victory in Christ.



Cokato, Minnesota — Pictured are the new members who recently joined Good Shepherd Free Lutheran Church.



Montgomery, Illinois — Pictured are the 1994 WMF officers at St. Olaf Lutheran Church. The congregation is one of the AFLC's newest churches and is currently calling its first AFLC pastor.



Beltrami, Minnesota — Pictured is the new Resurrection Free Lutheran Church which was dedicated on August 3, 1993. The congregation was organized in 1988 and held services in the Beltrami Community Center before building their new church.



Also pictured is the congregation's president welcoming three new families as members on February 27. Rev. Rolf Heng is the pastor.

Evangelism: Methods and Message

A person wonders at times if people should be required to have a license before they can use certain words. The requirement would be, "Before you take that word out in public and use it, you need to know what it means." Licensing, of course, is impossible, but it does seem attractive at times for some words. One word in particular which is often used incorrectly is the word "evangelistic."

The word used in the New Testament for evangelist is defined as "a bringer of good tidings." It is a tragedy when messages and events where no "good tidings" are declared are called evangelistic. It is necessary to tell people how sinful they are. To be evangelistic, however, we must also tell people what God has done for them in Christ. Altar calls can be wonderful things but they, by themselves, do not make a meeting evangelistic. That is done by proclaiming the good news of Jesus, crucified and risen again.

The main issue in evangelism is not the method but the message. It is impossible to count the number of different ways people have been led by the Holy Spirit to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. Some go forward in response to a gospel message at a crusade or special meeting. Others pray with a friend or relative in their living room. Some get alone with God and His Word on a mountain top or an ocean beach. Others are brought to God as infants in baptism. Somebody else's walk with God may start in a totally different way than ours did and that is okay. God is not limited as we are. He can work in people's lives in surprising and incredible ways. We get tempted to think this kind of program, this kind of meeting, this kind of method is necessary for evangelism to take place. Those things that we are familiar with can be effective, but they are not always necessary. (Sometimes, they are not even effective.) What is necessary is the Word of God and its declaration of our sinfulness and God's gift of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus. The content of the message, not the method, gives an individual, group or event the right to be called evangelistic.

One method of doing evangelism that has been used a great deal in the history of our AFLC is the conducting of special meetings. During my growing-up years God encouraged me a great deal in my Christian walk when pastor-evangelists visited our congregation and shared God's Word at a series of meetings. God has worked through similar meetings in many other lives as well. This has led some to feel strongly that the AFLC needs an individual who will travel full time throughout our congregations, conducting special meetings. It is fine for this to be proposed and discussed, and if the majority feels this is right to do in our day, so be it. Let us be sure, however, that it is done because it is believed to be the right thing to do today; not simply favored because it has always been done that way before. The message does not change, but the method may. The Bible does not say, "To be evangelistic, a congregation must have special meetings once a year, beginning on Sunday and ending on Wednesday." To be evangelistic, a congregation must be continually "bringing good tidings" of what Jesus has done.

Some may not favor the hiring of a full-time evangelist in the AFLC. They should not be accused of lacking a concern for evangelism. They may have just as deep a concern as anyone over lost souls. They may simply believe another method would be more effective. They may favor using those funds to send more missionaries or home mission pastors. They may feel the lack of one individual as the AFLC evangelist results in more congregations sharing their pastors with one another and, thus, possibly even more congregations and pastors having the opportunity to participate in special meetings. They may want to see someone going out, not so much as the evangelist, but more as the teacher of evangelism, training the lay people in the congregations for doing the work of evangelism.

We may favor different methods. That is to be expected. But may it be done in Christian love and respect. May our concern be to find the manner most effective in the day and place in which we live of proclaiming the great news of the love of Jesus and leading people to a saving, personal relationship with Him.

How Does One Cope With Suffering and Trials?

Last month I began an article that asked the question, "Why Would a Good God Allow Evil and Suffering?" In that article I pointed out that evil and suffering are not condoned or created by God, but rather a result of our fallen world. This in turn has caused massive spiritual, emotional, and physical damage to our world. But I also pointed out that God has promised that He is going to destroy evil and the terrible consequences that it has unleashed on our world. He tells us in His Word that Christ will come again to destroy all evil and bring about a new Kingdom where there is no more pain and no more tears. Although it is a great comfort to many that God will come back to destroy all evil in the future, a nagging question persists: How does one cope with suffering and trials while we are still on the earth? How does God want us to deal with the suffering that comes as a result of the present world in which we live?

A verse of Scripture I memorized long ago has become for me more than a nice Bible verse, more than just a spiritual concept learned in church. This verse became my life-line about ten years ago when I faced a life-threatening illness at the age of 27. The verse simply says: **"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and he will make your paths straight"** (Proverbs 3:5, 6).

When life takes you through uncharted, stormy waters, God tells us to trust Him. He says that if you will yield your life to Him, if you will open your life up to His leading, He will direct your paths.

When life's road is hard, there

is a natural inclination to follow our own instincts. We tend to place our faith in our own ideas and decisions; but it is in those times that God says: "Don't lean on your own understanding." Let God guide you out of the storm, consistent with His wisdom and not your own. This verse tells me that God knows me better than I know myself. You and I may not always know where He is leading. We may not always see the road ahead; but friend, there is a peaceful fulfillment that comes when you trust God with a whole heart especially when He "reshuffles the deck."

At Emmaus Lutheran Church, the church where I pastor, I like to tell people to keep trusting the heart of God when you cannot understand the actions of God.

I get a little annoyed with those who advance the belief that God would never want anyone to suffer, that trials and suffering should never come our way. When I look back on the life of Jesus Christ, it seems as if He frequently faced trials and suffering.

For those who have suffered the loss of a loved one, Jesus Christ can relate to that. For those who have faced the pain of rejection by a friend, a spouse, child or a parent, Jesus can sure relate to that. He has faced that same pain. If

you are single and live with loneliness, our Lord has been there, too. If you have been in poverty or without a home or you don't know if you will be able to afford food for the rest of the month, Jesus Christ has faced those situations, too. If you have ever been misunderstood and treated unfairly as a result, Jesus says: "I understand that rejection." If someone you love has died in disgrace or without dignity, Christ knows that too. In fact Christ even tells us that we can come to Him in areas we feel tempted to sin or disobey Him. He says, "I know about temptations and spiritual weaknesses and I can help because I have faced those too, yet without ever sinning."

I have found Christ to be trustworthy and Proverbs 3:5, 6 to be more than nice words when one puts that promise to the test in trusting Him with a whole heart and acknowledging Him in all decision-making.



— Rev. Jim Ritter