



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

April 28, 1992



*"As for
me and my
house we
will serve
the Lord."*



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The Gift of God

The most fundamental dividing line in the human race is between the saved and the unsaved, those who belong to God's family and those who do not. There is no third group. There seems to be a great debate, however, when the question is raised as to how one comes to saving faith in Christ. While there are some who desire to avoid this discussion, claiming that we should not pick over "details," the implications of our positions are of eternal importance for ourselves and for those to whom we proclaim the Gospel. It is here that the third article of the Apostles Creed and its meaning in Luther's Small Catechism becomes pertinent.

"I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him ..." These are well-known words and are soundly based on Scripture. But all too often, in what we say and how we live, we refuse to believe the truth of this statement. Pride is the foundation of sin and the chief enemy of the soul. Pride is by definition anti-God. Pride takes God from our lives and replaces Him with something or someone that is self-chosen. Some say they believe in God and that He has a place in their lives. However, if He is not central in our lives, then it is not God at all that is there but an idol that we have manufactured because **God is by nature central!**

How true are the words of Jeremiah, the prophet of God, when he says: "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). Pride is the nature of the human heart so we by nature want the credit of anything good in our lives to be our own. We want by nature to put ourselves where only God belongs.

So we come now to the matter of how we come to faith in Christ. How is self-involved in salvation? What does God do?

Light on the Way

First, we need to know that the self is unable to do anything in regard to coming to saving faith. "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). But even more than that, we by nature have no desire to seek after God and even willfully turn away from Him (Romans 3:10-11). Such is the depth of our depravity!

Second, we need to know that coming to saving faith is possible by the efforts of God. "What is impossible with men is possible with God" (Luke 18:27). Salvation must be initiated by God, for we are by nature opposed to Him, and God must carry out the conversion in us (the rebirth). A person who is dead can do nothing.

Finally, we must know that God has done everything to bring about new birth in my life. "But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith ..." Conversion from beginning to end is a work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of the Gospel of Christ. "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). If I am saved, it is by the grace of God alone from beginning to end. And to Him be all the glory! If I am lost, it is because of my own pride and self-will and only I deserve the blame.

Praise be to God who saved us while we were yet sinners.



— by Rev.
Jon Wellumson



Joshua 24:14-15

Who Is It Going To Be?

The old general called his subordinates to gather around him. His last battle was long since fought; soon he would enter his final rest. Now was the time for farewell.

The aged man began to speak, with a clarity that belied his advanced years. Those encircling him listened carefully as their venerable leader challenged them to continue faithful to the values he had cherished for so long and to give their entire beings to his God.

The general was Joshua; the subordinates were the leaders of Israel; the exhortation was "fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness," the continuing choice of the speaker was clear: "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." It was in this setting that our text arose. We fail to appreciate its vitality if we don't consider its context (Joshua 23:1-24:13).

As General Joshua speaks to the Israelite leaders (chap. 23), he vividly reminds them of the Lord's many activities on their behalf. How shall they respond to such a God? The aged general makes the issue very clear: love the Lord and cleave to him and his Law. God has blessed — and continues to bless — you very much. However, you will perish if you turn from him.

Before the wise old general says more, he summons everyone before him; then God speaks (chap. 24). In a sweeping review of history, Israel's God reminds his people of exactly what he has done for them. From the very

beginning, the Lord acted in grace for his people; his people merely received. Everything they are and have is a gift, unearned and undeserved!

In view of God's cascading grace, Joshua challenges his contemporaries: "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. And if you be unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell; ..." Joshua's response is: "but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (24:14-15).

Choose this day whom you will serve — the challenge of General Joshua rings out to all generations of God's people. Who will we serve?

Will we serve the Lord? He demands and deserves our wholehearted allegiances. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). Perhaps we Christians would do well to remind ourselves of this declaration as regularly as do faithful Jews who recite it four times daily!

Will we serve the other gods, the pseudo-gods of this world? As in the days of Joshua, they are plentiful. Do we serve them, even though we claim to know the Lord?

How about the god of materialism? This god's followers are revealed by their appetite for more and

more of the things of this world and their pervasive lack of satisfaction with what they have received. The god of materialism has always tried to con us into believing we can have it both ways: love both God and the things of the world. Jesus, however, tells the truth: "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

What about the god of status and success? This liar tries to convince us that we are failures if our income isn't steadily increasing or our contributions to the world aren't being recognized. When this impostor infiltrates the church, Christians began to struggle with feelings of discouragement or failure because their church isn't growing. Jesus addressed this god's lie when he said: "For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life?" (Matthew 16:26). The Scripture makes clear that faithfulness, not status and success, is what matters (Revelation 2:10).

Another contender for souls today is the god of comfort and security. This impostor's lie is simple: if you can attain a certain level of security (whether in the form of retirement funds or a healthy balance in the church treasury), you have it made and don't really need to take the risk of faith any longer. How did Jesus confront this ancient lie? He told a story about a rich farmer who one day decided he had it made. However, that very night, God required his soul — and all the comfort and security was gone in an instant! "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:21).

These false gods are summed up in the god that is Me! The fundamental idolatry comes when we humans place ourselves on the throne that belongs to God alone. Why are we so tempted by desires for material things, for status and success, for comfort and security?

DAD The Family Shepherd



I dedicate this article to my father, the late Richard H. Lewis, who knew his children and his Lord for only a short time, but none the less passed on a legacy of love. And to men of faith who have been godly models for me: the late Rev. Howie Olson, the late Rev. Leonard Patzold, Arnold Hagen, Rev. Amos Dyrud, Mr. Olaf Olson and Mr. Jesse Dale.

Kids, yesterday the angels took Daddy to heaven." Those were my mother's numbing words to me, my twin brother and my two sisters. It was February of 1956 and I was four years old.

For the next 20 years my mom would work full-time, and over-time, to make ends meet, and try to be both mother and father to her four children. In those 20 years, I would not fully realize, that although my mom did everything she possibly could to provide for our family, I was growing up with a part of my life missing. I was

CHOOSE

Is it not because we regard **ourselves** as more important than the Lord? To address this deception, Jesus told about the self-righteous Pharisees and the tax collector whose cry "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" revealed his submission. Jesus concluded "I tell you, ... every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 18:14).

Who is it going to be for us who have received such abundant grace? Will we choose to serve the lying impostor gods of this world or will we allow the outpoured Spirit of God to work graciously in us so that we, with Joshua, declare "**as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord**"?



— Rev. Jerry M. Holmaas
Maranatha Free Lutheran
Chassell, Michigan

Partners In Prayer



"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).

Pray for Rev. Robert Lee as he fills the office of AFLC president through the Annual Conference.

Praise God for souls saved in recent weeks in our Home Mission congregations and throughout the AFLC.

Pray for the Connely Dyrud and the Dan Giles families as they make preparations to return to the mission field. The Giles family expect to return to Mexico in early June. The Dyruds will return to Brazil after the Annual Conference in June. Also, pray for Missionaries John and Ruby Abel as they conclude their year at Campo Mourão and return to the United States.

Praise God for the desire and efforts of Home Mission congregations to reach out in their communities.

Pray for Home Mission congregation vacancies at Spokane, Washington; Chillicothe, Illinois; Warroad, Minnesota; and Murrieta, California.

Pray for the Snipstead family.

Praise God for the Missionary Commissioning Service for Jonathan and Tamba Abel on April 12, at Calvary Lutheran Church, Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

Pray for Home Mission congregations at Detroit Lakes, Duluth and Ortonville, Minnesota, as they consider building projects.

Pray for the lay leadership in each of our congregations.

Pray for the AFLTS senior seminarians as they seek the Lord's leading.

growing up without a model of what a father is and should be.

I remember returning to our apartment the night our first child, Jenny, was born. I was filled with joy at her arrival but at the same time overwhelmed with the responsibility just received. "Lord," I prayed, "how can I do this thing of being a father, when I've never really watched anyone do it? Please Lord, help me!"

Since that day I have become a father on three other occasions and although my development as a dad has been slow, I rejoice to be the father of my children and thank the Lord for His grace and wisdom to be their dad.

There are times when my wife, Pat, and I wonder if we are doing things the right way. There have been times when we have felt we have failed our children. The Lord has been faithful, however, and has impressed upon both of us the need to be "consistently adequate" rather than strive for perfection as parents. We are finding that routine consistency is more effective in the long haul, than periodic stardom in the arena of parenting.

Because I grew up without a father, my model for fathering has come from primarily two sources. First, the Lord Himself has been faithful to His promise to be the helper and father of the fatherless. (See Psalm 10:14, 68:5 and 146:9). Secondly, godly men of faith have served to set the example of what a Christian man, husband, and father should be.

More recently, however, the Lord has brought another helpful resource to my attention, a resource that I have had the privilege of sharing with other men. That resource is the ministry of Dad, The Family Shepherd.

²"Dad, The Family Shepherd is a ministry dedicated solely to equipping men to be champions in the home. Using a concept called father power, Dad, The Family Shepherd teaches men to take hope, claim God's promise and become effective shepherds."

Martin Luther is reported to have said, "every home should be like a little church, where the father is the pastor."

Dad, The Family Shepherd is a ministry that facilitates fulfillment of that admonition.

Dad, The Family Shepherd was founded in 1984 by Dr. David Simons. Dave has combined his background as a former NFL linebacker with a Doctorate of Ministry Degree and years of experience to produce a conference that is solid in its Biblical foundation and practical in its application.

Often using sports as a context, Dr. Simons encourages men to realize that what we do today as fathers, will have an impact on the next four generations (Exodus 34:6-7, Psalm 78:5-6). Conference participants are challenged to stay in the game for the duration and avoid the 100 meter dash approach to fathering, to recover quickly from mistakes because every play is like a new game, and to put their love for their families into action, by learning to speak their family's love language.

During the conference, men are given the opportunity to break up into groups for an "Encouragement Team" (E-Team) experience. The E-Teams are the key to a successful conference in that they provide an ongoing opportunity for growth, accountability, fellowship, and friendship after the conference concludes.

Our five man E-Team became so enthusiastic about the Dad, The Family Shepherd concepts, that 15 months later we hosted our own Dad, The Family Shepherd Conference, in its video format, here at West Lisbon Lutheran Church. From that conference new E-Teams were formed by the men from our congregation who attended.

Presently our E-Team, now in its 16 month of existence, is working through a study entitled, "The Friendship Course." Through this study, we hope to improve our abilities to create and maintain Biblically modeled friendships and help upset the unfortunate social norm that states "real men don't need friends." I thank the Lord for each of my E-Team brothers and the growth God is bringing to our lives through our fellowship and friendship.

Dad, The Family Shepherd maintains an ongoing relationship with con-

ference participants by offering resources in the form of books, E-Team courses, as well as audio and video tapes that stimulate spiritual growth and equip men to be better family shepherds.

There are still those days when I feel more like "Dad, the German Shepherd" than "Dad, The Family Shepherd." The difference today, though, is that now I can recover, know God's forgiveness, and let the next play start another new game by God's grace.

Dad, The Family Shepherd, is not an end in itself, but for many of us it has been a beginning, a starting point for Biblical growth, to become the dad's God wants us to be.



If you or your church would like more information on the ministry of Dad, The Family Shepherd, write to Dad, The Family Shepherd, P.O. Box 21445, Little Rock, Arkansas 72221; or call 1-800-234-DADS.



— Rev. Rob Lewis
West Lisbon Lutheran Church
Newark, Illinois

Notes:

¹"Healing the Dysfunctional Church Family," by David Mains, Scripture Press, pgs. 106-108.

Mrs. Gertrude Hult,
age 90.
Picture taken
in 1989.



MOTHER A Memorial Tribute

Each of us has a mother. We each carry special memories of our mother. These may be stored from our own experiences with her or from stories others have told us. If she is gone, we may have questions born of longing and regret. "What was she like? Why couldn't have I known her better? Did she really love me? Why

didn't I love her more?" No matter what kind of mother we may have had, each of us has a deep desire to be loved by her. Our life is shaped by the presence of or lack of that love.

For me, it was a little more than a year ago that my mother, Gertrude Hult, "flew away" to her eternal home after a lifetime of seeking and follow-

ing her Lord. These following paragraphs can only briefly summarize that search and walk.

My mother was not a complicated person. She grew up in a very loving home. Her parents were hard-working Illinois farmers and taught their daughter the value of a disciplined, hard day's work. Even though her parents were active in the lodge and considered that their church, my mother was allowed to attend Sunday School at a nearby church. However, it was not until she went to Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois, that she gave her life to Christ and was baptized and confirmed. When Mother became a Christian, she became a committed Christian. It was this quality more than any other that I remember in her. I know it was this commitment that led my father, Ralph Hult, to ask her to be his life partner.

Her faith was a great source of joy for her and I know she constantly prayed for each of her children. Yet it was not until her later years that I heard her offer a spoken prayer. We knew she loved the Lord as her Savior, but as long as my father was at home, he led us in Bible reading and prayer and taught us about Jesus. Mother was his supporter in this. And what a support she was! Her whole life was given to taking care of their family. We were raised to work together, each one being responsible for his or her assigned task. Though my Dad was away much of the time, I don't remember my Mom even suggesting that it was a hardship for her to carry all the home responsibility for their large family. Some of my foremost childhood memories are of seeing her changing a diaper, nursing the baby, hanging out clothes and working in the garden. Mother really knew how to work, but she also knew how to rest and to play. When our noon meal was finished it was always rest time, even though she could often take only ten minutes. When supper dishes were done there might even be some time to play.

Before I was born, my parents had served as pioneer missionaries in Sudan and Tanganyika for the Augus-

tana Synod from 1919-1926. Then there were 15 years at home when Dad served in home missions and as an interim pastor in Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, Montana, Minnesota and Michigan. When an urgent call came for volunteers to go alone to our mission field in East Africa, during the early days of World War II, Mother agreed with Dad's going and rejoiced with him that he would again be able to serve there. At the time they both thought she and the family would soon be able to join him. When Dad died unexpectedly in 1943, after barely a year in Africa, Mother was left with two sons in the military and eight younger children to care for and educate.

Mother served four happy years at Luther College, Wahoo, Nebraska, as a librarian and teacher. Then in 1947, she volunteered to go under the World Mission Prayer League to Bolivia, South America and serve as matron and teacher in their orphanage. It was here she was given the Spanish name "Mamita" (Dear Mother). Her two youngest children were with her that first term. She left at home her others in grade school, high school, college, nurses training, medical school and her new granddaughter. At her commissioning service at Bethlehem Lutheran Church at Wahoo, she said through tears: "this business of getting out the gospel is so important that even we grandmothers have to go."

She was aware both then and

through her following years of service that some looked unfavorably on her leaving her children in the care of others. But when I think of how difficult it must have been to let go of the children she had given birth to and nurtured every day of their lives, I am amazed that she could trust them to the care of someone else. I believe Mamita's decision to go to Bolivia did not speak of her **little love** for her family, but rather her **great love** for them and for Christ. She knew there were many other people who needed to know of the same Lord who had blessed her family. Her service in Bolivia spanned 16 years with some intervals at home. After she retired because of health problems in 1963, her service continued at home till the last day of her life. At her home church, Immanuel Lutheran, Springfield, Missouri, she set up and kept the library, taught Bible classes, quilted for Lutheran World Relief and helped in every way she could. Everyday her mail box had letters to her children, grandchildren, other family, fellow missionaries and friends from throughout the world.

What did my mother teach me? From her I learned to have an unquestioning commitment to the Lord as the foundation of all life. She taught me cheerfulness, thankfulness and hard work. She modeled how to be respectful and helpful to others. She instilled in me an eagerness to learn and to appreciate the world around us. She urged me



to "try harder" and to never give up. She also taught the importance of a healthy diet and she worked hard in her kitchen and garden to provide that. She instructed me in cooking, baking, canning, washing, ironing and mending. But most of all, Mother taught me to love the Lord and His Word.

I am afraid that one of the lies of our modern culture is that adults have little to share with the young. The wisdom and experience of grandma and grandpa is now embarrassing and out-of-date to their grandchildren. But could anything be more relevant in 1992, than these promises from the same Bible that guided them? To mention only a few: "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19); "God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in time of trouble" (Psalm 46:1) and "In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your path" (Proverbs 3:6).

Even in her last years Mother was sometimes plagued with the fear that she had not been a good enough mother to her family. But she had given them all to the Lord, and I know for certain that she, as did the Apostle John: "Had no greater joy then to hear that her children were walking in the truth" (III John 1:4).

— by Eunice Will
Springfield, Missouri



The Hult family, 1939. The writer, Enice Hult Will is standing to the far right.

God Brought Another Heathen Into His Kingdom

Thank you, pastor, for baptizing Laurie", Gene said sincerely, though rather than looking at me his eyes were fixed on his precious little girl.

"Yes, thank you, pastor," echoed Gerry, as she too gazed into Laurie's eyes.

With that Gene and Gerry started across the church parking lot, stopping often as others got a closer look at their little baby.

Laurie's baptism had undoubtedly been the high point of that morning's service. When worship was over her baptism became the focus of conversation among our members.

"She was a little angel; she didn't fuss once."

"Gene and Gerry are such a nice couple; they'll make wonderful parents."

"Isn't it great to have a baby in the congregation again?"

Then, from a little circle of men, as though everyone else stopped talking on cue, we all heard: "Well, the Lord brought another heathen into His Kingdom."

Laurie — a heathen?!?

The Scripture readings and the explanatory comments during the baptism had clearly described Laurie's spiritual condition: "Little children, though seemingly innocent, are by birth and nature sinful, and without forgiveness would be lost forever."

No one took issue with that truth. We believed all are sinners, even babies. That was our confession: "Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto you that we are by nature sinful and unclean."



Those Hectic And Happy Preschool Years

HOW WOULD YOU "COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS" AS A MOTHER?

(RM) Their names are Jesse and Jonathan! How precious to hold your babies for the first time, bring them to the Lord and watch those first tottering steps ... or have your two-year-old ask you to bake a birthday cake for Jesus at Christmas and then hear him sing, "God bwess you today, God bwess you we pway, God bwess you, dear Jesus, God bwess you aw-ways."

(EB) After 11 years of marriage we were blessed by adopting as infants, Elizabeth (now four), and Paul (now two). What wonderful gifts to receive them into our hearts and home. The first several months with two little ones were busy and many days the dirty dishes were still on the counter until evening. Also, the dust cloth had quite a vacation ... and still does occasionally! Now there are some days when obedience or sharing must be strongly "encouraged" while other days their love is so sweet and Christlike. Having the opportunity to be home with my children and to love and guide them in His way is a true privilege — a gift from the Lord.

HOW HAS SCRIPTURE BEEN AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO YOU?

(RM) Because Jesse is in his "terrific two's" and Jonathan just celebrated his first birthday, I often find myself opening my Bible to Isaiah 40 ... "He gives strength to the weary."

(EB) I've found myself singing to my children, "Because the Lord is my Shepherd, I have everything that I need. He lets me rest in meadows green, and leads me beside the quiet stream." We also play Bible tapes at bedtime, so our four-year old could tell you she has read through" the Bible several times in her young life.

WHAT HAVE YOU GLEANED FROM YOUR PARENTS' EXAMPLE?

(RM) I am most thankful for their consistent walk with the Lord. Psalm 16:6 expresses how I feel: "The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me."

(EB) Mom and Dad have been a wonderful loving example to me. Welcoming guests (including pastors and missionaries) was a natural way to learn more about Jesus and what He was doing in many people's lives. Going to church was the normal thing to do. The need to have a personal relationship with Jesus was constantly reinforced. Now our children acknowledge that Jesus is in their hearts and are looking forward to heaven and spending time with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Nevertheless, "well, the Lord brought another heathen into his Kingdom," powerfully forced us to re-

examine what we believed and professed. Yes, we truly are in a pitiful spiritual condition by nature. We are

The writers, Eunice Berge (EB) Fargo, North Dakota, and Rebecca Moan (RM) Minot, North Dakota, both answer to "Mom-my" or anything that goes "waaahhh!" in the night. As sisters, they share the excitement (and exhaustion) of rearing two preschoolers approximately 18 months apart in age.

Eunice and Rebecca, both AFLBS graduates, are daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Wall of Comfrey, Minnesota.



HOW HAS MOTHERING AND YOUR OTHER PROFESSIONS MIXED?

(RM) Teaching in Christian schools was an important part of my life. But when I declined a teaching position after we moved to Minot, I wondered if I would keep busy. Then the baby boom hit, and there was no more wondering! It is a God-given privilege to be a full-time "worker at home" (Titus 2:5).

(EB) As a nurse, I work three consecutive days every two weeks. Afterward, there is a lot of catching up to do — love and attention to my family, rest and housework. I am thankful for my husband's help in caring for our little ones when I work.

WHAT SUGGESTIONS CAN YOU GIVE TO DADS OF PRESCHOOLERS?

(RM) Take time today to be Dad. We found ourselves so busy, and we would often comment, "It will get better next week," but it never did! Something that we fondly call "The Children's Hour" has helped us. After supper Mom disappears to iron or relax (or write an *Ambassador* article!). Meanwhile, Dad is on diaper duty and actively plays with the children. Not only do Jesse and Jonathan love it, but it is a boost for me to have a break in each day.

(EB) Sometimes, after a day with the children, a simple pleasure is putting the supper dishes away "in peace." During this time my husband plays with the children and they all enjoy getting riled up! Getting extra rest is also another big encouragement.

WHAT HAS BEEN ONE OF YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES AS A MOM?

(RM) Being a wife at the same time! I can't seem to play with the boys, cook balanced meals, wash clothes, keep the house clean, and still have time and energy for meaningful communication with my husband. I guess we'll have to schedule a "Husband Hour" next!

(EB) I want to please the Lord by being consistent and loving in my response to my family. Directing and guiding my children in day to day life is an ongoing challenge. Deuteronomy 6:7 "You must teach them (commandments) to your children and talk about them when you are at home or out for a walk; at bedtime and the first thing in the morning."

sinful; we are unclean; we are lost; we are separated from God. We are heathens!

However, believing in Jesus, who is the propitiation for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of

TRUST IN
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WITH ALL YOUR
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Proverbs 3:5-6

"... powerfully forced us to re-examine what we believed and professed."

the whole world (I John 2:2), we also appreciate anew that the gift of salvation in the Son is for heathens. Likewise, we appreciate anew that the gift to believe in Jesus is given to heathens through the Gospel, even the Gospel connected with the water of baptism.

Yes, thanks be to God that he brings heathens, like little Laurie, like you, and like me, into his Kingdom.

— Rev. Paul Jecklin
Savannah, Georgia

Lutheran Sentinel, September, 1991
Reprinted with permission.

LUTHER ON EDUCATION

A Synopsis

"Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up" (Deuteronomy 6:4-7).

The 1991 Annual Conference of the AFLC passed a resolution establishing a Christian Academic Education Board. One of the goals of this board in its first year of existence has been to formulate a statement of purpose which would accurately reflect the directive given to it by the Annual Conference. That statement should also be consistent with the teaching of Scripture and Lutheran theology. This article gives a synopsis of one area of study relating to this goal, that is, to briefly summarize the teaching of Luther on education. A more complete and detailed article will be distributed at the 1992 Annual Conference.

Luther's teaching on education began with the Bible, particularly with the instructions of the Old Testament concerning the training of the family, and especially as this is seen in the Fourth Commandment and its meaning. He felt that the foremost study of all should be the Bible and advised that no one should send his child to a school where the Holy Scriptures are not supreme. Schools, especially the universities, should turn out people who are well-skilled in their knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and capable of standing against the heretics, the devil and the world. (James Atkinson, Ed., "Luther's Works, Vol. 44, The Christian in Society I," Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966, p. 205-207.)

Those responsible for the education of the young are the family, the state, and the church, which Luther called the three hierarchies of government estab-

lished of God. Parents have the primary responsibility of education and are to raise their children for service in society and the church. The Church has need of godly heads of families, useful teachers and capable ministers of the Gospel, and society needs accomplished and well-trained men and women for the maintenance of civil order and the proper regulation of the household. For these reasons both the state and the church, as well as the family, are to do all they can to see that children get the best possible education.

In addition to the diligent study of Holy Scripture, schools are also to teach the catechisms, both Small and Large, as summaries of God's Word. Added to that should be a study of the ancient languages to give understanding of the Scripture and to carry on government. Luther also recommended the teaching of rhetoric, dialectic, and logic, acquainting the students with the inductive — deductive learning process. Finally, he felt that the areas of history, science, music, and gymnastics should also be taught to strengthen the entire person for the sake of producing well educated adults for service in church and state.

Luther saw this education process occurring in three levels of schooling. The first level was called "Latin" schools and would probably best be compared with today's elementary and high schools. The second level of schooling would be the university where the preparation would be completed for offices in the civil realm and attendance in a seminary for preparation for the Christian ministry. The third type of schooling recommended by Luther would be in what he called "schools for the common people." These schools would compare with the present technical schools and would give training to make young people "fitted for the various callings of life."

In developing a statement of pur-

pose from this and other studies the Christian Academic Education Board has, at least at this point in time, come to the consensus that the following would be goals that would reflect its purpose in ministry to our AFLC congregations.

The Christian Academic Board will function as a resource board to provide information and encouragement to:

1. The parents and families within the AFLC desiring such information as they fulfill the responsibilities given by God to be diligent in the training of their children in the Christian faith and unto His glory as they function in church and society.

2. Those individuals, congregations and groups that would desire information concerning the establishment of Christian academic schools within the environment of the local congregation, or congregations.

3. Those individuals, congregations and groups desiring information which would enable them to share a more effective Christian witness within the environment of the public school system.

4. Those individuals, congregations and groups desiring information concerning the establishment of a school of higher learning which would enhance the ministry of the AFLC in the world unto the fulfillment of our Lord's Great Commission to make disciples of all nations.

—Rev. Ralph Tjelta
Blaine, Minnesota

Christian Academic Board

Rev. Michael Crowell
Rev. Del. Palmer
Mrs. Karen Haugen
Rev. Ralph Tjelta
Mrs. Bev Enderlein
Mr. Chuck McKeen
Mr. Joel Baker

Unity Lutheran Church Massapequa, New York

Unity Lutheran Church was formed in 1984 by eight families who were members of an LCA church that was in a state of turmoil as a result of a new pastor who was hired to replace their retiring pastor of 30 years.

It was decided from the beginning to join the AFLC as it was truly a democratic organization, in fact our church body was set up with the same ideals in mind. We have no church council, the council is the congregation, and every member has a vote in all decisions. We grew in a matter of months to approximately 100 members.

Our pastor served us as a part-time volunteer so that we could immediately start saving to purchase a permanent place to worship in the community. We started out by renting a hall from the Masonic Lodge. In 1986 we found a piece of property in Massapequa that was for sale. It was one-half acre and we purchased it for \$180,000, which was about 70% of its appraised price. In 1988 we started construction of our new church building with the assistance of the AFLC home missions board.

We have found it extremely difficult financially with mortgage payments amounting to \$4,000 per month, and we are forced to conduct fund raising in addition to sacrificial giving in order to meet our monthly expenses. Our members have joined together on regular basis to conduct different fund raiser projects at the rate of at least one per month until such time as we have enough members to be self-supporting. We finished off the church basement, and use it for rentals of family parties. This not only makes us more visible in the community, it generates additional income to our church. We also rent out our facilities to a Seventh Day Adventist mission congregation.

In August of 1989 our pastor left the congregation, which left us with no pastor. Our members immediately banded together and with the help of the Lord were able to conduct Sunday services themselves. The home missions board of the AFLC was kind

The Lord Had A Plan For Us

enough to fly Pastor Don Greven to New York once per month to assist us with the pastoral duties of our church. Thanks to Pastor Greven, we were able to run the church during our period of about 24 months without a pastor. Pastor Greven taught our confirmation class while he was here in addition to assisting us in converting our Sunday School program over to the AFLC material.

In June of 1991 myself and two of our members went to the annual conference of the AFLC in order to get to know some of the members of our AFLC. We were not sure what to expect, feeling like outsiders due to being so far from the Midwest where most of the AFLC churches are located. We were quite pleased to learn, however, how many people had heard about us and our work on the East Coast. We immediately felt like part of the AFLC. We left that conference feeling a renewed sense of belonging as well as spiritually uplifted by the programs of the week.

In September of 1991 our prayers as a congregation were answered as the Lord sent to us Pastor Roy Warwick

Home Missions

from Aberdeen, South Dakota. Pastor Warwick joined our congregation as a full-time pastor through the assistance of the AFLC home missions board from a subsidy we receive for our pastor. We now have all the elements needed to make us a growing congregation. A beautiful church building, a fine pastor, a spirited hard working congregation, an association that is there to assist us, and a Lord who believes in us and our work in his name.

We realize that without the assistance of the AFLC home missions board that we would not have been able to continue our work in Massapequa, and we hope that in the future that we can assist other AFLC churches to be formed in the New York area.

The experience that we as a congregation have gone through, particularly being without a pastor for a period of time has actually strengthened our congregation as a family who have helped each other through those tough times. We now understand that the Lord had this plan for us. I would encourage all mission congregations that are feeling defeat not to give up as the Lord will come through in His time to enable you to carry on in His name. We as a congregation pray for the mission congregations of the AFLC every Sunday, and ask that you do the same for us.

—Roy Cloughen, President
Unity Lutheran Church

LUTHERAN BROTHERHOOD GRANT TO THE AFLC HOME MISSIONS

The Church Extension Program Subsidy is a fraternal program of Lutheran Brotherhood designed to aid Lutheranism. Over the past 15 years the AFLC Home Missions Department has received over \$700,000 through this financial program.

During 1991 Home Missions received \$40,000 from Lutheran Brotherhood and divided the funds evenly between eight congregations as follows:

Abiding Savior Free Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
Atonement Free Lutheran Church, Arlington, Washington
Christ the King Free Lutheran Church, East Grand Forks, Minnesota
Faith Lutheran Church, London, Minnesota
Shepherd's Church of the Valley, Murrieta, California
Christ Lutheran Church, Wichita Falls, Texas
Word of Life Free Lutheran Church, Upsala, Minnesota
Christian Free Lutheran Church, Wheatland, Iowa

Youth Family Camp Held at Fazenda Retiro, Campo Mourão

A beautiful setting, a well-organized program, dedicated and sensitive counselors, consecrated speakers, receptive hearts, the presence of the Holy Spirit; all of these ingredients for a wonderful Bible Camp were present at our Annual Carnival Bible Camp held February 28 to March 4, 1992. It was an unforgettable week in the lives of many Brazilian youth.

What is so special about Bible Camp? Why do we consider it such a high priority in our ministry as church-planters in Brazil? Bible Camp provides a place and an opportunity for people to "come apart" from their normal busy lives and reflect upon their relationship with God. The intense fellowship and concentrated teaching help campers consider what is really important in life.

Challenges are given to return to the work-a-day world a "new creature" with a "renewed mind" and a fresh desire to live a consecrated life, putting Jesus in His rightful place — on the throne of our lives. Sound preaching, small group studies, one-on-one conversations, and quiet times all alone with God nurture decisions that profoundly affect the direction of many lives.

This year's camp was especially blessed. My husband, Paul, and I (program directors) were so thankful for the spiritual concern and the selfless involvement of the 12 young people who volunteered to be counselors. They prayed and worked in a way that

made their love evident to all. Only eternity will reveal all the fruits of their labors. However, we do rejoice in knowing that 20 young people made decisions to let Jesus be Lord of their lives during this camp. It is such a blessing to notice the transformation that Jesus brings about even in the short time we are together at camp.

All 110 campers (60% male/40% female) joined into the joyful spirit of camp. Their talents and cooperation were evident in their exuberant singing, their creative skits and special music, their participation in the sports and other activities. We believe God was present in a very special way to make all of this possible. The bond of fellowship will not be forgotten.

The Lord blessed us with wonderful weather too. Big rains preceded and followed camp, but the five days of camp were perfect. It was unseasonably cool, but that's a welcome refresher in the heat of summer. The star-studded skies made the late-night camp fires extra special. One night we had a Galilean sing with a big bonfire built in the middle of the lake. There was a group on each side and a boat in the middle singing and sharing back and forth. God's creation is a beautiful backdrop for spiritual reflection.

Our greatest concern in the spiritual birth and growth of individuals as they come to camp. Of the 110 campers this year, many came from non-Christian backgrounds. The Word of God was sown in the heart of each one. Only time will tell what kind of soil the seed encountered. Please pray with us that these Brazilian young people will experience real joy in knowing Jesus and that the decisions they made at camp will be carried out in their lives in the real world. May we all remember Jesus' promise, "In this world you shall have tribulations, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

— Becky Abel

Santa Felicidade, Parana

From a 1991 Bible School Graduate



Reginaldo Roberto Rezende

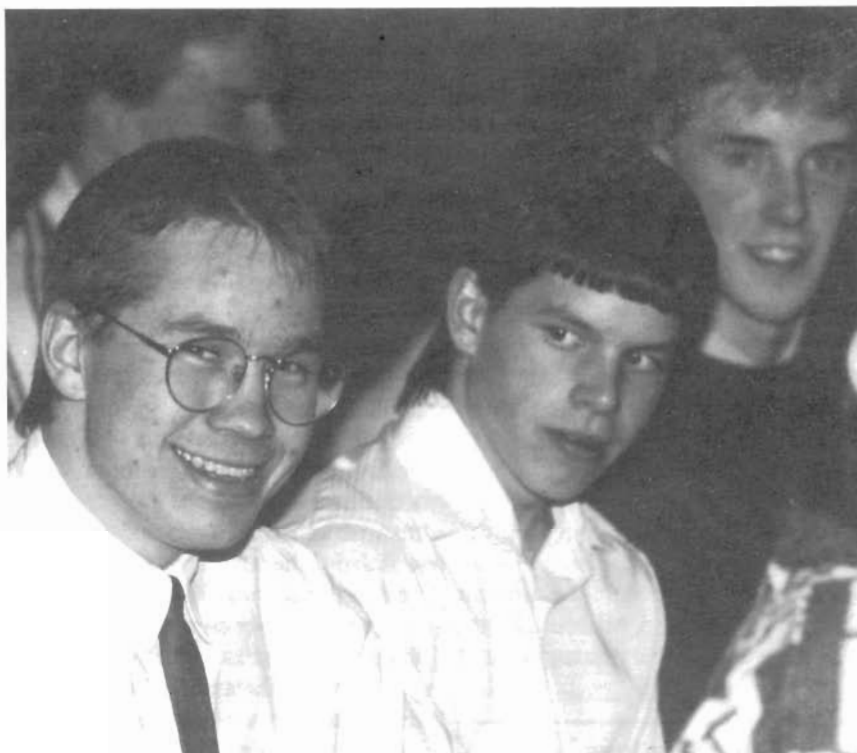
My name is Reginaldo Roberto Rezende, I am 23 years old, and was born in Campo Mourão, Paraná. I was born into a Christian home, but I made my decision for the Lord when I was 12 years old. From that day my life changed much. My relationship with my parents improved and my interest in the things of the Lord increased.

When I was 18 I went to Curitiba (capital city of Paraná) to complete my military duty, and I remained in the army for four years. During these four years I had many trials, but I thank the Lord that with his help I had victory over them.

With all I had been through, I felt the necessity of learning more profoundly from the Word of God so that I would then be better able to transmit it to others. I also wanted to better develop my God-given talents. I was encouraged by the pastor of the church I was attending, Paul Abel, to come to Bible School. I accepted the challenge. I thank God that this year of studies at the Bible School has been a blessing and I have grown spiritually.

I am now helping in the church of Cohapar (suburb of Campo Mourão) where we have as pastor, Iran Santiago de Góes, Jr.

A verse that has spoken to my heart is Romans 12:1-2: "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." Without sacrifice, we will never know what is the will of God for our lives.



By Friday evening, March 20, 1992, approximately 115 prospective students had arrived on the AFLBS campus. They came by train from Montana, by plane from Washington, by church van from northern Minnesota and by car from Michigan as well as states in between. The weekend, hosted by the Bible School, gave the high school students a taste of campus life. The young people attended sample classes, experienced dorm life, enjoyed a Saturday evening banquet followed by an evangelistic service in the chapel and could even get a taste of music at AFLBS by joining the Campus Days Choir. The weekend is an annual spring event designed to acquaint high schoolers with our AFLC Bible School.

During the same weekend, the annual AFLBS alumni tournament was held. Basketball games were at North Hennepin Community College and at Bethel College. Eight men's teams participated. The Saturday afternoon championship game was between the oldest team (classes of '67-'76) and the current AFLBS students. The experience of veterans won out. On Saturday evening, a pizza party and praise service was held at Solid Rock Free Lutheran Church, Osseo, Minnesota.

Help Wanted

Due to the growth on our schools' campus, the Board of Trustees is seeking applications for the following positions:

1. Superintendent of buildings and grounds (to be in charge of all maintenance, repairs and up keep of all buildings, grounds and equipment).
2. Full-time cook.

A complete job description is available for each position. Please contact Pastor Don Greven, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441; phone 612-544-9501, for more information if you sense a call to serve the Lord in this way.

We ask all our people to pray for God's direction in filling these positions.

AFLBS Basketball Teams Win Second and Fifth Places In National Tourney

The AFLBS men's and women's basketball teams travelled to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on March 19-21, for the NBCAA National Tournament. The AFLBS women played for the championship title. They lost that game to Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College, Moore, Oklahoma, 65-55. The women Conquerors' season record ended at 12 wins and four losses.

The AFLBS men's team beat Florida Christian College, Kissimmee, Florida, 85-78, to place fifth in the tournament. Their season record was ten wins and nine losses.

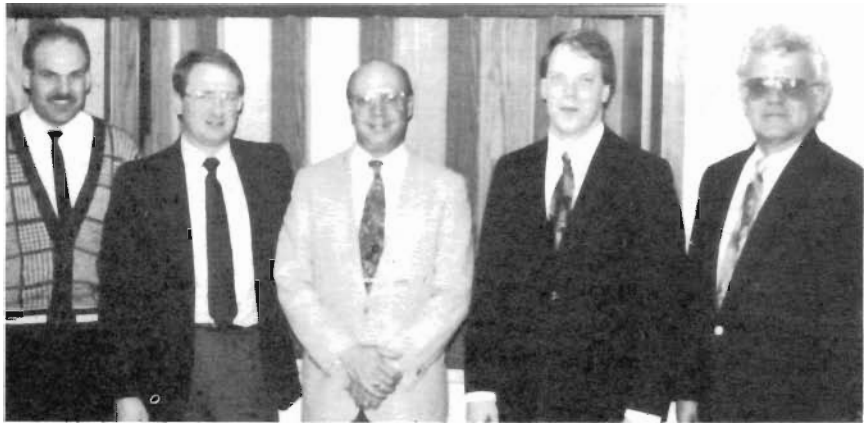
Congratulations to the coaches and players!

Rev. John Abel, AFLC Missionary/Evangelist, will return from Brazil in May. His speaking schedule has openings for the end of July and the month of August. September and October are filled, as well as the first week of November. The last two weeks of November and the first two weeks of December are also open. Please contact him at Box 97, Hitterdal MN 56552.

Boscobel, Wisconsin — Trinity Lutheran Church will host a Life in Christ Crusade April 26-30. Dr. Steven Lombardo, AFLC Schools' faculty member will be the evening speaker and also will lead a morning Bible study.

Western North Dakota — Eastern Montana District — The first district-wide men's retreat was held April 3-4, at the Upper Missouri Retreat Center north of Williston. The sessions featured a video series by Charles Colson entitled, "Challenge to the Church." The weekend was such an encouragement to the men that plans are tentatively being made for two retreats per year for the district.

Rev. Hubert DeBoer, Moorhead, Minnesota, is serving the Hampden and Edmore, North Dakota, parish as interim pastor.



Thief River Falls, Minnesota — Our Saviour's Lutheran hosted their annual Missions Conference March 15-18. Pictured are the current pastor's of Our Saviour's parish with the speaker of the Missions Conference, David Molstre. (Left to right): Todd Peterson, Del Palmer, David Molstre, James Molstre, and Connely Dyrud. The mission conference had as its theme, "The Christian Posture." Pastor Molstre challenged us in our attitude toward the people around us. Using many examples from the home missions church of Palmdale, California, Pastor Molstre explained that we must love the people as Christ loved us. On the last night of the conference Pastor Connely Dyrud spoke about what the foreign mission field is like. Following the service Pastor Dyrud divided the people into small groups to pray for missions. Attendance at the conference was excellent and under the new World Missions unit giving plan, \$455 per month was raised for missionary salaries along with \$4,128.25, which will be divided between Home and World Missions. We, as a congregation, would challenge other congregations to have a mission conference in your church as we expand our vision in the AFLC.

The Association Retreat Center — The annual Men's Retreat at the Association Retreat Center was held the weekend of February 21-23. The theme was "Crumbling Foundations." Our guest speaker was Pastor Vincent Will, pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Springfield, Missouri. Pastor Will came to us with a rich background

in world missions.

The weekend's activities began on Friday evening after registration with a wonderful time of sharing. As each man introduced himself and where he was from, he also shared a word of personal testimony. This lasted for two hours as the 85 or so men shared. It set the tone for the rest of the weekend.

Pastor Will shared in four sessions during the day on Saturday. The sub-topics were: "God, The Master Designer; Materials, The Means God Uses; Construction, Care in the Building; and Completion, The Laid Foundation."

One highlight of the weekend was the free-will offering taken on Saturday for Pastor Bob Lee to assist in his trip to Estonia. The men shared just over \$700. The ARC Board later unanimously voted to increase that amount from the retreat treasury to total \$1,000 even.

It was a personal joy for me to attend, both as a participant and also officially as a member of the ARC Board. I can't encourage men enough to make plans for 1993, should the Lord tarry.

— Pastor John C. Rieth

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences — February 1 - March 31, 1992

FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	REC'D IN MARCH	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	%* TOTAL
General Fund	\$295,450.00	\$15,574.84	\$26,003.23	9
Schools - (AFLTS) . .	149,535.00	5,171.14	8,564.49	6
(AFLBS) . .	208,625.00	9,434.74	13,475.83	6
Home Missions	433,616.00	18,438.74	35,435.28	8
World Missions	409,715.00	22,958.02	42,827.84	10
Capital Investment . .	30,000.00	1,747.89	2,190.40	7
Parish Education . . .	84,385.00	11,070.24	14,561.27	17
ARC	20,000.00	760.25	1,061.46	5
TOTALS	\$1,631,326.00	\$85,155.86	\$144,119.80	9
1991 - 1992	\$1,537,681.00	\$50,169.16	\$133,184.46	9

*Goal 17%

O HAPPY HOME!

This issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* is a first for our publication, combining the traditional Mothers' and Fathers' Day themes into one Family Life focus. It is our prayerful purpose that the union of these important topics will serve to emphasize their essential unity, beyond the sentimentalism that can sometimes cushion the impact of any serious consideration of them.

The sad fact is that our so-called happy homes may not be too happy at all these days. An epidemic of divorce has swept North America, and, together with an increase in the number of unmarried mothers who keep their babies, the result is millions of single-parent homes, a development that radically alters our customary image of family life. The father-at-work, mother-at-home, two-child households of the past represents only a small fraction of present day reality. Shocking statistics point to an explosion of child abuse cases, a tragedy is compounded by evidence that a member of the immediate family is usually the culprit.

The Word of God does not ignore the issue of dysfunctional families. Lessons that can be gleaned from the life of David, for example, are both positive and negative in their teaching, and still have the power to startle modern readers by their candid revelations and clear relevance. Nor is Scripture silent concerning the principles that produce healthy and happy homes, and the sheer volume of good Christian books that develop these principles could easily bury a full-grown adult in any avalanche.

Failure can be called the one common link that connects all of our families. Statements like: "I've done everything possible," or "I've done my best," are no longer legitimate excuses, because they are essentially lies. There is always something more that could have been done, and the family life ledgers of fallible fathers and mothers are never free from the marks of less than our best, but a firm confidence in the grace of God gives us strength to go on. The Father loves our children more than we could ever love them, and His care for them is perfect in its unselfish purity. Our trust in His saving and keeping power is more important than all of our parenting skills and strategies.

The Lord is the heart of any truly happy home. He still

is waiting and willing to pick up broken pieces and to shape them into something beautiful, to forgive and forget. The need is real, and the time is now. Open the door of your home to Him today!

A WORD OF EXPLANATION FROM YOUR EDITOR

Not even two years have passed since I became editor of *The Lutheran Ambassador*, a short time indeed compared to my predecessor's many years of service. The months have been pleasant ones, in spite of a few mildly irate letters and some difficult deadlines, and one might have anticipated a longer career of producing editorial commentary and constructive criticism before the literary well ran dry.

The sad circumstances relating to the resignation of AFLC President Richard Snipstead, however, have led the Co-ordinating Committee to request that I, as vice president, immediately assume the office of president on a full-time basis. My parish has granted me a leave of absence, and the burden of new duties makes it impossible for me to continue to serve as editor of this publication. Rev. Laurel Udden, New Hope, Minnesota, has agreed to "come out of retirement" and fill the position on a temporary basis, and he will be working together with Solveig Hjermstad in the production of the next issue. Many of our readers remember his editorial work in the past years with *Evangelize*, the former publication of the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement (L.E.M.) of which he was the director, and the gratitude of our church family is extended to him for his willingness to serve at this time.

Thank you for encouragement in word and prayer during this difficult period of transition. Continue to pray for the Snipstead family, too. The well-worn words of the apostle still stand: "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, those whom He called according to His plan" (Romans 8:28 NET).

Rev. David Skordahl, Murrieta, California, resigned as pastor of Shepherd's Church of the Valley in order to accept a call to the Dalton, Minnesota, parish (Zion-Sarpsborg, Kvam, Tordenskjold), beginning this summer. He has served the California home mission congregation since 1990.

The Christian Academic Education Board — of the AFLC is soliciting materials that can be resources for Christian Schools and Christian witness in the public schools. If you have such materials, we request that they be forwarded to Mrs. Roger (Karen) Haugen, Route 2, Box 91, Cokato, MN

55321. These materials are intended to create a library of resources that can be used by districts and member congregations. They will serve as resources in our planning and will be available for use by others who request them.

Some materials are now available from Mrs. Haugen at 612-286-5079.

Letters to the editor

To the Editor:

I have heard people ask, "Was the church asleep in 1973 when the killing of preborn babies was legalized?" Now I pray we are awake enough to stop the so-called Freedom of Choice Act. This radical bill goes well beyond Roe vs. Wade. The bill's prime sponsor, Rep. Don Edwards (D-CA), said, "It provides for no exceptions whatsoever ... for any reason." Since no state would be allowed to restrict or limit abortion, this bill should really be called the Freedom to Kill bill. The ACLU admits that it would prohibit parental notification laws, informed consent, and waiting periods. The vast majority of Americans want at least those provisions. The National Abortion Rights Action League has predicted it to pass both houses this summer. If our federal representatives clearly understand the extreme nature of this bill, it can be defeated. Please write immediately to your U.S. congressman and to your two U.S. senators and express your strong opposition to the so-called Freedom of Choice Act (H.R. 25, S. 25).

*Debbie Neitzer
Camden Point, Missouri*

To the Editor:

We are concerned Christians, not gullible, as stated in your editorial "Again and Again" (March 17 issue). We were caught sitting on our hands when Madalyn Murray O'Hair put across banning anything religious in our government and schools, and after hearing her on a recent Donahue program, we better be on our toes.

It could have very well been true. I sent in my signature in good faith, and I am proud of all who did.

*Lucille Coffield
Reva, South Dakota*

Make your plans now to attend the AFLC Annual Conference, June 17-21

Watch for our Pre-Conference issue coming next time.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Second-Class



Brodhead and Janesville, Wisconsin — Fifty-one new members were recently received into membership at Bethany Lutheran and Trinity Free Lutheran Churches. Fourteen of the new members completed adult confirmation class. "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).