

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

April 5, 1988

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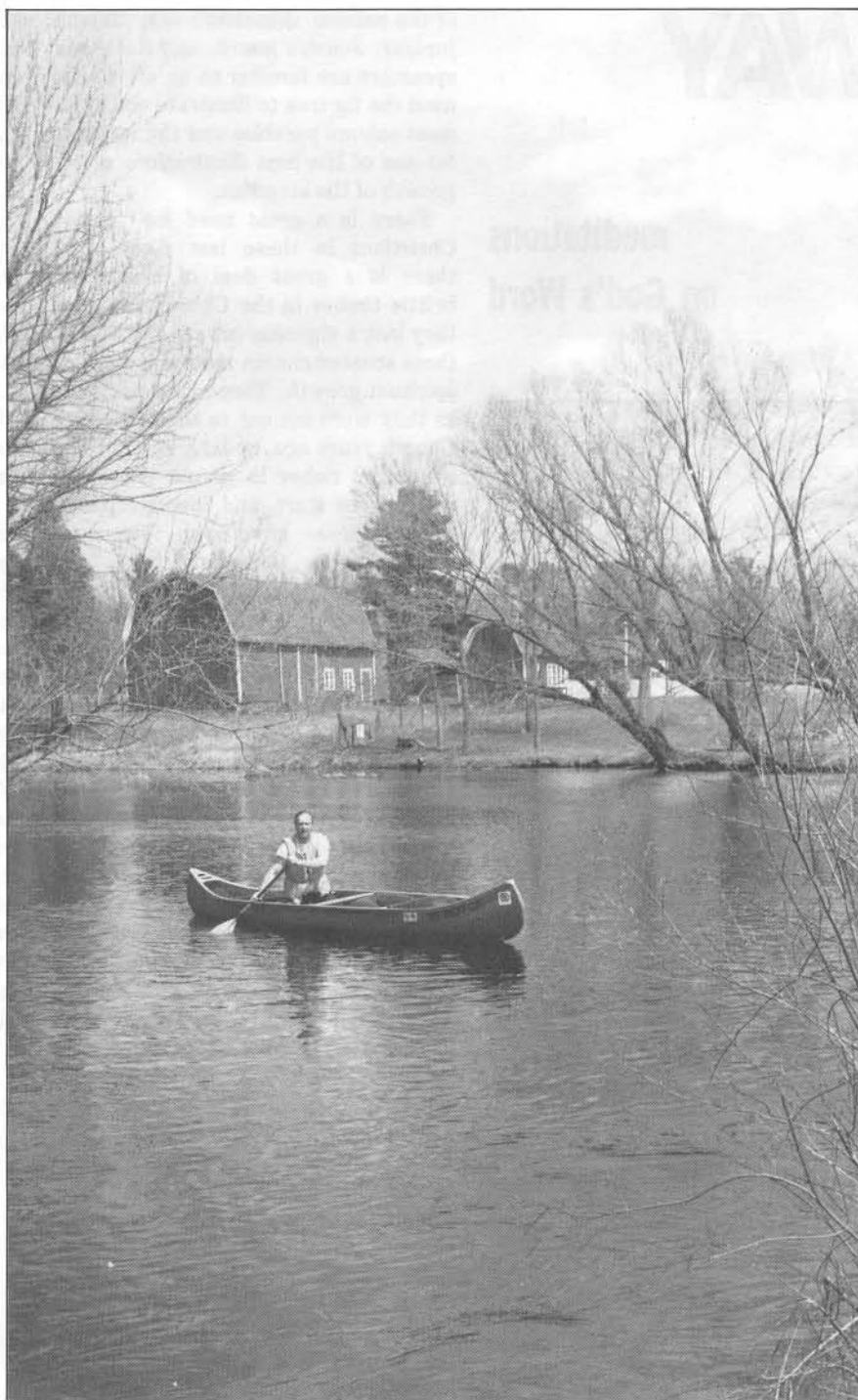
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meditations on God's Word

Cover photo by
Roger C. Huebner, D.D.S.

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THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Trees have a message

The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which He hath planted" (Ps. 104: 16) KJV.

The Bible is full of trees, from the time when Adam and Eve sat under their shadow in Eden and on to that splendid vision of the New Jerusalem, where the tree of life bears 12 kinds of fruit and its leaves are for the healing of the nations. Absalom's oak, Elijah's juniper, Jonah's gourd, and Zaccheus' sycamore are familiar to us all. Christ used the fig tree to illustrate one of his most solemn parables and the mustard for one of His best illustrations of the growth of His kingdom.

There is a great need for "cedar" Christians in these last days when there is a great deal of brash and brittle timber in the Church. Because they lack a vigorous inward Christ-life, these stunted church members have no spiritual growth. There they are, just as they were set out in the soil of the Church years ago, no larger, no broader and no richer in graces than they were at the start, and the caterpillars of worldliness have spun their ugly webs all over their branches. They drink up God's air and sunshine, but do not add any beauty or fruitfulness to the cause which they represent.

A cedar-Christian not only grows, but he grows in all atmospheres and through all weathers. Regardless of how the wintry gales might rage over Lebanon's stormswept heights, the "trees of the Lord" toss the tempests from their elastic bows and stand as fast and firm as the everlasting mountains underneath them. In the Church of Jesus Christ there are just such hardy specimens of godliness, storm-proof, gold-proof, temptation-proof. They never bend and they never break. They never compromise with sin one single iota. Popular hurricanes rage against such people: sometimes when preaching plain truths that make sinners fear and tremble, sometimes denouncing iniquity in legislative halls, sometimes when uncovering sepulchers of uncleanness, sometimes when risking their lives for the cause of Christ. The fiber of such cedars of the Lord never bends or cracks. Opposition only makes their roots go deeper and

the trunk of their testimony for the truth stand firmer.

It is usually not the winds of opposition or persecution which bring down church members these days. They are in greater danger from secret influences and besetting sins which gnaw out the heart of their religion. And when others are startled and puzzled by the fall of some prominent man in the Church, it is only the crack of a piece of timber that had been worm-eaten by secret sin long before. Christ's genuine cedars are sound to the core. The fiber of the wood is so solid that it not only is able to withstand a heavy strain, but it will also take on the bright polish of "the beauty of holiness." Just as Solomon used the trees of Lebanon for the most conspicuous portions of the temple, Jesus Christ also uses cedar-Christians to be the lintels and the doorposts, and the stately pillars in His spiritual temple. These are the trees of the Lord which grace has planted and whose "Fruit shakes like Lebanon."

I don't remember much of an emphasis on Arbor Day when I was growing up and one hears even less about it these days. It's not even noted on most calendars any more. It is celebrated here in North Dakota, however, each spring, when school children and others plant trees for future generations to enjoy. It is an "Arbor Day" in the church when the converting power of the Holy Spirit creates witness-bearing, sin-defying, and bountiful, fruit-yielding Christians. Planted by the rivers of water, their leaves never wither; they continue to bear fruit even in old age; they are always full of sap and green leaves. Death is only their transplanting into the realms of glory.



by Rev.
Jerome C. Nikunen

Easter has passed. The festivities are over. Special music has been presented, the messages have been preached and families have gathered in fellowship. To some, Easter is just a holiday. To believers, Easter is the most glorious day of the church year.

What effect did the recent Easter have on our lives? Did the festivities seem to be traditional and entertaining, or were we moved in our hearts to a new degree of commitment and expectation? What we experience depends a great deal on our understanding of the Scriptures, which reveal to us the plan and working of God, and on our own willingness to accept God's plan in our hearts and lives.

The human or fleshly response may be one of disbelief, doubt, disappointment, anger or defiance, but not of peace, joy and assurance. *The Scriptural response* may be one of intellectualism or head knowledge. This leads to an attitude of legalism which produces self-righteousness, but also no peace, joy or assurance. *The spiritual response* is experiencing a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ. A total acceptance of His death and resurrection is necessary to redeem us from our lost condition. This is the only response that will bring true peace, joy and assurance.

As we look into our text of Luke 24:13-35, let each of us examine our hearts for that Easter glow. The two men in our text, who had been followers of Jesus (vs. 19-22), tell of their personal observations and thoughts of Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and man. They had hoped Jesus would be the one to redeem Israel. They were looking for an earthly savior, a human deliverer, an earthly king, the one to establish the perfect kingdom on earth. These two men on the road to Emmaus had a preconceived idea of God establishing an earthly kingdom. When the events of the past days had taken place, with the arrest of Jesus and the trial and crucifixion by the Romans, their hopes were crushed. They felt all was lost, that they were in danger and the only thing left to do was to flee for fear of the Jewish leaders.

When Jesus joined the two men on the road, they were downcast and discouraged; because of this, Jesus knew they wouldn't believe it was He so He distorted their vision. It is true today that many people do not have a clear vision of who Jesus is because of lack of faith or some preconceived ideas of the way to salvation.

The mind has to be brought to a point of belief before the Holy Spirit can open the eyes and the heart. This preparation can only take place by hearing the Scriptures. There is no other way of being brought to the knowledge of truth except by the Word. Jesus began to open unto them the truth about Himself, beginning with Genesis

The AFTERGLOW of EASTER

and continuing through Malachi. He told them everything the prophets had said concerning Himself. He told them that the things they had believed were not God's plan at all, but human ideas, proclaimed by church leaders and intellectuals of that day.

In our day, the same distortions are being taught. The Scripture is being humanly interpreted or neglected altogether. Today there are many people who believe that by unifying all the church bodies into one great world church, we can come up with a peaceful world. This church would be led by a man capable of working miracles and showing great power. It is no wonder there are so many confused and unregenerate people in our churches today.

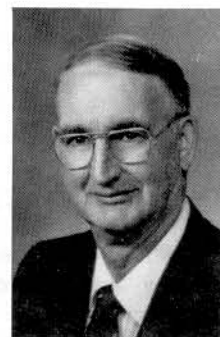
Needed today is what Jesus gave the two men on the road to Emmaus, the total Scriptures in all their truth and purity. When the Word is given in that way, the Holy Spirit can do His work in the heart-changing process. The whole outlook begins to come into focus and that is when "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

As our friends walked along the road and listened to Jesus, their spirits began to lift and they assumed new attitudes. When they reached Emmaus they insisted that Jesus stay with them in their home. They were no longer downcast and fearful, but rather in a generous mood, willing to open their home to this stranger. The Word was working. Jesus could sense the change of attitude and the openness of their spirit. He joined them, not that He had need, but to fulfill the purpose He had come to accomplish. When they were seated, He did something that was common for Him. He broke bread and gave thanks. This was the turning point. The distortion left their eyes and they saw Him as their Lord and Savior. The one who was dead was now alive. What a moment!

How well I remember when Jesus became real to me. The crucifixion, which had been a horrible and meaningless event, now became the most meaningful sight. That tragedy took on ☩

Luke 24:13-35

"What effect did the recent Easter have on our lives?"



by Rev.
Philip Featherstone
Pukwana, S. Dak.

new meaning. It was God's plan of redemption for sinful man. I was responsible. My sins helped put Jesus on the cross! The blood that flowed that day was the only thing that could blot out the scarlet sin of my life. Good Friday became a day of joy. The scales dropped from my eyes and I saw Jesus as He really was, my Lord and Savior.

Now our friends from Emmaus were ready for the Holy Spirit to do his work. We see it in their response, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" The glow that they felt was the power of the Holy Spirit working through the Word to change their hearts. What a change it made! Their old fear and sadness was gone. A new fire was burning in their hearts. Their doubts were gone and their questions answered. Jesus was alive. Easter was past, but the glow and excitement were just beginning. Nothing would hinder them now.

The hour was late and it had been a long day. The old flesh would have said that this newfound joy could wait until tomorrow, but the new spirit within them sent them hurrying back to Jerusalem. They were experiencing the spiritual response to Easter. In the words of Paul to the Galatians, 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (NIV).

Fired by the Holy Spirit, our two friends had a new goal, to go and tell. They went directly to Jesus' other followers who were hiding away in the Upper Room. They could not contain the wonderful news, "Christ is risen — He is alive — We have seen Him." Note the change that has taken place in these two men since we first met them hurrying away from Jerusalem. Surely,

they had not become better men. Just hearing the Word, as Jesus explained it to them, couldn't have done it, for they had heard all that before. It had to be the filling of the Holy Spirit and the burning they felt in their hearts.

Have you experienced that filling of the Holy Spirit? Does the "glow of Easter" warm your total being so you are experiencing the joy, peace and assurance that comes from the total spiritual response to Easter? If not, why not? What is missing in your Easter experience that has left you wanting? Could it be that we have our own preconceived ideas about forgiveness and salvation, or that we are blinded to the truth of God's plan for fallen man? Have we become Gospel-hardened by hearing the truth over and over again until it passes right by us and we take it for granted? Have we fallen into the trap of traditions which lead us to just go through the motions, without meaning? Is it legalism or head knowledge, something we have known all our lives as fact, but have never realized personally, a living vital relationship with Jesus Christ? If Calvary and Easter are to become real to us, we must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, have our eyes opened and our hearts set on fire.

This is not the end of Easter. It is just the beginning. Jesus told the men that in not too many days hence they would be filled with power from above and that they should go into all the world preaching and teaching the Gospel to all people. After their eyes were opened, they did hurry to tell others of the good news. As the Easter glow burns in us, let us not fall back into our pre-Easter ways, but let us hurry to tell our friends, neighbors and family of the risen Savior. Let us also continue to search the Scriptures for the inner truth that will keep that glow increasing into an unquenchable flame as the Spirit enlightens us with new truths.

Lutheran Council on Biblical Inerrancy

The Lutheran Council on Biblical Inerrancy and Concordia Theological Seminary LC-MS, Fort Wayne, Ind., announce Lutheran Summit I on "Biblical Inspiration and Interpretation." LCBI and Concordia Seminary are calling on the international Lutheran community to articulate the confessional Lutheran understanding of the doctrine of the Word and Scriptural interpretation. This is a historic event. LCBI decided to approach Concordia Seminary with the idea because of the

great confusion that has been generated in recent years on the part of some synods who have misrepresented the biblical and confessional understanding of the Scripture's authority and interpretation.

The International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI) began its work in 1978. The council consisted of theologians from many denominations. Perhaps its greatest accomplishment was the authorship of the 1978 Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, a

statement on biblical inerrancy that has been widely accepted. The Council produced two other statements. One on hermeneutics and the other on Scripture's role in society, but the historic and theological differences between the various denominations prevent various theological groups from accepting these statements. Recognizing the importance of ICBI's work the Lutheran Council on Biblical Inerrancy wishes to build on this work

cont. on p. 16

From the files of *Folkebladet*, May 23, 1934

(Rev. L. E. Kjelaas was a pioneer pastor in the Grenville-Webster area of South Dakota and at LaMoure, N. Dak. He lived out his days in Minneapolis.)

Pastor L. E. Kjelaas

scattered remarks - pastor and horse

I had decided to travel with the cattle for slaughter to St. Paul last fall and also look in on Pastor Kjelaas while on the trip, but two weeks before I was to leave I heard that he was dead. And so I postponed the trip.

Kjelaas (water spring on a ridge) from Trondelag (Norway) was a blacksmith in the old country. One day a drunkard came into the shop only to make sport of Kjelaas. The poor fellow kept on so long that Kjelaas took and threw him out and did so quite roughly. As a Christian, Kjelaas felt reproached in conscience even though he had been fully in his right to do as he had done. So one day Kjelaas went to the man, engaged him in conversation, and begged his forgiveness, and then the drinker broke down and said that the wrong was his and he had gotten what he deserved. And after a heart-to-heart talk the whole thing became a turning point in the wayward one's life.

It often happens that the innocent feels guilty and when things have been cleared up the one truly wrong acknowledges his guilt.

I learned to know Kjelaas in 1892 in South Dakota. The large man in a buggy well loaded down with the pastor and his baggage, with a little grayish brown (chestnut) horse before it called "Prince" was well-known throughout Day and Codington and adjacent counties.

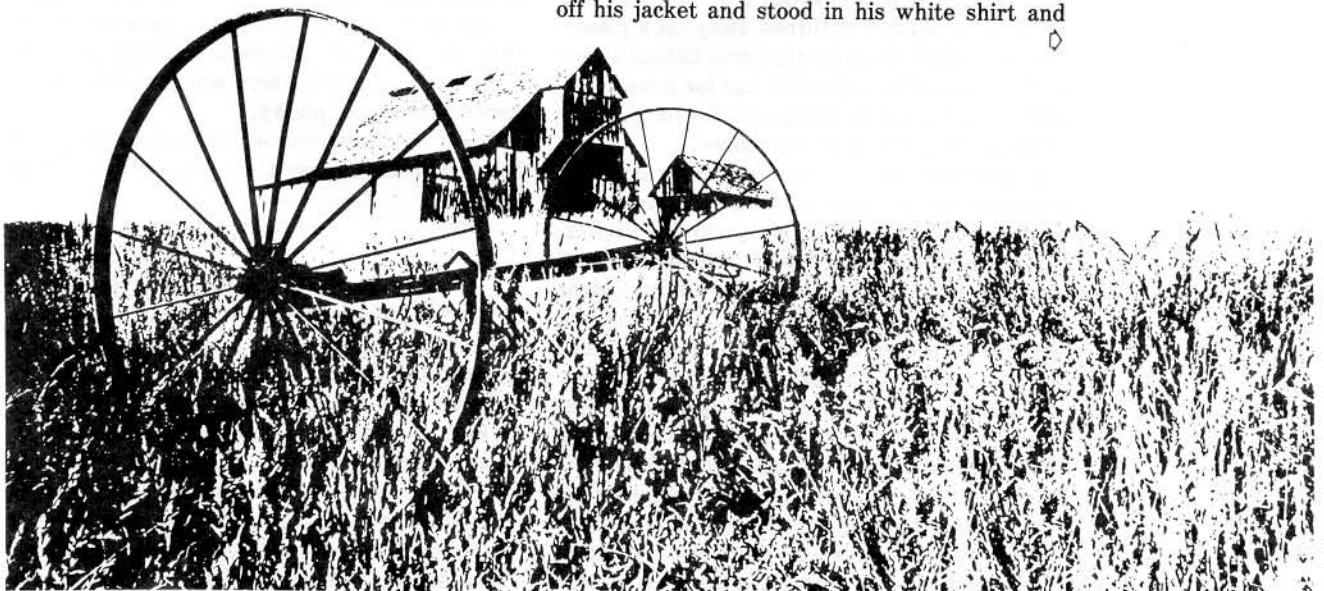
In 1897 he was present in Trinity Church (Minneapolis) and voted for the (Lutheran) Free Church and that name was chosen. There he

arranged for me to teach parochial school and I was in his parish three summers and taught.

One time he was soaked to the skin by a terrible rain on his way to Bergen Church in Day County. When he had come into a home where he had stopped, the lady wanted him to change clothes and put on some of her husband's clothing which was new and large enough. But the pastor declined and wouldn't change. Then, however, the stoutish woman grabbed him by the shoulders and told him she would turn his shirt inside out on him if he didn't obey. And then he got a room where he made the change and if he hadn't done so he would have been in danger of getting pneumonia.

The big Lutheran Church (Norwegian Lutheran Church) people had to respect and honor him even if they lamented that he went along with Augsburg (Seminary) and its beliefs. He himself was so happy in the Free Church without its episcopal control.

One time he held meetings by Wist Post Office, west of Sisseton, S. Dak., and stayed as he often did at the extremely hospitable Bjorgos'. He was a blacksmith. Mr. Bjorgo went away on Sunday afternoon and didn't come back before the next day. Early Monday morning a Polish man came who had driven several miles with oxen and wanted some plowshares sharpened. He was very disappointed to find the blacksmith gone. Mrs. Bjorgo disclosed his problem to the pastor. Kjelaas asked if he could use the shop. He was given permission. He took off his jacket and stood in his white shirt and





STEPS IN DEVELOPING A LESSON

(Each step is reviewed by the Parish Education Board.)

1. Present evaluation of aims, needs, etc., appropriate to age-level.
2. Submit a general outline of 36 lessons.
3. Coordinate a quarterly outline with lessons.
4. Write specific lesson outlines, aim, memory verses, texts, catechism usage, application and the actual lesson.
5. Revise lesson one or more times.
6. Send text to activities and art people. Do typesetting and page design.
7. Proofreading and adjustments.
8. Printer.
9. After innumerable tedious hours, the revised AMBASSADOR SERIES is available at 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55441, ready to be shipped to your Sunday School.

Second grade curriculum completed

The first AFLC Annual Conference called for development of Sunday School curriculum. Truly God gave wisdom to the visionary founders of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. The first Ambassador Series curriculum became available to the congregations of the small, young AFLC during the formative decade of the 60's.

Today there is a total revision project underway of the current materials. Approximately four years ago the Board of Parish Education began extensive study on how to revise the current Ambassador Series. Detailed analysis of grade-level vocabulary, appropriate memory verses, catechism usage, text variety and lesson content

KJELAAS

hammered out (the shares). His great red whiskers were now black with coal dust and the white shirt was even worse off with sweat and dust.

When he was finished, the Pole was afraid that the charge might be very high, but had to ask the cost. But then the man, who was always poor, heard, "Nothing for the work," and he couldn't believe his ears — *nothing...*

The horse Prince, a "buckskin" of 1000 lbs. or less, was a wonderful horse. It could go at a trot all day long. And the way in which it could follow a wagon track or trail was exceptional. And the reason Kjelaas always wanted to drive only one horse was in order that he could find room for it and not be turned away (at a place). There would be room for the horse behind a door in the stable or in a calf stall and for himself, he said, if I got a crib or manger in the barn, I was thankful. This was in pioneer times.

It fell to my lot to cause the destruction of old Prince at age 28. I was teaching parochial school at Saron (Church, six miles northeast of Roslyn), three miles from the pastor's home. I was going to stay two miles further on at Halvor Johnson's. I was given Prince to drive. When I got there I turned the horse out in the pasture because there was no hay left from the winter. When he came inside the wire fence he rolled over at once because the flies or gnats were very bad, too close to the fence, and hooked his feet in the fence barbs and cut a hind foot almost off so that it was hanging only by the skin. Prince stayed there three weeks and then I went to bring him home. He hobbled on three legs to the

church, the two miles, and stopped a little as though there was a meeting. Then he began to go south toward home, but when he reached Storehaugen (the big hill) and saw the buildings straight south he whinnied loudly several times, lifted his tail and would go on, but going down the hill his speed was slowed with only one back foot. When he came home to his stall he ran forth and back in full gallop like a war horse, whinnied and raced with his tail in the air. Then Kjelaas laughed, something he seldom permitted himself to do, but when he saw how glad Prince was to get home again, and the pastor was equally glad to get his horse back, they cheered each other. Yes, so the dear Prince would get to die at home as a general (to be shot). In three days he got a neighbor to shoot the horse and bury it there where it had shown itself so brave and plucky.

These memories will be with me as long as I live. They are dearer than precious stones to me.

Johan O. Brensdal
Antelope, Mont.

—Translated from Norwegian

(J. O. Brensdal was himself a pioneer pastor in northwestern Minnesota, Bisbee, N. Dak., and Plentywood, Mont., later turning to farming. I met him when I was a boy in Montana — he died in 1940 — and find it interesting that early in this century he got his mail for a year at a country post office, Brunkeberg, which was located in the same section of land as the church — Telemarken — I serve southwest of Goodridge, Minn., is situated.—Ed.)

Only the beginning of an immense project

consumed long hours of dedicated Parish Education Board members. There were even some comparative studies made of other major curriculums. The vision of the AFLC founders was being passed on. The Board saw the need to continue to develop curriculum that was soundly biblical, Lutheran and still affordable for nursery classes through adult education.

As of this writing, the third quarter of the second grade curriculum has just come off the press. This revised second grade material zeros in on the Ten Commandments with a good balance of Law and Gospel. This is distinctive as compared to the major curricula available in today's market.

Pilot teacher's manuals have been

completed for the first two quarters. Teachers using the manuals will have the opportunity to complete questionnaires to maximize the effectiveness of the manuals. Mrs. Katha Tjelta, Director of Parish Education said, "As with the student book, considerable time and effort must be put into the Teacher's Manuals so that the spiritual aim of the student lesson is properly taught."

Without distributing expensive craft packets, the revised Ambassador Series includes two activities per lesson. Activities selected are ones which encourage student involvement. "The colorful lessons will attract interest," however, we believe the written content will always be the primary reason for using the Ambassador curriculum,"

according to Mrs. Tjelta. "The Word is what will last, not the colorful illustrations."

Grade four of the revised series is being written and a writer for the third grade is being secured. As soon as additional completed grade levels are available, a notice will be placed in the *Ambassador*. Mrs. Tjelta feels it is critical to be developing the curriculum for the lower age levels soon along with the upper grades.

The Parish Education Board is committed, by God's grace, to build a basic foundation with the right progression in the curriculum. All this must result with men and women who show themselves approved by God, workmen "that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15). This process can be speeded up as more people commit themselves to make this visionary project work. Dedicated volunteers are needed.

— S. Hjermstad

AMBASSADOR SERIES DISTINCTIVES

BIBLICAL

- A Bible Text for Every Lesson
- Both Old and New Testaments
- The NASB Study Translation
- Reference to the Original Languages
- Careful Interpretation and Application

LUTHERAN

- Correlated with Luther's Small Catechism
- Consistent with Fundamental Lutheran Doctrines
 - Personal Salvation
 - The Grace of God
 - Faith in Jesus Christ
 - Law and Gospel
 - The Word Alone
 - Priesthood of All Believers
 - The Means of Grace: Word and Sacraments

EVANGELICAL

- Living Faith
- Godly Living
- Sincere Witness

TEACHABLE

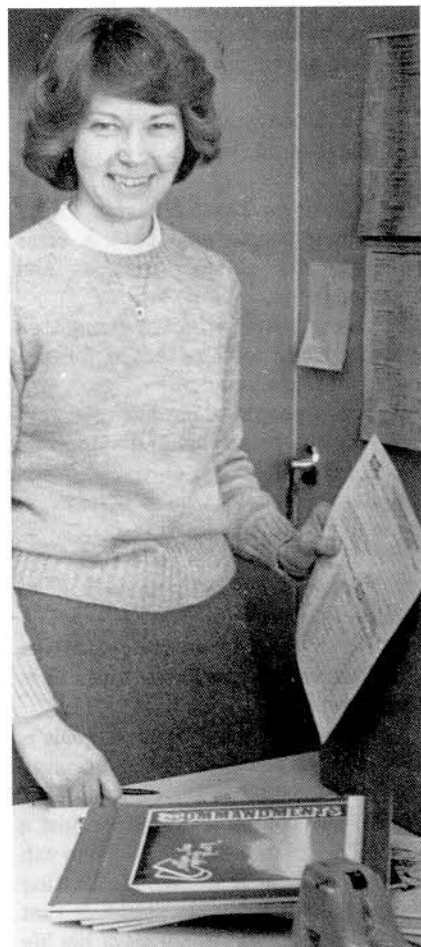
- Graded for Specific Age Level
- Introductory Background for each Lesson
- Specific Lesson Objectives
- Step-by-Step Development
- Suggested Questions and Answers to Aid Understanding
- Thorough Explanation of Theological Truths
- Practical Application and Review
- Suggested Teacher Techniques

CHALLENGING

- Complete Lesson in Student's Workbook
- Vocabulary Words for Gaining New Understanding
- Memory Verse for Each Lesson
- Student Activities to Reinforce Lessons
- Hymns to Encourage the Inner Man

INTERESTING

- Attractive Format
- New — Colorful
- Creative — Encouraging Teacher and Student Interaction



Mrs. Ralph Tjelta, Director of Parish Education.

Youth ministry—its direction



What we do — we all do together.

What direction should the local congregation go in youth ministry? How do we determine this direction? There needs to be planning and direction given.

Before a captain sets his ship out to sea, he has a carefully laid out plan or course that he will be following. He knows his destination and he has studied all of the influencing factors that will affect the course of the ship. He knows the currents, the winds, the landmarks and he also knows the potential of the ship and what it can withstand. Once he has studied and marked down all of these various parameters and has checked the ship and crew to be sure that all necessary provisions are in place, he *then* heads the ship out to sea in the right direction. He would never leave before making a course.

Youth ministry is similar to sailing a ship. First of all, let's look at the destination.

Goals for Youth Ministry

1. Young people who have a clear understanding of their purpose and direction in life.
2. Young people who are committed to using their total potential for the service of God's kingdom.
3. Young people whose lives are governed by the principles and standards of God's Word.
4. Young people who properly respond to authority.
5. Young people who know God.
6. Young people who know how to work and play with others.
7. Young people who are committed to building strong families, now and in the future.

As you can see, each of these goals is written with the underlying assumption that Christianity is real, that Jesus is alive, that church is more than just a form of religion or ritual, that one can know God if he truly seeks. Lasting change follows the understanding that a true Christian has given *all* of his life to Christ, that he gives Jesus full control of *every* area of his life. Anything

less is not true Christianity. These are the foundations of Youth Ministry at Bethlehem Lutheran Church. We want young people who come seeking for something and meet Jesus, not just some program or agenda. We hope to foster this with an environment of care, prayer, fun, teaching and prayer. Thus you have a description of the *destination* of our ship.

What about the currents, winds, storms and other factors? Where do we begin the journey so that we end up where we want to go? Which currents will push us away from the goal and which will move us more quickly to our destination? One of the most positive forces to move us closer to our goal is acceptance and love. Each young person, whether he/she knows Jesus or not, needs to be accepted for who he/she is. There ought to be no outcasts in the church. Each person who comes to a youth function should feel welcome and relaxed as he interacts with others. Picture how it would be if a new person came to a meeting and four or six people walked up to him at various times and introduced themselves. What a welcome! Or how about one group of friends being bold enough to walk over to some other kids and begin a conversation. Things like that help move the ship speedily toward the destination.

Although there are multitudes of negative currents and storms that we will fight against, some are known to us and can be avoided. Most of these negative forces have to do with self-discipline and need not affect us if we are careful. Here are some of the negative currents and how we can avoid them: (Guidelines)

1. Because we are a "group" or "body" with a common purpose, we need to do things together. When groups of individuals pair off and do their own thing, it divides the group and makes it weaker. This includes unnecessary distractions during meetings or individuals leaving the group during an activity without permission.

2. As a body working together, attitudes of individuals affect the whole group. This is true both for positive attitudes and negative attitudes. If all cooperate, we all have fun. But if one or two are half-hearted or complain, it can ruin the fun for the whole group. "Do all things without grumbling or complaining." *What we do — we do with all our hearts.*

3. Because of the weakness of our flesh to give in to sinful desires and attitudes, Paul instructs us to "make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts." And then he says, "Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification (to strengthen and build him up)." "Let us behave properly as in the day, not carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy." In keeping with these Scriptures, we allow no carnal or worldly behavior or behavior that excites such behavior at youth meetings, such as smoking, chewing tobacco, drinking, profanity, physical contact between the sexes, hateful or critical words, or other questionable or sinful actions. *What we do — we do to build each other up.*

Finally, in order for the voyage of the Youth Ministry to be a success, we need an able crew and plenty of provisions for the long trip. We need a group of willing, serving parents who are willing to support their teens in activities by giving rides, helping financially, encouraging attendance, etc. We need youth who are willing to take on extra responsibilities to help plan, pray, promote and participate. We need a church which is willing to make young people feel like they are a part of the church just like everyone else. In your congregation, won't you help in youth ministry?

Troy Funte

***This article (with adaptations) was written by Mr. Troy Funte, the new youth director at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Morris, Illinois. It appeared in the *Bethlehem Star*, the congregation's monthly newsletter.

POLITICKING IN CHURCH

We're against it. It seems like there've been more reports than ever of candidates for the U.S. presidency speaking in churches, at Sunday morning worship services or whatever. And their talks are apparently about what needs fixing in the U.S. and what they propose to do about it.

The charter and purpose of a Christian church are cheapened when candidates for civil office are allowed to come in seeking votes. Christian congregations ought to be above that. Members should be interested in the issues that prevail but should never allow their worship services to be vehicles for partisan political debate.

What about political candidates attending church services during campaigns? While any move made during a campaign has political overtones, a candidate ought to go to church if he is accustomed to doing that, but with as little fanfare as possible. (We realize this is not an easy thing for a sitting president to do in our day.) He or she should participate as any other member of the day's assembly. When not running for office a person in politics may be called upon to share a testimony of what Christ means to him at a church service or be invited to preach the sermon, if he is able to do that.

The late Rev. Trygve F. Dahle, in his autobiography, wrote that when he was a pastor at LaPorte, Minn., he had governors and senators in his audiences many times, LaPorte being a popular vacation area. But, he wrote, "My message was always the same — salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father." Good for him, and we expected that of Tryg.

May we throw in a bit of trivia? In his autobiography, William Allen White, the "Sage of Emporia," Kansas, and a personal friend of Theodore Roosevelt, tells of a visit the former president made to Emporia during his ill-fated Bull Moose campaign of 1912. The campaign found Roosevelt in town over a Sunday as a house guest of editor White and his wife.

But let us read the words of William Allen White as he told about it. "It was supposed that I would take him to our Congregational church, and it was packed to the doors; but the Colonel asked if there was a German Lutheran church in town. There was, and I took him there. Mrs. White did not go. She was afraid to leave the preparations for the Sunday dinner. So we four — the poet, the banker, the hero, and I — marched down the aisle of that little church where a score or so of worshipers were gathered, by no means a fashionable church. When the preacher saw what he had, he turned pale. He afterwards told me he felt like dropping dead; but he went through with the service and read his sermon without changing it. He made some slight reference to the Colonel's presence. Of course everyone in the congregation had stared at him in amazement. But the preacher lined out hymns, and I was interested and delighted to note that the Colonel stood up with the congregation and sang three verses of "How Firm a Foundation, Ye Saints of the Lord," without taking up the book. As a songbird, the Colonel was

nothing to brag about. He had a rough bass about a half-tone off-key, and no ear for music, melody, or harmony. But he bellowed through the hymn without 'da-daing' on a line, so I was proud of him" (*The Autobiography of William Allen White*, The Macmillan Company).

Whatever one may think of Roosevelt's politics or presidency, he showed a marvelous disdain, at least in this instance, of using church attendance for political gain. Bully for him!

As the presidential campaign grinds on through these coming months, we hope that the Sunday services of churches, at least, will not be desecrated by partisan political appeal. And why not leave the Lord's Day open and free? It would do the politicians a world of good, too.

PRAYER AND SCRIPTURE

Adolf Köberle, in his book, *The Quest for Holiness*, writes, "A prayer life that does not stick to Scripture will soon become poor in ideas, poor in faith, poor in love, and will finally die. Free prayer and silent prayer require years of faithful association and training with the spirit of Scripture" (Augsburg Publishing House).

There is more meant here than we can explore or set forth in a few lines. But we can see that Köberle is saying that to pray well, not in the sense of impressing others, but effectively before God, we must be steeped in Scripture and our thoughts and words moved by it.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was of the same mind as Köberle. For he wrote, "If we wish to pray with confidence and gladness, then the words of Holy Scripture will have to be the solid basis of our prayer. For here we know that Jesus Christ, the Word of God, teaches us to pray. The words which come from God become, then, the steps on which we find our way to God" (*Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible*, Augsburg Publishing House).

So this is another reason for being in the Word of God, the flourishing of our communication with the Lord, that we don't remain babes in our speech, but develop wholesomely. The prayer of confession and the prayer for mercy may be very stark and simple, even as the drowning man cries out only the word "Help!" And that is all God needs to hear.

But to go on with Him there must be more. As mother and father will not be satisfied after a while with only the handful of words their little one first learned, so the heavenly Father waits for words that give evidence that His child is growing and learning the language of the soul.

Therefore, it is necessary to immerse ourselves in Holy Writ so that our talking with God, the words we use, is molded by an ever-increasing knowledge of the Scriptures.

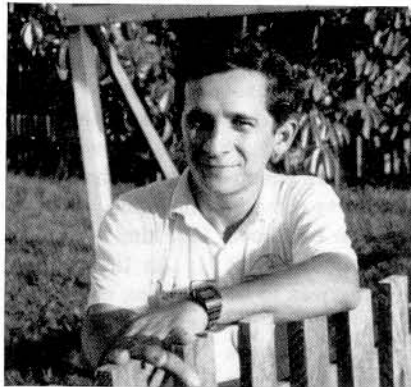
A testimony from Brazil

Pastor Nilson Gomes de Melo

I was converted to Christ Jesus in Vilhena, Rondonia, through the ministry of Pastor George Knapp, at the beginning of 1979. At the beginning of 1980 I went to the Bible School and Seminary as I had the desire to better know the Scriptures and thus to better serve Christ. I studied the necessary years of the Pastoral course, which for me were the most sublime studies I have ever had. I was graduated in 1985 and was ordained in January, 1987, after a year of internship. By Christ's grace, today I am in the ministry as a missionary pastor in Rondonia, together with the companion that the Lord has given me, Zelia Vieira de Melo.

Here in Vilhena we are working especially with Bible studies in the homes of non-Christian families, with the goal of bringing them to the knowledge of Christ and to conversion. Our work is considered missionary due to the distance between us and the other Lutheran churches. Our church is in the northwest part of the country, whereas, the other churches are more to the south, and we are located about 1,600 miles from headquarters in Campo Mourao. We have a church building, but without enough members to be self-supporting. This is our second year of ministry in this location, working with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This church in Vilhena is very special



Pastor Nilson Gomes de Melo

to me, as it was here that I acknowledged Christ Jesus as Savior and Lord of my life, but it is sad to say that the church has suffered various problems.

But praise to the Lord who said "...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). With this in mind, we are certain of the victory that the Lord Jesus gives us, as it is written: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37).

We ask that you continue praying for my wife and me in our work here in Rondonia.

(Ed. Note: Since this was written, Pastor Nilson has left Vilhena and is now serving the church at Iretama).

Memorial Chapel to be built in Campo Mourao

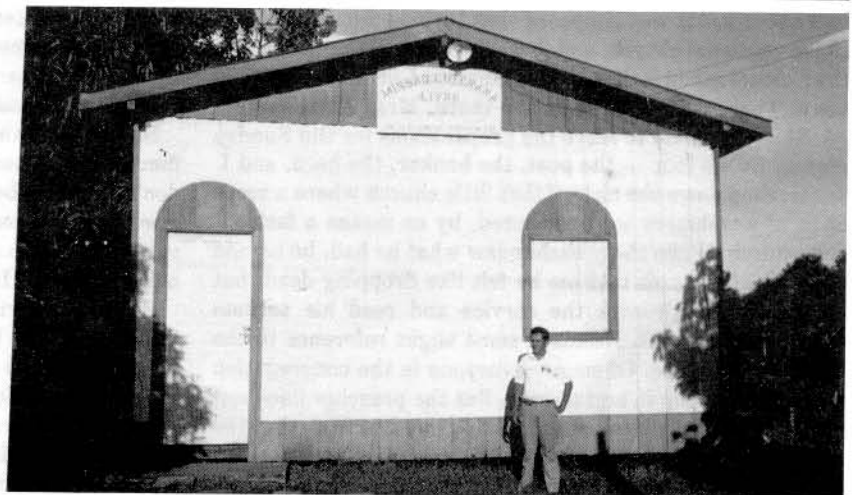
God has blessed our Association of Free Lutheran Congregations these past 25 years. There are many loved ones in our local congregations who have prayed, worked hard and supported the spreading of the Gospel near and far. These faithful warriors are now part of the church triumphant in heaven. Their zeal, love and prayers have not died and neither have their memories.

Therefore, we in Brazil thought it would be fitting to build a Memorial Chapel on the AFLC Bible School and Seminary Campus in Brazil in memory of those who have gone before us. For us the living, it would be our Ebenezer, "the stone of help," saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (I Samuel 7:12).

The Chapel project was approved by the AFLC World Missions Committee on September 29, 1987. We ask for your prayers and support for this special mission project. The construction for this Memorial Chapel will cost \$5,000.00 in 1988, and an additional \$5,000.00 in 1989 to complete. All gifts and memorials (can be individual or group) should be sent to: Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, World Missions Department, 3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard, Minneapolis, Minn. 55441-3099.

LADIES RETREAT

The ladies from Amery (Wis.) Lutheran would like to invite all of you to our annual Women's Retreat to be held at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis., Friday, April 29, through Sunday morning, May 1. Our theme will be "Conform to His Image," with Mrs. Paul Nash as our guest speaker. We have planned some fun activities for Saturday afternoon, with a banquet Saturday evening, followed by a music concert. Please mark your calendars now and plan to attend. We will be mailing brochures to all churches in our district shortly.



Pastor Gomes and the church in Vilhena

11. What is God working within us that opposes and dispels fear?
A. II Timothy 1:7

(1)

(2)

(3)

B. I John 4:18

C. I John 5:4

*"Fear knocked,
Faith answered:
No one was there."*

Personal Application:

1. Bill Gothard defines "worry" as: "Assuming responsibilities that God never intended you to have." What do you worry about? Does that responsibility really belong to your husband? to God? to others?
(Not for discussion)
2. List three of your fears. (Maybe it's fear of failure, or people, the future, or death, that you're not saved, etc.) Do a Bible study on *God's promises* regarding each area. (Look up the word and related topics in your concordance and make a list of God's promises just for *YOU!*) Memorize one verse to use each time fear arises in your mind.
3. Guard your thought life. Don't dwell on your fear: don't feed it. What should occupy your thoughts? Philipians 4:8. Begin practicing that today!

THE HIGHER PERSPECTIVE

WMF BIBLE STUDY #5

MAY, 1988

FROM FEAR TO FAITH

Worry and fear plague young and old alike. Even Christians often feel helpless in the grip of anxiety and nervousness. Enslavement to fear is never sudden. As we little by little let fear have control of our thoughts, a strong habit pattern develops that makes a person nervous and tense with fear, suffering emotionally and even physically. Again we go to God's Word for His answers.

1. What does worry accomplish? Luke 12:25-26
 2. Look at Christ's command in John 14:27, especially the words "let not" or "do not." Does this mean that we have responsibility here?
 3. When we experience fear in our lives, what does it show us about our focus? (Matthew 14:30)
- The Root Causes*
4. Let's go back to the first record of fear in the Bible, Genesis 3:7-12.
 - A. What did Adam and Eve try to do? (vs. 7-8)
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - B. Why did Adam say he was afraid? (vs. 10)
 - C. God knew that this outward symptom was not the root cause. What did God ask Adam to make him face the truth? (vs. 11)
 - D. What did Adam do next to evade his guilt instead of confessing his sin? (vs. 12)

5. A. Since the root of our outward problems is the heart (Matthew 15:18-19), what is the only way to escape the consequences of the fear that stems from a guilty conscience? (Psalm 51:1-2)

B. When we have been honest before God and the root of fear has been removed through forgiveness, what must we then allow God to do? (Psalm 51:10, 12)

The Battle

6. Turn to Ephesians 6:10-17.

A. We are not just battling a feeling that happens to come to our minds once in awhile. What are we really fighting against? vs. 12

B. Satan will use anything in his power to make us live in fear and defeat. What is our main weapon against him? (vs. 16)

C. What is the belt that keeps all of our spiritual armor in place? (vs. 14) _____. Why must we rely on the truth instead of our fears?

D. Can we win this battle in our own strength and willpower to get rid of our fears and doubts? (vs. 10)

7. What truths must we remember about Satan that will help us win the battle against him and his evil forces?

A. John 8:44b

B. Hebrews 2:14-15

C. I John 4:4

8. A. Satan attacks the minds of Christians, but we have the power and authority of Christ to do what? (II Corinthians 10:4-5a)

B. What do these vain imaginations and false arguments try to make us turn against? (vs. 5a). Explain what you think that means.

C. We can't let our thoughts hold *us* captive; instead, what must *we* do with those thoughts and fears? (vs. 5b)

The Victory

9. How can we keep fears and worries from defeating us?

A. I Peter 5:7

B. Philippians 4:6-7

C. Hebrews 4:12

D. Romans 6:12-14

E. Proverbs 3:5-6 (note the end of verse 5)

10. When you are bothered by a nagging doubt or threatening fear, where must you bring it and ~~claim~~ ^{claim} your victory? (Colossians 2:14-15)

Campus Days diary

For a couple of years now I've noticed youth from my church graduate, leave home and return changed. I've never understood what really caused that change — usually more happy and eager to work in our church and much more free to talk about things of the Bible. Finally, now as a senior in high school, I'm going to visit this place called AFLBS and perhaps understand the change I saw occurring in the kids from my Luther League.

It was Friday, March 4. I had been counting down to this day since January. The van from our church was leaving for Minneapolis at 1:00 p.m. As I left school to walk over to our church parking lot, my anticipation had turned to bitterness and hurt. I was not expecting the avalanche of ridicule and insulting remarks that many of my classmates gave me when they discovered I was going to visit a Bible school.

As the van began filling with teenagers from neighboring churches, someone began singing. Soon I found myself joining the chorus of praise and my sullen, wounded spirit was being forgotten.

The shadows were long and the sun seemed to sit on the tree-lined shore of



Campus Days Choir at the Saturday evening service.

Medicine Lake. So finally....this is AFLBS. I've actually come.

The Gospel Team Service in the campus chapel was amazing. One hundred and fifty teens plus the Bible School students made this the largest group of teens I've been a part of. What really impressed me was the freedom the kids on the Gospel teams had in sharing their faith. They actually seemed to enjoy it.

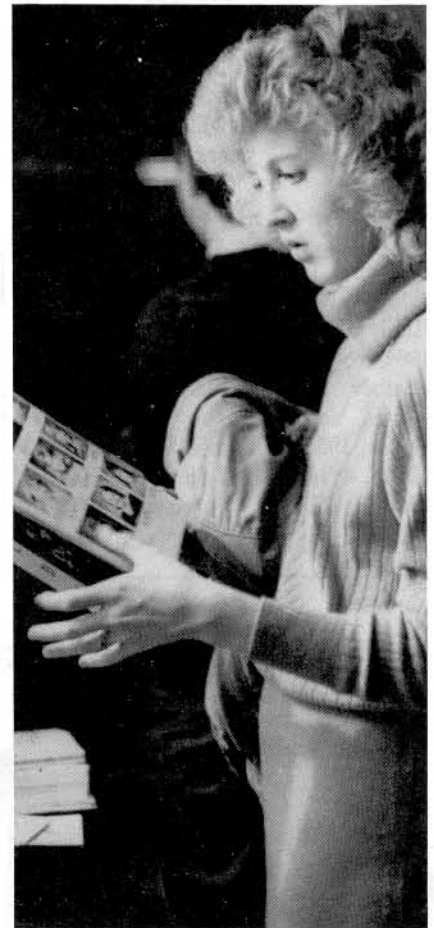
After a night of being packed into the dormitory, I woke up feeling good even though the floor would never pass a Beauty Rest test. This was the big day of getting to really know AFLBS. After devotions, I heard Pastor Haugen explain verses in a way I never dreamed of. After Dr. Monseth's doctrine class I was wishing there was another class. I was beginning to understand why I saw the changed lives in those AFLBS students from my Luther League.

The afternoon's recreation was followed by a delicious banquet in the school cafeteria. Jim Johnson spoke about the importance of not allowing our hearts to be hardened. During the afterglow later that night, I knew God was speaking to me. Sin was confessed and Jesus was invited into *all* my life.

Sunday morning arrived and I rolled up my sleeping bag and packed the van slowly. I think all of us were both tired and sad about ending our visit. After Bible class and the worship service, I settled into my seat for a sleepy afternoon rolling along the Interstate. Somehow, I kept thinking I would be making that trip many times during the next two years.



Heidi Johnson, LaCrosse, Wis., and Jim Berkas, Granite Falls, Minn.



Heather Hinderaker, Radcliffe, Iowa, took time to look at the display board. Heather was one of over 150 teenagers to visit AFLBS.

photos by S. Hjermstad

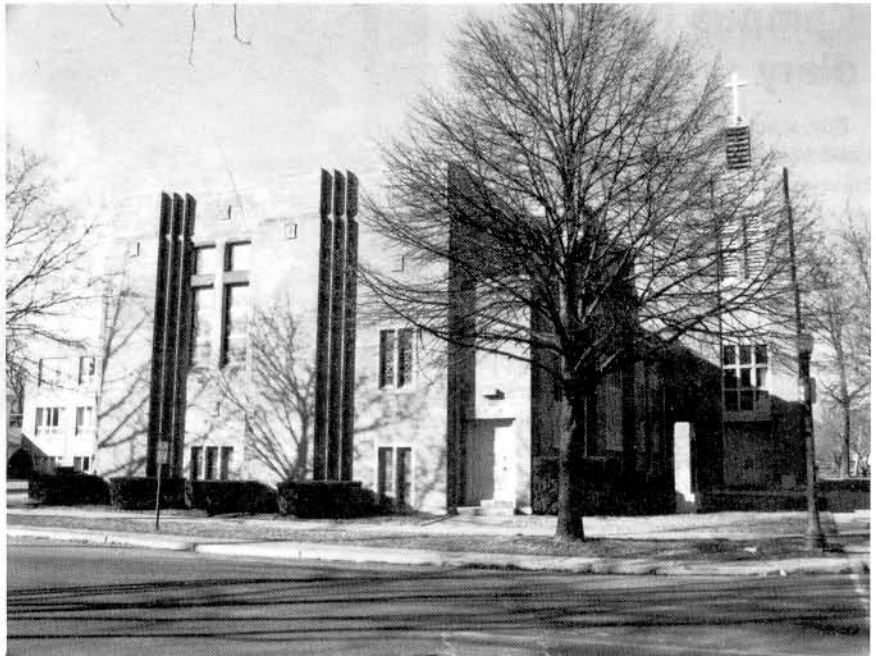
Introducing new AFLC congregations

Bethlehem Lutheran Morris, Illinois

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized in 1880 by Scandinavian settlers at Morris, Ill. Very early in its history there was a division on doctrinal grounds and some of the members left to join the Baptist Church. It was first a member of the Conference, then of the United Lutheran Church, Norwegian Lutheran Church (Evangelical Lutheran Church) and American Lutheran Church. Last year it affiliated with the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

Bethlehem's first church was built in 1884 and a second in 1895. The present church was erected in 1953, the educational unit in 1957. In 1880 there were 20 members, in 1914, 317. At present there are about 1000. The 1987 budget amounted to \$190,000.

Through the years Bethlehem has been served by nine senior pastors: B.P. Strand, 1880-83; N.G. Nilsen, 1883-93; T. Aarrestad, 1893-1927; C.M. Hanson, 1928-38; A. Abrahamson, 1939-44; Norris W. Stoa, 1944-55; L.G. Hinderaker, 1955-68; Norvil Wigtil, 1968-85; and John Skeie, 1985--. A number of assistant pastors have served as well. They are: George Voeks, 1958-64; James Sandvik, 1964-67; N. Wigtil, 1967-68; John Baxter, 1969-71; David Johnson, 1972-76;



Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Steven R. Woita, 1976-78; David Nygard, 1979-87; and Richard Thompson, 1987--.

Morris is a city of about 9000 located in Grundy County and is southwest of Chicago.

CAN YOU HELP?

The people in DeKalb, Ill., who are hosting the 1988 Annual Convention of the Women's Missionary Federation need to know how many women will be attending and eating the noon meal on June 15.

It is also important that those in charge of the *noon* meals on the Confer-

ence site each day know how many people to expect.

Please let Pastor Gray know if you plan to eat at the WMF dinner on the 15th and also what noon meals you expect to eat the other days, Thursday through Sunday. His address is: Rev. Dennis Gray, 112 West Milner, DeKalb, Ill. 60115. Call: 815-758-8727.



The Associate Pastor's Parsonage



Parsonage of the Senior Pastor

Astoria, Oregon

Bethany Lutheran Church of Astoria Oregon, Alvin Grothe, pastor, had its ground breaking service last August for the new church to be built. The concrete for the full basement was poured late last fall. The Lord really blessed us with unusually dry weather and the day after the concrete was poured it rained. The picture gives a view from the deck on the north end of the parsonage looking across the Columbia river to the hills in the State of Washington. The ship is Japanese and ships from that country are a daily scene. It also shows the pump truck in place and they are in the process of pouring the concrete in the forms. We have let things rest and settle through the rainy winter months.

About the second week in April, the Lord willing, we intend to get started with the upper structure. God has been so good in helping to work out all the problems and supplying the funds as needed. We have been approved for help by the "SOWERS," "Servants on Wheels, Ever Ready," an organization comprised of Christian men experienced in building. They try to secure enough volunteers from around the U.S. for each project. They travel in and live in their RVs and we provide



the "hook-ups," which we have in. Mr. Richard Moore, a very fine Christian man and very experienced in building, a nephew of Doris (Mrs. R.S. Persson), was to come by the end of March and will supervise the entire project. He works with the "SOWERS."

However, we could use some more volunteers. Maybe there are those who

would like to visit "The great Northwest" and park in or near Astoria for a short time and give us a hand in raising this house of worship. Fort Stevens is not far, is by the ocean and is very reasonable for all hook-ups for motor homes and trailers. Pray about it! We would love to have you!

— Pastor Alvin Grothe

Personalities

Rev. Forrest Swenson, who has been assistant pastor in the Roseau, Minn., parish (Rose, Roseau, Norland and Spruce) for some time, has resigned that position. Pastor and Mrs. Swenson make their home in Roseau.

Rev. Philip Featherstone, pastor in the Pukwana, S. Dak., parish (Pukwana and St. Olaf) since 1978, will retire effective July 1. Pastor and Mrs. Featherstone will continue to make their home in Pukwana.

APPLICATIONS BEING RECEIVED

Medicine Lake Lutheran Academy is receiving applications for teachers certified for both elementary and middle school for the 1988-89 school year.

Direct inquiries to: Mrs. EugeneENDERLEIN, Medicine Lake Lutheran Academy, 6300 Walker St. (Central Center), St. Louis Park, Minn. 55416.

In memoriam

Key: The name of the town was the address of the deceased. Following that is listed the name of the deceased, age, date of death and the church in which he or she held membership.

MINNESOTA

Strathcona

Arthur B. Kvale, 82, Feb. 23, Poplar Grove.

Arthur B. Borud, 87, Mar. 8, Dovre. Thief River Falls

Mrs. Helga (Chester) Dyrud, 86, Mar. 14, Our Saviour's. Mrs. Dyrud was the mother of Rev. Connely J. Dyrud, missionary in Brazil. He was able to attend her funeral service.

Spicer

Mrs. Elmer (Selma) Gravgaard, 78, Feb. 28, Green Lake.

MICHIGAN

Ishpeming

Mrs. Ina Pentti, 79, Mar. 6, Hope. Mrs. Pentti was the mother of the late Rev. Kenneth Pentti, evangelist in the AFLC.

MRS. M.A. HELLAND DIES

Mrs. Emily Helland, widow of Dr. M.A. Helland, died shortly before Christmas at the age of 90. Her funeral service was held at Oak Grove Lutheran Church, Richfield, Minneapolis, Minn., on Dec. 22. She had been organist at Oak Grove for many years previous to the last term she and her husband spent in Madagascar.

Emily Larson and Melvin Helland were married in 1919. They served in Madagascar under the Lutheran Free Church from 1921-40 and 1960-63, in educational ministry. Dr. Helland taught at Augsburg College and Seminary in Minneapolis from 1941 to 1960. He passed away about seven years ago.

LEADERSHIP SCHOOL

The Luther League Federation Leadership School will be held July 24-28 at Association Free Lutheran Bible School, Minneapolis, Minn. The evening speaker will be Rev. Jack Aamot, executive director of the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement. More details later.

COUNCIL

creating statements of affirmation and denial more consistent with biblical Lutheran theology.

Lutheran Summit I will be held during the summer of 1989 at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., and will seek to answer two questions. "Is the 1978 Chicago Statement on Biblical inerrancy sufficient for Lutheran theology?" and "What is the Lutheran method of biblical interpretation?"

The Lutheran Council on Biblical Inerrancy was established in 1986, publishes a quarterly newsletter and distributes books and other education materials. Along with publishing the newsletter and distributing materials, LCBI also sponsors an annual conference on biblical authority and its implications for the life of the church. Conference III is entitled "Scripture in Parish Education" and will be held at Living Word Lutheran Church in Eagan, Minn., April 29-30, 1988. The conference is designed to help congregations improve the quality of parish education, in light of our modern culture and increasingly liberal churches. This year's conference will have participants from several Lutheran synods and is one of the few free conferences able to bring fellow Lutherans together under one heading.

LCBI is also working on a video series for use in parish education on the nature of biblical inspiration and its implications and application in the life of the Lutheran church. The video should be available by the summer of 1988.

If you have any questions for or would like further information from LCBI, please write to: LCBI, P.O. Box 16564, St. Paul, Minn. 55116 or call Craig Stanford, E.S. 612-644-6416.

THANKS FOR THE HELP

Rev. Robert D. Giles, Laveen, Ariz., writes that the poem printed in the *Ambassador* some months ago, "A Hundred Thousand Souls," and which we labeled as Anonymous, was really written by Missionary A.B. Simpson. He sent along a little booklet entitled "Are the Heathen Really Lost?", which contains the poem and attributes it to Mr. Simpson.

Thank you, Pastor Giles, for the information and the booklet by Dick Hillis.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.

Minneapolis, Minn. 55441

Second-class

2038 W1
STANLEY HOLMAAS
RT 1 BOX 1

NEWFOLDEN MN 56738-9701

from here and there

Duluth, Minn.

On September 19, 1987, St. John's Free Lutheran Church in Duluth was the scene of the wedding of Theresa Lee and Michael Holte. Student Pastor Mark Molstre conducted the service.

This was the first wedding at the church and also the first wedding conducted by Pastor Molstre.

The altar, before which the young couple said their vows, was constructed by Theresa's father, Glenn Lee. Glenn is a deacon at St. John's and also the president of the congregation.

Preaching Missions

Grand Forks, N. Dak.

Trinity Lutheran Church
Bruce Dalager, pastor
April 17-20

Speaker - Rev. Laurel Udden
Minneapolis, Minn.

Newfalden, Minn.

Westaker Lutheran Church
Hubert DeBoer, interim pastor
April 22-24

Speaker - Rev. Gary Skramstad,
Minneapolis, Minn.

Eben Jct., Mich.

Calvary Lutheran Church
John Mundfrom, pastor
April 23-27

Speaker - Lay Pastor Clifford Johnson,
Esko, Minn.

Amery, Wis.

Amery Lutheran Church
John Rieth and Brian Davidson,
pastors
April 24-27

Speaker - Rev. Gary Jorgenson,
Stanley, N. Dak.

DeKalb, Ill. — Rev. James W. Asp, Chillicothe, Ill., was the speaker at the "Stop at the Well" services in Grace Lutheran in early March. His theme was "The Shadow and the Reality." Five services were held.

St. Paul, Minn. — Carol Hoikkala of Minnesota Valley Lutheran spoke at Victory in Christ Lutheran on Feb. 21, pointing out the dangers of humanism, New Age thinking and how they relate to many issues of our day, such as public school, education, abortion and euthanasia. She works with Pro-Family Forum.

Cokato, Minn. — Good Shepherd Lutheran will dedicate its sanctuary and organ on Sun., Apr. 10, at a 2 o'clock service. Victor Sporleder will be the organist.

Minneapolis, Minn. — Medicine Lake Lutheran announces Mr. Olaf Friggstad, Frontier, Sask., as the speaker for its Life in Christ Crusade, Oct. 16-20. Mr. Friggstad has been an evangelist for the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement in Canada.

Williston, N. Dak. — "The Magnetism of the Cross" was the theme Pastor Leslie Johnson, Lake Alma, Sask., chose for the special meetings at Emmanuel Lutheran, March 27-31.

Tioga, N. Dak. — Pastor Terry Olson, Valley City, N. Dak., was guest preacher at special services at Zion Lutheran, Mar. 20-23.

Kalispell, Mont. — Stillwater and Faith Lutheran Churches co-hosted Deeper Life meetings, Jan. 31-Feb. 7, with Rev. Herbert L. Franz, Dollar Bay, Mich., as speaker. The overall theme was "In Times Like These."