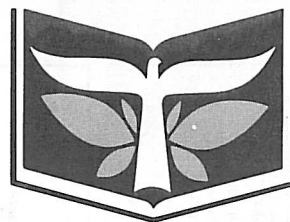


*A challenge for the
new year
from five pastors*

p. 3-6



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

December 24, 1991



Look at the
birds of
the air ...
your
Heavenly Father
feeds them.
Are you not
much more
valuable
than they?

— Matthew 6:26



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

December 24, 1991 • Vol. 29, No. 24

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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

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COVER:

Photo by Roger C. Huebner, D. D.

Subscriptions: \$12.00 per year.

Write to:

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

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

USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413

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

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

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The Eternal New Year

One wonders why the "world" so boisterously celebrates the New Year. For them, there is nothing really new but the calendar. In spite of previous resolutions, there remain the same unconquered sins, the same sense of emptiness, the same conflicts and frustrations with a lack of ultimate purpose in life. The only "new" thing offered on New Year's Day is a new hangover. The days ahead promise the same pattern of unanswered questions: "Who am I? Why am I here?"

Some of us, who have experienced many years, can say: "I have no pleasure in them" because of the frailties, aches, pains, and frustrations which old age often brings. We are described in Ecclesiastes 12. "The keepers of the house tremble" (we become shaky), and even strong men walk bent over and "the grinders (the teeth) are few," and those that look through the windows (the eyes) are dimmed, and the sounds of life and even the songs of birds grow hushed as through closed doors (hearing). Nevertheless, the precious silver cord of life is not snapped and life is good when walking with Christ. As we number our days more carefully, for they likely are few, we experience anew and more deeply His new mercies every morning.

For those of us in the fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, we need not ask: "Who am I?" for "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called the children of God, ... Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be for we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (I John 3:1-2). Nor is life empty for Jesus keeps His promise that we may have an abundant life. While frailties testify daily that "we have here no abiding city," rather in faith we "look forward to the city which has foundations (permanence), whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:19). There we await "what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have

Light on the Way

entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him" (I Corinthians 2:9).

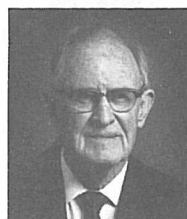
Meanwhile, in expectancy, we watch, Paul tells us in I Corinthians 15:51ff: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed." In that moment we will be ushered into the City of God to join the great fellowship there (Hebrews 12:22-24). We will even be in fellowship with God Himself.

It will really be a new year as "he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4). and the great multitude in the fellowship of the redeemed will shout with joy in a voice like peals of thunder:

"Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give Him glory, for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb has come, and His Bride has made herself ready."

Then the angel added to John and to us: "Blessed are those who are invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb!" And to assure us of this joyous event, the angel declared: "These are the true Words of God" (Revelation 19:6-9).

May many of our fellowship here meet in the great New Year celebration of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb! It is the crown of having walked in fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, while in this life. It's the emblem of eternal joy.



— by Rev.
Kermitt C. Grundahl

I LOOK NOT BACK ...

*I look not back; God knows the fruitless efforts,
The wasted hours, the sinning, the regrets,
I leave them all with Him who blots the record,
And graciously forgives, and then forgets.*

People make two errors in dealing with the past. One is to be as the Pharisee who went up to the Temple to pray. He remembered the good things and seemed to be able to forget, or perhaps overlook everything else. The other extreme is to be as Judas Iscariot, who apparently was so overwhelmed by the magnitude of his sin that he violently took his own life. He was unable to consider the grace and mercy of God. Both Judas and the Pharisee were in error. However, both extremes are advocated by powerful influences in our society.

Teachers of the "Power of Positive Thinking" doctrine encourage us to dismiss feelings of guilt from our past and to think well of ourselves. On the other hand, some of our media "Superstars" suggest that death is the solution to the hopeless mess we have made.

God's Word instructs us to bring the past to God who alone is able to forgive our sins and to heal our hurts. In the Old Testament we read: "He that covers his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). The New Testament assures us that: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

As a little child tells his parents everything, so we are to tell our Heavenly Father

all things. Hebrews 12:1 urges us to claim God's gracious provision: "Let us lay aside every weight, even the sin, which does so easily beset us." The sin and guilt of the past are a deadly weight that only God our Father can lift from us. When Jesus, God's beloved Son, cried out from the cross: "It is finished," He declared that the full payment for the sins of mankind had been made, once and for all. It was this that Isaiah, by the Holy Spirit, had spoken of when he wrote: "He hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). Because of this fact, David was inspired to write: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our sins from us" (Psalm 103:12).

The sins of the past that have been confessed to God are no longer held to our account! "For He hath made Him, who know no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Corinthians 5:21).

I look not back. I leave it all with Him!
Praise be to God!



—Rev. James Winter
Calgary, Alberta

I LOOK NOT FORWARD ...

Annie Flint must have had Matthew 6:34 in mind when she wrote the second stanza. "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." It is so easy to look forward and become anxious. Questions flood our minds when we consider the future. The "what if" list can be endless. The future to us is uncertain.

God sees the future. Only He knows what 1992 will hold for each of us and even if there will be a 1993. For some, 1992 will be recorded as the year of birth; for others, the year of death. "Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139:16).

We may have many days or just a few days. For those who know Jesus Christ, their destination is certain. Heaven is where the road leads. Since God only knows the number of our days, we should live each day with the awareness that it could be our last. We cannot presume upon

the future. Fortunately we do not face each day alone. Jesus promised us that surely He would be with us always, to the very end of time. We need not fear what each day holds because He is with us. The writer of the hymn understood this when she wrote: "And He will face with me its every trial."

Indeed, 1992 will bring its share of trials for each of us. For the one who belongs to the Lord, trials and burdens need not be borne alone. Psalm 55:22 says: "Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you."

As 1992 unfolds, let us take courage from these sure promises in God's Word.



—Rev. Richard Larson
Abercrombie, North Dakota

*I look not forward; God sees all the future,
The road that, short or long, will lead me home,
And He will face with me its every trial,
And bear for me the burdens that may come.*

*I look not round me; then would fears assail me,
So wild the tumult of earth's restless seas,
So dark the world, so filled with woe and evil,
So vain the hope of comfort and of ease.*

I LOOK NOT ROUND ME ...

Are you looking around and wondering what is happening to this world? Sometimes it is scary. We all live with fear, even though God's Word says: "Don't be anxious about anything."

One of the greatest concerns for us as parents is the future of our children. Recently Jane and I were talking about the things happening around us. We could see all the pressures in our sons. The world's restless, dark and evil lures are trying to destroy them daily.

There are no sound values being taught. There are

no rights and wrongs. Research tells us that drugs kill, tobacco kills and fornication kills, but society does not listen. In spite of this medical research, the world says: "Do as you please. You can make your own choice." This is a cause for fear.

Often even those who are professing Christians live under the grip of fear. Perhaps it is fear of failure as an employee, an employer, a parent, a son or a daughter. It is easy to believe that one has to be the best, the most popular and most appreciated person in the community. Nobody wants to be ridiculed. The desire to accumulate earthly things becomes a priority. This person is described in Titus 3:3, "For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another."

People fear the world and the things of the world but seemingly have little fear of the One who made them and can protect and provide for them.

The world offers no hope, no comfort, only the striving after the wind as Solomon says. The world's goods are perishable. Paul reminds us: "Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ ... having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12).

I LOOK NOT INWARD, ...

What is the place for Christian introspection? Does this hymn propose that a Christian should ignore the inward sins of his heart, the secret motives, thoughts and desires? No, it warns against the improper use of introspection.

The proper use of Christian introspection is conviction of sin. The law of God reveals out-

ward sin, but it does not stop there. To show us the depth of our sin, the law forces our eyes inward to our heart to show us that sin is not only superficial action. Sin originates in our heart, arises in our inner thoughts and desires, and only then culminates in outward action.

Christian introspection is necessary! We need to look inward. We need to know intimately the true condition of our heart. For the more we see our inner sin and helplessness, the more we cling to Christ.

But there is a point where introspection must stop. It cannot be used when the believer is considering the assurance of salvation, his standing before God. This is what the author means when He writes: "I look not inward; that would make me wretched." Why? Because "... I have naught on which to stay my trust." We dare not look inward for assurance, because there is nothing there but "failures and shortcomings ... weak endeavors crumbling into dust."

The Scripture teaches the believer to find his assurance in Christ. He learns to say: "I have complete assurance of my acceptance by God on account of Christ and His death on the cross."

Christians are prone to "performance-based assurance." That is, they at times measure their position before God by their ability to do "Christian things." The self-confident looks at himself and assures himself that God is pleased. But the sensitive soul who has honestly looked into his heart sees his failures and shortcomings. At this point the person thinks: "I haven't done very well, I've failed, I've broken my promises." He concludes: "God must not be pleased with me!"

Christian introspection is proper when it is used for the conviction of sin. But when it crosses over into the area of assurance it has gone too far. Then the believer stops looking inside and looks to Christ. He says: "What I am on the inside has nothing to do with my standing before God. I must look to Jesus and His righteousness, and find my assurance there."

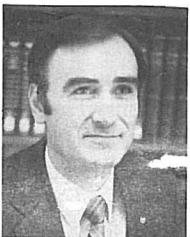
—Rev. Martin Horn
Astoria, Oregon

*I look not inward; that would make me wretched;
For I have naught on which to stay my trust,
Nothing I see save failures and shortcomings,
And weak endeavors, crumbling into dust.*

Even when there is knowledge of this, the ungodly often still cling to their worldly hopes. They hope they are good enough to get to heaven. Efforts are made to make others pleased; then perhaps God, too, will be satisfied. But Jesus says: "I am the way, the truth, the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6).

Whom do you believe? The world or Jesus Christ? Where is your hope? Is it in the world's treasures or the eternal treasures of Jesus?

My prayer is that each of us might look to the author and finisher of our salvation, Jesus. When we look around at the problems of the world, it is easy to react as Peter did when he was walking on the water. Peter took his eyes off Jesus. Only then did he begin to sink. When our hearts and minds are only focused on the Lord, we can then have true peace and joy in our daily lives. May God give each of us His grace to fix our eyes on Christ in 1992.



—Rev. James Rasmussen
Park River, North Dakota

... BUT I LOOK UP

*But I look up
— into the face
of Jesus,*

*For there my
heart can rest,
my fears are
stilled;*

*And there is
joy, and love,
and light for
darkness,*

*And perfect
peace, and
every hope ful-
filled.*

— Annie Johnson Flint

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on the earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ ... who is our life (Colossians 3:2-4).

Look up! Standing at the foot of the cross, I look up. There is Jesus! My Savior hangs upon that cruel cross in death for me. How good it is for me to stand here and gaze upon my Savior, to see the blood that flowed for me, to see the wounds that brought me peace. As I look upon the Son of God on Calvary, I realize that the greatest of all possible sacrifices has been made for me. The earth shakes, the rocks break at the injustice — that God should die for a sinner like me. Yet it is most certainly true. Jesus died for me. How good, indeed, it is for me to be here, at the foot of the cross, staring in awe at my Savior.

This is how I need to begin this new year, looking up at Jesus from the foot of His cross. But more than that, I need to begin every day of this new year at the cross, looking up at Jesus. Here is rest for my troubled conscience that aches with sin and failure. Here is peace for my anxious mind that worries about this uncertain life. Here is joy for my sad heart that feels the hopelessness of the world. Nothing in me, around me, before me, or behind me can match the joy and peace that Jesus gives. Teach me, O Lord, always to look up!

How often like Peter on the Sea of Galilee in the midst of the storm, my eyes tend to wander away from Christ. I tend to think that Sundays or Wednesday evenings



or morning devotions are the times to look at Jesus. And so often there is barely time for these. But the rest of the time, my mind and energy are taken up with the cares and concerns of life: work, home, family, school, finances, community service, recreation, and so on. Yet Colossians 3:4 says, "Christ is our life." As I cannot stop breathing, so I cannot let the eyes of my heart wander from my crucified and risen Savior. He is all I have, all I need, all I want. Yes, I must keep looking up into the face of Jesus. How joyful this is now and for eternity because, wonder of wonders, He smiles at me!

Won't you look up and see Him, too?



— Rev. Stephen Mundfrom
Sebek, Minnesota

Parish Education

The Apostles' Creed, Son — Our Redeemer, is the title of the new second quarter fourth grade student book which approximately 500 children are now using. A special word of thanks is due Ellis Bloomfield, our printer, who saw us through all the book changes, proof copies, typesetting, printing, binding and delivering of the books to our office.

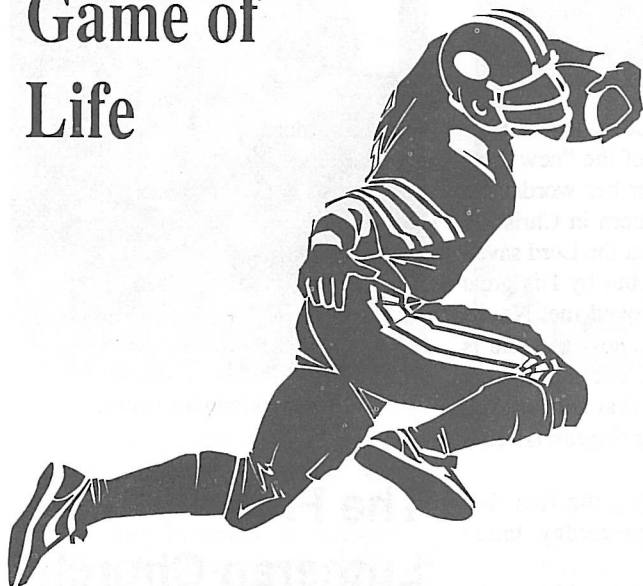
Something New in Parish Education

An excellent filmstrip resource is now available from the Parish Ed. Office. The title of the series is "What God Made" and contains two filmstrips. Filmstrip one has two parts: "The Creation Story" and "What God Above the Earth." The two parts of the second filmstrip are: "What God Made on the Earth" and "What God Made Under the Earth." Each filmstrip comes with cassette narration and a script booklet. Side one of each cassette has narration for grades one to three and side two has narration for use with grades four to six.

There are several ways these filmstrips could be used effectively with the new fourth grade books, such as to: 1) introduce a book, 2) reinforce a lesson, 3) review several lessons, or 4) summarize a book.

The new "Children's Missionary Library" presents the lives of 12 different missionaries on filmstrips and cassettes. Children and adults will enjoy learning about the lives of people who have been changed by God and have answered His call to go and tell the Good News of salvation to people all over the world. Use for Opening Chapel Time, a mini-missionary conference in your own church/Sunday School, individual class sessions or take a cassette with you when visiting a student or someone else who is sick or shut-in and listen to the story with them.

The Football Game of Life



The Saints vs. the Demons

Jesus always met people where they were. For many Americans it's in the "quarterback chair" watching TV football. Life can be viewed as a football game. To the indifferent, it's just a bunch of men running around in confusion, chaos and violence, while many spectators cheer.

But there are boundaries, rules, penalties, a goal line, a time clock and a final victory. There are two opposing teams: the **Saints** battling the home team, the **Demons**.

It looks like the **Demons** are winning if we judge by their overwhelming big team marching down the field against our little churches. They are pushing for homosexual rights, godless education, free pornographic expression with much violence. We Christians have taken goal line stands. May I suggest the **Demons** are held to three field goals in our era.

Looking back to the Middle Ages (third quarter) Luther and the Reformation was another goal line stand for truth. Thus only three points for the **Demons**.

	1	2	3	4	
Saints	7		0	0	
Demons	6		3	9	

The second half **Saints** look like losers in the eyes of most of the media and Joe Six-Pack. In the First Quarter, God got a touchdown with Creation, but the **Demons** came right back with the Fall. The Genesis 3:15 promise blocked the extra point. It looks like we are losing 25-7.

May we view the Second Quarter as Holy Week. The **Demons** scattered the **Saints** in fear on Good Friday as our Superstar was crucified. How they must have celebrated that touchdown.

But wait! Jesus Christ our Superstar rose on Easter to defeat sin, death and the power of the devil. The New Testament emphasis on the living Christ implies about ten touch-

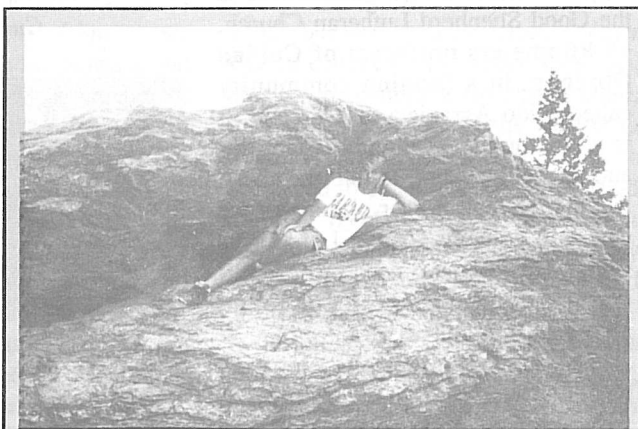
downs for Easter. Focusing in on the Resurrection is our hope, our only eternal hope. That means we **Saints** are winning 77-25 and time is running out. "Thanks be to God who gives us the Victory through Jesus Christ our Lord."

	O.T.	N.T.	Mid	Now	
Saints	7	70	0	0	77
Demons	6	7	3	9	25

If you **don't** go to church, then consider, "Where am I in the game of life?" ... a spectator in the grandstand? ... or by default playing with the "losers"? Take another look at the scoreboard. Should you change your mind?

If you are a committed Christian enduring pain, knocked down, or even fumbling the ball, then be encouraged. Look again at the score 77-25 because of Jesus Christ our Superstar. Look again at the time — "he that endures to the end will be saved." Keep getting the Word at the Sunday morning huddles. Keep celebrating the victory with your fellow saints. And the best is yet to come!

—Rev. Mel Meyer,
Norway, Illinois



Ray Mastel, Wallace, South Dakota, relaxed during a break in the schedule at last summer's national Luther League Convention.

The 1993
Luther League Convention
will be held June 28-July 3
at the
YMCA of the Rockies
Estes Park
Colorado

New Lives in Christ

Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday today and forever. His great power and forgiving love are at work, making new lives, lives of victory and power in the Holy Spirit.

We give thanks to God for the ministry which we are carrying on in this area of Mexico. We are aware that it is a great and ambitious project but it is obeying the Great Commission of Christ Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20. And we have the promise that He will be with us till the end.

The work in which we are involved is in the northern part of Mexico. The church which has been established is the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 40 kilometers northeast of Ciudad Obregon, in a farming community called Ejido Agragiata de Obregon. It is a community of about 50 families and the congregation has 40 members. But there are also other places that we desire to conquer for the Lord Jesus Christ. However, we need more workers and we are praying for them, according to Matthew 9:37.

The work of evangelization was begun in 1985. It has prospered, thanks to God. In February, 1991, we became affiliated with the AFLC, and we are thankful for their help and encouragement.

Our sister in the Lord, Isabel Hernandez Leyva is one of the "new lives in Christ." Let us hear her words: "In the year 1988, I was born in Christ by His grace. I believe that the Lord saved me not by my merits but by His great love with which He loved me. Now I am happy with Jesus, now that He is the Lord of my life. I ask you to pray for our community, that our church may shine in the darkness of this world."

I close by repeating the fact that "Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever."

—Pastor Gabriel Mercado
Ciudad Obregon, Mexico



Pastor Gabriel and Virginia Mercado.



Isabel Hernandez Leyva.

The Free Lutheran Church Also A Brazilian Church

Today we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of the AILLB (Association of Free Lutheran Congregations of Brazil). On the horizon of our thoughts there is the year 2000 — a marking point of the proposal set today for our churches in various parts of the Brazilian territory, and also beyond its borders. We can't be a church without the memories of the paths we have walked since its beginning. Likewise, we can't build a strong future without our desires being founded in the strong and secure roots of the past.

The history of AILLB began with the Reformation of Martin Luther in the 16th century, and was followed by Phillip Jacob Spener, born January 13, 1635, into an era in which the interdenominational situation was very confused. The ministry of Spener was characterized by preaching and the practice of Biblical zeal by his followers, from which the name "Lutheran Pietism" was brought into existence. This is a prominent phrase in Lutheran fundamentalism of which the Free Lutheran Church is a faithful guardian. From Germany to Scandinavia and from there to the United States, and



Some of the women outside Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

from the U.S. to Brazil, Lutheran Pietism as proposed by Spener has reached us, through the Free Lutheran Church.

Henceforth we are, and have today, this great responsibility in our hands: a Brazilian Free Lutheran Church that continues to preach, teach, and exhort its members to practice the Word of God in their daily walk. This is our trademark. But is this our only reason for living? Are we certain that we haven't left the practices that brought us into being? To celebrate this Silver Jubilee it is important that each Free Lutheran knows what his characteristics are.

First of all, the AILLB was born with a missionary emphasis. Are we still mission minded? What have we been doing in terms of missionary work? A church that has forgotten the words "go and preach" is destined to spiritual ruin.

Second, how well are we, as a church, training our pastors? Are we supporting and praying for our Bible School and Seminary that they continue rooted firmly in the teachings of our churches and the kingdom of God? Are we making sure that they continue to protect and preserve Lutheran Pietism in Brazil, filling any crack that might allow "new winds of doctrine" to seep through? We have to keep in mind the fact that what the Seminary leans toward, the church also leans toward.

Third, has our AILLB stated its opinion, position, and contribution to the problems that afflict Brazil at this present moment? What do we have to say in regards to schools, orphanages, and nursing homes, etc?

Fourth, have we taught our members that loyalty to our Lord Jesus Christ is exclusive, and that it cannot be divided with human organizations, even if they appear to be noble. (For example: Masonry, political causes, movements.) For we know that the only solution to man's afflictions is in the transformation of man's heart through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Fifth, after meditating daily on the Word, are we ready to fight, like Spener and others, for our faith, so that we won't become stagnant and compla-



Rev. Oséias and Betty Camara.

cent in our Christian walk?

As we look at the past, especially through the blessed eyes of Spener, we find that our fight and work is immense. As in the time of Spener, we still find corruption in the political and spiritual realms. We see the urgency of clinging to the precious Word of God. We see the necessity to preach our Christianity to all and to not conform to the changes of secular teachings. We must continue our message of evangelical preaching that reaches out and touches the hearts of all who hear it.

Our battle is great, and when we realize all that has been set before us, we might feel discouraged and weak. Let us look to the Holy Scriptures and learn from the church in Revelation, the one that had little strength of its own. But it was obedient unto the Lord and clung to Him, to whom Jesus gave this promise: "I open up a door that no one can close" (Revelation 3:8). Brothers in the Lord, we celebrate this Silver

"... a Brazilian Free Lutheran Church that continues to preach, teach and exhort its members to practice the Word of God in their daily walk."

Jubilee and boldly say: "Ebenezer, until here the Lord has helped us." The doors are open and we will go through them, taking advantage of the great opportunities to serve the Lord and bless our generation and future generations. But for this door to remain open we need to take to heart the words in Ephesians 4:15-16: "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." And also in Revelation 2:10: "Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life."

It is also of great value to take to heart the exhortations left us by our forefathers, like Ignatius, who wrote: "Those who say they are Christians will be recognized not only by their words but also by their actions." After Cortez conquered the Aztec kingdom, and his prisoners were condemned, they were exhorted by the Jesuits to become Christians. But when those sentenced to death asked if they would have to live in Heaven with their "Christian conquerors" by whom they were being tortured, the Aztecs said that they would rather die pagans.

Tertullian says: "What are the signs that are given us other than wisdom, that some teach us to honor God with frivolous human works; temperance, by which we abstain from the material possessions of men; charity, through which we possess nothing, not even by sight; compassion, that makes us ready to help our neighbor; truth, that does not allow us to err; liberty, through which we learn how to die. Whoever wants to identify Christians needs to learn how to read these signs."

On a final note, we leave our beloved AILLB with the words of the Apostle Peter in the book of I Peter 1:15-16: "But just as he who called you is Holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am Holy."

Note: This speech was given by Pastor Oséias Camara, president of the AILLB, at the opening service of the Brazilian Annual Conference in January, 1991.

God Provided a Church

It was about one year ago when I received the phone call that challenged my family and me with a major life change. My employer was asking us to consider taking a position in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The decision would be difficult.

For eight years we had enjoyed living in western North Dakota in the community of Dickinson. It was there that God had led us to a small, young congregation belonging to the AFLC. Frankly, we had never even heard of the AFLC, but God, in His infinite wisdom and grace, led me to a life-changing commitment through the preaching of His Word and the Christian fellowship that we found at this little white church. God and the church became the very center of our lives.

Our immediate reaction to a move at this time in our lives was mixed, to say the least. Could we possibly move with two teenaged daughters involved with school and friends, and our son now adjusting to his first year of college? What about our jobs, friends, and above all, our church and spiritual well-being? We prayed and discussed the choice over and over during the following weeks.

The decision to move was made, and then many concerns became reality. The most important of these concerns was the church life we would find in our new community. My need for Christian friends was never greater since I began my new job without my family, who remained in Dickinson to finish the school year. We knew there was a young AFLC mission congregation in Sioux Falls, but would it preach the truth of God's Word? Would it provide the fellowship that we had come to depend on and would need so badly at this time? Would we be disappointed and feel the need to search out a new church affiliation to meet our now-enlightened spiritual life?

I thank God for providing positively for all our needs through Abiding Sav-

ior Free Lutheran Church. At this Home Mission congregation I met new Christians and enjoyed the truth of God's Word preached and taught with great conviction. I am especially thankful for Pastor Erwin Brandt and his wife, Lorraine, for their encouragement and wisdom. It is truly great to find God's people in a new environment. This Home Mission congregation was the Spirit-filled place I had hoped for.

When I look back over this past

year, I realize how vitally important it is to find a good church home, especially for families that are in transition or facing difficulties. My experience has truly given me a new sense of urgency regarding Home Mission work in the AFLC. Where would many of us be without the vision and commitment of those that God has used to begin new works? I thank God for providing a church for my family, and I pray that we will never lose the vision to provide this opportunity for those around us.

Praise the Lord! He does meet all our needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

—by Phil Jenson

*Abiding Savior Free Lutheran
Sioux Falls, South Dakota*

JOIN US IN PRAYER

AFLC HOME MISSIONS

1. A clear vision on the part of the entire AFLC for lost souls and an urgency in reaching them for Christ.
2. Home Missions Committee as they seek God's direction in church planting.
3. Informational meeting at Mondovi, Wisconsin, on December 9.
4. Upcoming Home Mission Pastors' Retreat on January 20-21.
5. Vacancies: Rugby, North Dakota; Wichita Falls, Texas; Spokane, Washington; Arlington, Washington.

Praises:

1. For providing a church building (rental) for Solid Rock Lutheran in Osseo, Minnesota.
2. For the Home Missions Committee's opportunity to hold a two-day planning and strategy meeting on November 21-22.
3. For Pastor Curt Emerson's acceptance of the call to Granite Free Lutheran in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Begins December 1.

AFLC WORLD MISSIONS

1. The Bakers have just completed their language training in the city of Londrina. Tom's father is gravely ill in the hospital in the Pittsburgh area and Tom and his family have returned to the States. Patti will undergo surgery while they are in Pittsburgh.. % Mr. and Mrs. Chalmer Baker, 307 Wren Dr., Greensburg, PA 15601. (412) 837-4166.
2. Travelling mercies for Connely Dyrud's, Daniel Giles and Jonathan Abel's as they travel on deputation.
3. Jonathan and Tamba Abel are preparing for the arrival of their first child on February 24th.
4. Recent weeks have seen almost 250 decisions for Christ as students from the Bible School, Missionary John Abel and another evangelist have shared the Word of God in the churches of the Brazil AFLC.
5. Chaplain Michael Crowell and family as they take up their new assignment. at Box 6091, Fort Hood, Texas 76544.
6. Chaplain Antal's baby daughter, Gretchen was recently rushed to the hospital during a bad seizure. Wisdom is needed as the doctors seek to determine the cause.

These three elements present in the Garden, and in the world today, were also present when Jesus was tempted of Satan in the wilderness. Sometime, on your own, study the three temptations Jesus faced. See how they parallel the temptations Eve faced in the Garden.

Whereas, Eve succumbed, Jesus was victorious. "For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted" Hebrews 2:18 (NASV). Jesus' triumph can give you hope that you, too, can be victorious.

16. How did Jesus defeat the devil? Matthew 4:4, 7, 10 He met every temptation head on with the phrase:

17. How then can you, too, be victorious over temptation? By whose strength is the victory won? Hebrews 4:15, 16; I Peter 2:9

18. When you try to fight the battle alone, what will happen?

The secret of victory over temptation is found in the Lord. Let Him do the fighting for you "... for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to save you" Deuteronomy 20:4.

LIFE RESPONSE

Can you think of some practical ways in which you can stand firm against the schemes of satan? (Besides using the Word of God.) Romans 12:1, 2

Luther's Small Catechism: (Q. 355) What does Such Baptizing With Water Signify?

Galatians 6:2

Ephesians 4:31 Put off

and, put on

Women of Wisdom and The Word

EVE

How To Handle Temptation

Study Verses: Genesis 3:1-6

"I have sometimes thought that temptation is to our soul's health what vaccination is to our body's health, a process by which we are prepared for the victory over far worse attacks of far worse diseases." Hannah Whitall Smith

Every one of us is tempted to sin. But temptation in itself is not sin. Adam and Eve were created in a state of innocence. The one restriction placed on them was a simple moral test. Unfortunately, they flunked the test. Since "all Scripture is profitable for instruction," we can learn from Eve's downfall. Satan will go to any lengths to trip us up. II Corinthians 2:11b tells us that "... we are not ignorant of his (Satan's) schemes." Jay Adams, in his book, "A Theology of Christian Counseling" (p. 55), mentions the devil's schemes in terms of his bringing Eve to doubt, distort, deny and finally distrust God's Word.

Scheme #1 — DOUBT Genesis 3:1

Often, temptation to sin comes to us in steps. Genesis 3:1 tells us that "the serpent was more subtle," (in the Hebrew, arum or "crafty") than any other beast of the field. The serpent, later identified as Satan by both John and Paul (II Corinthians 11:3, 14, Revelation 12:9) didn't come to Eve and directly say that God was a liar and that she should eat of the fruit of the tree. Instead, he attacked her in an unbelievably subtle way.

1. Read Genesis 3:1. The first scheme Satan used involved only four words. (In the NASV translation) What were they?

2. What was Satan really saying in those four words?

3. How does Satan use the same scheme on us today?

Scheme #2 — DISTORTION Genesis 3:1

4. How did Satan distort what God had said? Genesis 2:16, 17; 3:1b
5. What was Eve's answer? How does she, too, distort God's Word? Genesis 3:2, 3; 2:17

Scheme #3 — DENIAL Genesis 3:4

As Eve listened to the serpent, he became bolder in his attacks against God. His next scheme involved the denial of God's judgment against sin.

6. What did the serpent say to Eve in v. 4?
7. What was his next blatant statement? What accusation did he make against God? v. 4, 5
8. Who is the real liar? John 8:44

These three attacks, doubt, distortion and denial, lead ultimately to distrust God's Word.

Satan's tactics haven't changed much in 6,000 or so years. Just as Satan schemed to get Eve to distrust God's Word, he attempts to get us to distrust God's Word, too. A fair question for us is: Is the Bible complete, reliable and without error?

9. Who is the source of the Bible's inspiration? II Timothy 3:16

"Inspiration is that inexplicable power which the divine Spirit put forth of old on the authors of Holy Scripture, for guidance even in the employment of the words they used, and to preserve them alike from all error and from all omission." L. Gausson

10. By what means was the Bible written? II Peter 1:21

11. Are all parts of the Bible equally inspired? II Timothy 3:16

Some may say that the concepts of the Bible are inspired but could have errors. Could that be possible?

12. What did Jesus have to say about the authority of the Scriptures? Matthew 5:18

13. What was Peter's testimony about the oral message of the apostles? II Peter 3:2

14. What were Peter, Paul and John's testimony concerning the writings of the apostles? Peter: II Peter 3:15-16

LIFE RESPONSE

Eve was tempted to doubt God's Word. Are you ever tempted in that way? If you doubt the complete reliability of the Bible, what other doctrines of the Bible are likely to be affected?

15. What was the result of Satan's temptation? Genesis 3:6

John gives us a helpful insight on the nature of temptation. A study of the three temptations reveal the kind of temptation you are faced with today. It covers a whole range of human desire.

Compare the temptation Eve encountered (v. 6) with the temptations you face today. (I John 2:16) Explain what each temptation really means.

Eve's temptation	Our temptation	Its meaning
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- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |

Introduction to the 1992 WMF Bible Studies

The purpose of our studies is to help us to be women of the Word and in so doing, know God's wisdom. Times and circumstances have changed over the many centuries since the Bible was written, but basically we still face the same kind of problems that the women of the Bible faced. They struggled with the meaning of life (the Samaritan woman). They faced home pressures (Lois and Eunice). Martha worried about fixing a wonderful meal for Jesus while Mary sat at Jesus' feet as a disciple (learner). The Bible was written so that we may know the Savior. (John 20:31, "but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" NASV). But the Bible was also written for our instruction. (Romans 15:4 "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." NASV)

It is my prayer that we would be women of the Word. That can only be accomplished, with the help of the Holy Spirit, by a daily walk with God. Proverbs 8:10, 11 says: "Take my instruction, and not silver, And knowledge rather than choicest gold. For wisdom is better than jewels; And all desirable things can not compare with her." NASV

Leading the Bible Study

The WMF Bible Studies are designed with the idea of studying the Scriptures and providing an atmosphere for discussion. The leader is not expected to "lecture" the women. On the contrary, the leader is there to guide the study with the specific purpose to bring praise and honor and glory to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The leader's manual has suggested answers. In addition, there are suggestions in the margins to direct the discussion. For example, "Begin with prayer ..." or "Transitional question; you may ask the following question." These are just tools to help keep the direction of the Bible Study on target. I have also included what I call **Life Response**. The purpose of these questions is to apply what we have just studied. The Bible is practical and does speak to our every need. But we must **apply** what we are learning. There may be times when the leader's manual doesn't provide answers to the questions. Therefore, participants will have to find their own answers.

The following suggestions may be helpful to the Bible Study leader. Any person can be a Bible Study leader, but I must be honest with you — in order to lead successfully and smoothly — it will take some prayerful preparation ahead of time.

1. Be prepared. Prayerfully go over the lesson ahead of time. You will have the answers before you and as you study, you may find that you will discover even better answers!

2. Introduce the members of the group. Do you know everyone?

3. Open the study with prayer. Invite the Holy Spirit to lead you in the truths that can be applied to everyday life.

4. Finish the whole study. Some questions may prompt lengthy discussions. The leader will want to allow that, but with some limits.

5. When asking a question, as far as possible, don't answer the question yourself.

6. When a factual question is posed, and someone is having trouble answering it, rephrase the question to clarify it in the mind of that person. Do everything in your power to help that person in answering. We don't want any person to feel a sense of failure.

7. It is the leader's responsibility to make the group develop a sense of unity. Certain steps may have to be taken to achieve that unity:

a. Encourage the quiet ones to participate. You could ask that person a simple factual question (which is usually easier) or you could ask if they agree with what has just been discussed. Your personal discretion is needed here.

b. Usually every group has a talkative person. Encourage others to add their personal insights, as well. Example: "Mary (the talkative one) that was an interesting thought. Sally, do you have any other ideas?"

c. Asking factual questions to those that aren't as familiar with the Bible is a good way to get them involved. Perhaps later, they will feel more comfortable.

d. Always keep in mind the purpose of the lesson. It's very easy to get side-tracked.

8. Remember, each individual is important. What we think a woman **should** think is not nearly as important as what they **really** think!

9. Don't be afraid of a certain amount of silence. Thought questions do require time to think.

10. Never tell a participant that her answer is wrong! Also, do not turn to someone else for the "correct" answer. Instead, comment on any portion of the answer that may be acceptable. Example: "That was an interesting answer, Mary. Does anyone else have some other ideas?" Or "Perhaps another answer." We don't want to accept wrong theology, but the way wrong answers are handled will be remembered long after the original question is forgotten.

11. Very familiar passages are often answered with "pat" answers that require little thought. Encourage reading these familiar passages in another translation of the Bible to get a different slant. Or ask these kind of questions: "How would you explain this passage to a child, or a person from another culture?" The words Jesus says to the Samaritan woman, "... when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshippers." ask: "What does it mean to worship in spirit and truth?" In other words, **make them think!**

It is my prayer that these suggestions will be helpful to every Bible study leader. It is a privilege to guide the women in the study of the precious word of God.

— Mrs. Angie Lombardo
Maple Grove, Minnesota

PEOPLE and PLACES

Lake Stevens, Washington — Elim Church hosted its tenth annual Fall Festival on October 31. Approximately 110 costumed people from the church and community attended the fun-filled evening, which began with a chili and hot dog supper, followed by family games and a talent show. Richard Gunderson is the pastor at Elim Church, and Seminarian Alan Arneson is the intern.

The following officers were elected by the Illinois District at their annual convention on November 9. **Rev. Gary Jorgenson**, Ottawa, president; and **Jack Dawson**, Chillicothe, vice-president. **Rev. Mel Meyer**, Norway, continues to serve as district secretary, and **Merv Mathison**, DeKalb, as treasurer. The convention, hosted by the West Lisbon congregation, rural Newark, heard two messages from Dr. Craig Jennings, newest faculty member at the AFLC Schools, and the decision was made to send \$2,000 from district funds to the seminary. Due to a treasury surplus, congregations were requested not to send any donations to the district until further notice. Other actions by the convention included a welcome to the district's newest congregation, Ebenezer of Evergreen Park Church, suburban Chicago, which was represented by four delegates.

1992 AMBASSADOR SCHEDULE

The following schedule includes the deadlines and themes for the 1992 issues of our publication.

Monthly WMF Bible Studies will usually appear in the first issue of the month before they are used.

Please send all materials to: The Lutheran Ambassador, Solveig Hjermstad, Assistant to the Editor, P.O. Box 423, Faith, SD 57626 (FAX 605-967-2382).

<i>Date of issue</i>	<i>Editor's deadline</i>	<i>Special emphasis</i>
January 7	December 11	Eternity
January 21	December 23	Sanctity of Life
February 4	January 8	Watchmen on the Walls
February 18	January 22	Prayer
March 3	February 5	Lent
March 17	February 19	The Word of God
March 31	March 4	Revival
April 14	March 18	Easter
April 28	April 1	Family Life
May 12	April 15	Pre-Conference
May 26	April 29	Bible Camp
June 9	May 13	Pentecost
June 23	May 27	God and Country
July 7	June 10	Cults
August 4	July 8	Conf. Review
September 1	August 5	Education
September 15	August 19	Church Growth
September 29	September 2	Youth
October 13	September 16	AFLC 30th Ann.
October 27	September 30	Heritage
November 10	October 14	Thanksgiving
November 24	October 28	Advent
December 8	November 11	Christmas
December 22	November 25	New Years
January 5, 1993	December 9	Evangelism

Pastor Merle Fagerberg, Dalton, Minnesota, announced his resignation from Zion-Sarpsborg, Tordenskjold, and Kvam congregations, where he has served since 1980, and his retirement from the active ministry, effective January, 1992.

Everett, Washington — The quarterly business meeting of Calvary church congregation was held on October 27, and a resolution was adopted to release their pastor, David Hinrichs,

one day a week to work at planting a new church in south Everett.

Lutheran Ambassador readers, we are happy that some of you are still using the gold-colored bulletin inserts of last spring. However, please note that the subscription price changed as of October 1, 1991, to \$12.

Letter to the editor

To the Editor:

There have been several articles in *The Lutheran Ambassador* about construction of the new Administration Building and I am glad to see it has been started. Many families have been touched by the need for this new building for the AFLC. I'm sure it is difficult with such cramped space to care for the administrative needs of our church, but we look forward to continual growth in the years to come.

Since the request for volunteer help possibly hasn't been as good as originally hoped for and since I would like to help with construction, distance has become a problem. By the time expenses for travel and living costs in the Twin Cities are taken into account,

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences - February 1 - November 30

FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	REC'D IN NOVEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	%* TOTAL
General Fund	\$ 276,830.00	\$24,331.76	\$160,298.48	58
Schools - (AFLTS) . .	151,900.00	8,744.27	70,674.02	47
(AFLBS) . .	193,950.00	11,557.07	103,860.44	54
Home Missions	433,616.00	25,853.16	229,778.89	53
World Missions	373,715.00	30,364.92	221,424.04	59
Capital Investment . .	25,000.00	1,292.90	17,798.28	71
Parish Education . . .	62,670.00	2,988.31	26,121.29	42
ARC	20,000.00	323.32	6,203.18	31
TOTALS	\$1,537,681.00	\$105,455.71	\$836,158.62	54
1990 - 1991	\$1,441,565.00	\$103,978.01	\$764,366.44	53

*Goal 83%

AULD LANG SYNE

Should old acquaintance be forgot ... are the familiar opening words of the sentimental favorite that is often sung at New Year's Eve celebrations. It is probable, however, that few of the people who are singing it have the faintest idea of what "auld lang syne" really means. A rapid search of the dictionary revealed the fact that the expression is a Scottish one, and literally translates "old long since," which refers to what we sometimes call "the good old days."

There is something about the closing of an old year and the opening of a new one that moves us to meditate on days gone by. Some of our readers have many more years to remember than others, but at times even the children like to talk about "when they were little." Memory is a selective process, and one soon realizes that the good old days are often recalled in better condition than when they were created! Memory is also a cleansing process, and not a few past hurts are washed away in the healing waters of forgetfulness, while the pain of others becomes less penetrating in time.

The point is that not everything about the good old days deserves to be preserved and perpetuated. This is true in our personal lives, and in the life of the church as well. No one is campaigning to remove all of the conveniences from our homes, and, though we like to tell our children about all of the miles that we had to walk (often through six-foot high snow drifts, at least) to our one-room schoolhouses, no one is suggesting that we ban school busing ... or snowplows, either.

Auld lang syne can become a subtle snare that shackles churches, too, obstructing them from genuine outreach to the generation of the nineties. "We've always done it that way before" are still the seven last words of the church, and there is certainly no improvement if you change the phrase to read, "We've never done it that way before." It may be that some parts of our church programs deserve to be forgotten.

Change is what life in Christ is all about. The end of an old year calls us to review its failures and successes. The beginning of a new year calls us to resolve that we will face the future learning from the lessons of the past. Let it be true in our lives and in our congregations.

THANK YOU!

This final issue of 1991 marks the conclusion of two series of articles in *The Lutheran Ambassador*: "Light on the Way" by Rev. Kermit C. Grundahl and "The Last Word" by Rev. John Abel. Many of our readers remem-

ber Pastor Grundahl from his years at the Minneapolis LBI, and were especially glad to gain from his ministry once more, while others were introduced to him for the first time. In a note enclosed with one of his articles, the octogenarian Bible teacher wrote of the blessing that preparing this series brought to him personally as the Spirit of God taught him, even in the night hours. New to the AFLC, he requested transfer to our clergy roster for conscience sake prior to the recent merger, expressing the concern that he would be of little use to the fellowship at this point in his life. His devotional series proves, without a doubt, that this concern was unfounded.

Pastor Abel, veteran missionary to Brazil who has also served as AFLC evangelist, carries a special burden on his heart for evangelism training. This concern was most evident in his articles, the aim of which was clearly to stir God's people to action. He has also reached the golden years of retirement, but no one has yet detected any sign of decline or slowdown.

It is also a pleasure to welcome two new writers: Rev. Jon Wellumson, Williston, North Dakota, who will be writing for "Light on the Way," and Rev. Jay G. Erickson, Plymouth, Minnesota, who will continue "The Last Word" series. Our readers will get to know both of these men better in the months to come.

Thank you, brothers!

A CORRECTION

One of our readers in the State of Washington wrote to inform us of the encouraging progress that has recently taken place concerning the Lutheran Bible Institute of Seattle (currently known as LBIS). The editorial comments in the October 1 issue about "debt and declining enrollments" were outdated, as the school raised over one million dollars in 12 months to totally eliminate their debt. Also, a decade of decline was reversed last year by a 31% increase in students, plus a 10% increase this fall.

A sincere apology is extended to alumni and friends of LBIS, and we surely do rejoice with you as the Lord prospers your school.

it becomes expensive just to provide the time while we are doing the construction work. The fellowship offered in a building project like this is a wonderful opportunity as everyone joins their talents and abilities for the benefit of the church. But being 500 miles from Minneapolis makes it difficult for some to be on site when our particular skills are needed. I wonder if there

aren't many of us in the same situation.

I figure that a week might cost \$500 or more just for travel and living expenses and it looks to me that contributing this sum of money would be more practical and possible for me. I would like to challenge others like me to do what we are doing.

Surely God has been good to us as an Association and blessed each of us

with plenty for our needs. Passages in Exodus 25:1-2 and Exodus 35:4-29 surely apply to our construction of this building. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we received enough funds to finish paying for everything and had some extra (Exodus 36:3-7)? Please find our enclosed check.

Walter and Dorothy Weichert
Faith, South Dakota

Personal Revival — God's Prerequisite

Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:2b).

We see from the context of this verse that it refers to how we received the Holy Scriptures. Yet I also believe that there is a sense in which this has been true down through the history of the church, as times of revival or restoration of the Divine life in the church have come from the Holy Spirit.

In reading a magazine dedicated to the history of revival (sent to me by one of our U.S. pastors, for which I am very grateful), I was impressed by the fact that God uses people in revivals. One author said: "Revival is always a personal thing, and no one is used in revival who is not himself revived first." After this statement, various men were listed: Robert M'Cheyne in the Dundee Revival of 1939, Howell Harris in the Welsh Revival of 1735, George Whitefield in the 18th century evangelical revival, and more recently Duncan Campbell, C.H. Spurgeon, and Dwight L. Moody.

The same writer, Brian H. Edwards, also said: "There has always been personal revival before public revival in those God uses." He tells of three ministers from the United Free Church of Scotland who went down to visit the scenes of the 1921 revival in their country, and brought back this report: "The men whose names came to the front would be the last that take credit. They are honest, earnest, modest young men with a humble idea of their own ability." These are qualities God is looking for in the people He will use.

One man whom God used 200 years ago was Howell Harris. He wrote in his diary: "I must have the Savior, indeed, He is my all; all that others, have in the world, and in religion and in themselves, I have in Thee; pleasures, riches, safety, honor, life, righteousness, holiness, wisdom, bliss, joy, gaiety, and happiness." This speaks of a man who has become sold-out to Christ. It speaks of a piety that is not

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Second-Class

Administration Building Progress

The construction of the Administration Building of the AFLC has been slow because of all the snow and rain. The roof should be on and windows installed by the 13th of January. At that time we could use volunteer workers to do steet rocking, taping, and building the partitions. Please let Pastor Les Galland know at the headquarters if you could help for a few days beginning on the 13th. Call (612) 545-5631 in the afternoons. Bring tools if possible. Meals will be furnished. Housing will be arranged for you, also. We praise the Lord for your help and gifts.

for self-righteousness, but born out of a deep experience of sin and grace, and thus desires purity of heart and mind in an ever closer walk with the Savior.

The people God uses in revival know that sin will spoil their walk with God and quench the power of His spirit. Regarding George Whitefield, it is recorded that long before revival broke out through his preaching, he was very conscious of being in the Scriptures. He wrote: "I began to read the Holy Scriptures upon my knees, laying aside all other books and praying over, if possible, every line and word. This proved meat and drink to my soul. I daily received fresh light and power from above. I got more true knowledge from reading the Book of God in one month than I could have ever acquired from all the writings of men."

These men whom God used were not dummies or dimwits. George Whitefield was a personal friend of

Benjamin Franklin and much admired by him. David Brainard learned several Indian languages and traveled over 3,000 miles in dangerous territory. John Wesley wrote 250 books and could quote from the Greek New Testament as easily as from his English one, while traveling thousands of miles on horseback and preaching an average of three sermons a day.

Much more could be said about these holy men of God who spoke in the power of the Holy Spirit. But the real personal question to each of us is: Do I want to see people saved? Do I want to see the Holy Spirit send revival in our church and in our community? If our answer to these questions is yes, then it behooves each of us to aspire to be like them. Perhaps in answer to earnest prayer God will graciously send us revival.

— by Rev. John H. Abel
Missionary-Evangelist