

NEXT ISSUE:
Eleven leaders look at
the AFLC's third decade

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

February 1, 1983



NEW-FALLEN SNOW

Roger C. Huebner, D.D.S.

AT THE MASTER'S FEET

Pastor Emerson Anderson



Called to worship

We have considered the sureness of the opportunity for communion with the Lord in 1983. Now we wish to consider that He *calls* us to come to Himself for communion and worship. Since worship is so central to all which is right in a life, we dare not pass by this matter lightly. God does call men to worship Him.

Some say Christ died for only those who would ultimately believe and therefore God seriously calls only those whom they call "the elect." We believe Christ died for *all* people and that God earnestly calls all men to Himself. That is an important truth. Keep it always in mind.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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God is earnestly calling all men to come and worship Him. In Psalm 19, we read something of God's call. It says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork . . . their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." We have the same picture throughout the Bible. It is a book of the "calling-God." God came to the garden calling lost Adam. In Isaiah 55:1, God cries, "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come to the waters." In the New Testament we find Him as the shepherd seeking one lost sheep. There is no end to such examples.

We usually think of the call of God as being for the unsaved only. But God calls the saved ones, too. We who are saved need to hear His call. There is a sense in which we can speak of being converted every day. Paul was renewed day by day. We are reminded that that is the significance of our baptism. The Catechism says our old Adam "together with all sins and evil lusts, should be drowned by *daily* sorrow and *repentance*, and be put to death; and that the new man should *daily* come forth and rise, to live before God . . ." We are very prone to drift from God. The hymnwriter said, "Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love."

To hear and answer the call of God every day is most basic. To miss that call is to court spiritual shipwreck. Perhaps that explains the many lives within the church which seem to be in disarray. Perhaps that explains the avalanche of marital and family problems deluging today's church. Would not a heart right with

God soon be a heart right with husband or wife or children or parents?

Dear brethren, to be in love with God is the solution to our greatest problems. God calls the saved ones to that place where such love can be cultivated. Jesus told the Samaritan woman that the Father seeks people to worship Him (John 4:23). A modern-day worshipper said the Lord *waits* to be wanted. Have you disappointed Him?

We live in a world where the call of God is continually going forth. He fairly shouts to us. "Come and worship!" The heavens issue that call and His written Word is in agreement. If I could do what I want to do, I would thoroughly convince every reader that God is calling loudly and clearly to people to come with Him individually into the quiet place that He may intimately reveal Himself to them. Response to that call will revolutionize personal life. It will revolutionize life in the home and in the church. It is a simple matter, yet so neglected.

**"Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult
Of our life's wild, restless sea,
Day by day His sweet voice
soundeth,**

Saying, 'Christian, follow Me.' "

The Lord beckons us to come into the closet.

Heavenly Father, we believe you would call us into the closet alone with You so You may disclose Yourself to us. We also believe that to be our highest privilege, and that all true good can issue only from such meetings. Thank You for that blessing. Help us to respond. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST

I Cor. 1:10-18

Strive for unity

The Epiphany season is the season that we place special emphasis on the Gospel coming to the Gentiles. One of the cities in the Greek world where a church was established was at Corinth. At Corinth many gods were worshiped. It was a city of trade, so when another belief, like Christianity, was brought in it may have hardly been noticed at first. Even as the Gospel was brought to those at Corinth there were soon to be divisions in the young church. It was at Ephesus Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, when it was about a year old.

Individuals at Corinth had taken up following the ways of man. Paul had been informed that there were quarrels in the church. He was against their disputes and of course the rivalry hurt the church.

The church had divided into four different groups that Paul mentions. The first group were those who were claiming to follow Paul. Paul was a bold Christian and some of the Corinthian believers claimed that Paul was the one to follow. Others claimed that they should follow Apollos. He probably appealed more to the dignified because he was known as a person who was highly refined. Cephas, also called Peter, was followed by a third group. A fourth group stated that they were of Christ.

In our day we live in a time when it is very easy to follow man. Many people will listen to their pastor faithfully Sunday mornings, but don't



by Rev. Dennis O'Neil,
Shenvlin, Minn.

take advantage of reading the Bible for themselves through the week. God has spiritual truths to teach us each day. You can only receive so much from other people. Your foundation needs to be built upon Jesus Christ. In our time some people will follow a nationally-known Christian, or their pastor, or a leader in their church instead of Christ. A great deal of damage can be done to the church when people choose to follow man instead of Christ.

Paul challenges his brothers in Christ at Corinth not to follow man. Paul asks about Christ being divided, in verse 13. Of course, Christ has not been divided! One believer cannot say that this is the way to Christ while another believer says there is a different way.

For those who thought so much of Paul, Paul stated that he had not been crucified. Christ was the one who had died for their sins. They weren't baptized in the name of Paul either. It would have been of no value to baptize in the name of Paul because it is through Christ that God offers His grace.

Paul realized that he had not been sent to baptize but to preach the Gospel. If Paul baptized everyone what would have been the results? Whenever Paul left a place, during the time he was gone there would be no opportunity to baptize new believers. However, according to Lenski, Paul gave this responsibility to the elders or pastors whom the apostles appointed in the new churches. Paul was not being critical of baptism, but he was stating what his calling was. Again Paul presses home the point that people are not to follow man.

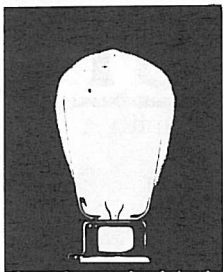
Paul does not stop there but goes on to encourage the believers to serve the Lord in unity. What a great joy it is for believers to serve together in unity. I hope this is your present experience.

Paul warned and gave advice to the believers that they all were to be in agreement. This meant that they were going to have to change their ideas of following man. They all needed to follow Christ now. All believers were working together for the same purpose. Paul stated that there were to be no divisions among them. Personal growth in Christ needs the bond of unity in the congregation. The unity was to extend so that each believer could be made complete. In order for this to happen it meant having the same mind and the same judgment. When a church makes a decision how good it is to see unity among the people. It is often better to put aside a decision or wait on it rather than see a church split over a decision that needs unity. In our own lives Christians need the influence of other believers in living a balanced Christian life and also in making decisions. Too often we forget the wisdom older Christians around us have gained through the years.

Paul does reveal that there are two individuals and one family whom he has baptized. One was Crispus. He had been a leader in the synagogue and had been converted to the Lord. When other Corinthians heard that, many of them were converted, too. Paul also baptized Gaius. It had been Gaius who had opened the door of his home to the church so that the

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"A great deal of damage can be done to the church when people choose to follow man instead of Christ."



"Thy word is a lamp unto my and a light unto my

FOLLOW . . .

Christians had a meeting place. Paul had also stayed at his house. He was a believer who practiced hospitality. A household that Paul had baptized was that of Stephanas. He was a man who was known for his voluntary Christian service. It is interesting that the ones Paul did baptize were those who were the giving type of people who wouldn't use their baptism by Paul for a selfish purpose.

Paul was sure of his mission to preach the Gospel. The Good News of Jesus Christ had power and he realized that. He had seen not only his life changed, but also countless others. Paul was a highly educated person, yet he preached the cross of Christ. Preaching Christ is what influences and changes other people's lives and it is still going on today.

Preaching the Gospel is not done by cleverness of speech. No minister or no Christian can use his influence in a way that man would get the credit for bringing someone to the Lord. If Paul could have brought someone to the Lord by the cleverness of speech then it would have been by works. Works cannot save us nor can they save anyone else. Even the words a believer uses in witnessing are a gift from God. The Gospel and the cross would be void if it depended on ourselves. However, the Gospel is the power of God and each time we preach or hear the Gospel we should realize this.

Each time the word of the cross is shared with the lost it is foolishness to them. We would think it should get through to them, but many times

it does not. Spiritual darkness has blinded their eyes. It can be a very close friend whom we want and pray for to come to the Lord. Yet they seem so far away. We may have a relative that we would long to see come to Christ, or certain people at work, home, school or wherever that we have prayed for, yet the truth of God's forgiveness in Jesus Christ has not reached them. It is important to keep praying. Only God knows the moment that they will open up their lives to Jesus Christ through the call of His Holy Spirit.

The word of the cross to those who are being saved is the power of God. Once Christ is in your life you realize God's power to direct your life. A person who is a believer is in the process of being saved. That means that once you become a Christian you haven't arrived. The Lord wants to reveal daily His power in your life so that you can be the person that Christ wants you to be.

If the people at Corinth would have followed Christ instead of man, Paul would not have needed to exhort them. What about you and me? Do you have the tendency to follow man or are you following Christ? When you follow Christ you find unity in your own life. You can also be used to unify your church and be used by God in your community and throughout the world. If you follow man or depend upon others you can only spread division in your world or in the church. Follow Christ and He will supply all the unity you need.

"The Lord wants to reveal His power daily in your life so that you can be the person that Christ wants you to be."

God's Word

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105).

We are on the way to eternity. But there are two ways leading to eternity, and how should we in the deep darkness of this world be able to find the right way—the way that leads to heaven—if we had no light to guide us through the darkness? The light that serves best when one is traveling a dark and unknown path is a lamp, a lantern. It does not compare in brilliancy with the powerful lighthouse, but it is just what the wanderer needs to light his pathway, step by step, until at last he reaches his destination. Such a lamp or lantern is God's Word.

Heaven is our goal. It is yours, also, dear reader, is it not? But "Heaven is not reached by a single bound." We are not at our destination when we have barely made a start. Our journey to our heavenly home is accomplished step by step. And what will meet us at each step of that journey none of us knows. Never has the whole way been lighted up, laid bare for us at any one time. But when we let the light of God's Word shine upon our pathway, step by step, as we

feet path"

Ps. 119:105

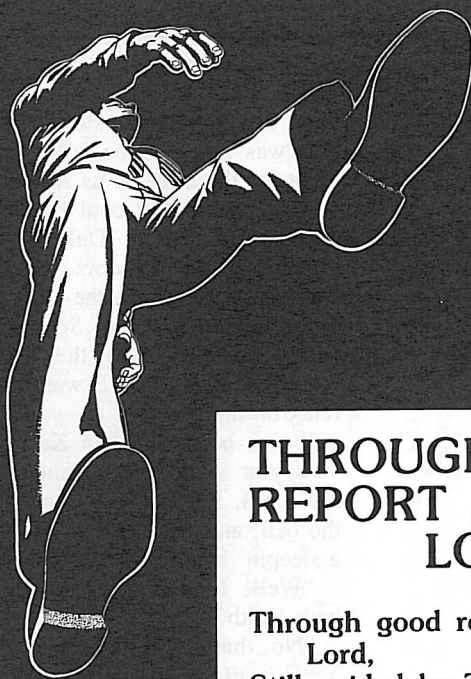
travel homeward, we shall not miss our way, but arrive in safety. But oh, how many pilgrims have gone astray on this highway of life and have perished because they scorned the light of God's lamp—His holy Word.

No doubt you have this lamp in your possession. You have a Bible, or at least a Testament. But the lamp must be lighted, or it cannot help you. Your Bible must not be only an ornament on your bookshelf or on your table, but you must use it. You must read it diligently and prayerfully, asking God's Holy Spirit to enlighten you. Oh, what joy your Bible will give you, and how it will help you on your way if you use it rightly! "Then had Thy peace been as a river, and Thy righteousness as the waves of the sea" (Is. 48:18).

It is our hope and prayer that this . . . may be to you, dear reader, a little light guiding you to the larger light—God's holy Word. God bless it to that end that it may be a help to you on your way to your heavenly home!

Lord, help me to keep Thy Word in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee!

Soren Dahl
(Courtesy, Tract Mission)



THROUGH GOOD REPORT AND EVIL, LORD

Through good report and evil,
Lord,
Still guided by Thy faithful word—
Our staff, our buckler, and our
sword,
We follow Thee.

In silence of the lonely night,
In fullest glow of day's clear light
Through life's strange windings,
dark or bright,
We follow Thee.

Strengthened by Thee we forward
go,
'Mid smile or scoff or friend or
foe;
Through pain or ease, through joy
or woe,
We follow Thee.

Great Master, point Thou out the
way,
Nor suffer Thou our steps to stray;
Then, in the path that leads to
day,
We follow Thee.

Thou hast passed on before our
face;
Thy footsteps on the way we trace;
O keep us, aid us by Thy grace;
We follow Thee.

Horatius Bonar

THE CONFESSIONS OF A CHILD

by Reuben Unseth

"When I get to heaven, I'm going to ask Jesus if He had fun creating the earth." Now who would say something so simple, so spontaneous, and say it believably? Perhaps you guessed. I heard it from a child.

Children demonstrate simple faith to those of us who sometimes complicate it. And it was nine-year-old Keith who made this simple statement of his faith in Jesus. He reminded me of the importance of knowing Jesus and of listening to children confess Jesus. It happened in a simple way as we talked one

night before going to sleep.

It was going to be a long, restful night for the three of us Ambassadors in the comfortably cool basement on that warm North Dakota August night. The Ambassadors, the summer singing team from the Association Free Lutheran Bible School, were nearly finished with the tour—one more concert. Ah! I was ready to relax on the bed.

It was bedtime when Keith asked, "Do you wanna come and sleep in my room, Reuben? You can sleep on the bed, and I'll sleep on the floor in a sleepin' bag."

"Well, I don't want to take your bed, Keith."

"No, that's O.K. Come on."

"Is it all right with your mom?"

"Yeah, it's fine."

"Why don't you check with her first?"

"O.K. MOM! Is it O.K. if Reuben sleeps in my room tonight?"

"Sure, Keith," she said, "That's fine."

The team wanted to get a good start in the morning, so we had to be up fairly early—especially considering it was a Saturday morning. So, I did not want to chatter all night with Keith. But I knew we would have a good talk. Keith has no brothers, so we Ambassadors substituted, being the pals brothers can be. We had talked and joked that evening at their house, and Keith and we three got on well together. I was eager to listen to Keith.

I turned off the light and cautiously stepped to the bed by the pale light filtering through the curtains. Keith tossed excitedly in the sleeping bag, eagerly talking as I pulled up the sheet. I did not have to say much—Keith wanted a listening ear.

Almost immediately he blurted out his statement about being in heaven with Jesus. He obviously wanted to talk about Jesus and some deep spiritual things. So we speculated a little further about being in heaven

with Jesus. But Keith wanted to be sure that he was going there. He wanted to be sure Jesus had forgiven his sins. "Sometimes I say swear words," said Keith. "I don't want to, but sometimes they just come out when I get angry. Do you think Jesus will forgive me?"

"Yes, Keith. God will forgive you if you ask Him to. But you need to ask Jesus to help you, so you won't swear."

"I do. But I still do it sometimes. All the kids at school swear."

Why don't you tell your parents, Keith, and ask them to pray for you, too. Jesus is stronger than the devil. He can help you stop swearing."

Keith and I must have talked theology for almost an hour. When he was winding down, he said, "I'm glad we got to talk about Jesus. I wish I had a brother I could talk with about Jesus."

"Do you talk with your mom and dad about Jesus?"

"Yeah, sometimes. But not a lot."

"Be sure to talk with them about Jesus. They want to talk with you, Keith. Ask them to pray for you, too. Why don't we pray before we go to sleep, Keith. O.K.?"

"Yeah, O.K."

"All right. You pray first, Keith."

After hearing Keith tell Jesus his need and thank Him for His blessings, I prayed and went to sleep. I awoke the next morning and prepared for travel. When I went to the kitchen, Keith was still in the "sack." I inhaled the aroma of a German breakfast of fried bread as I sat at the table talking with Keith's mother. I recounted to her the deep spiritual concern Keith had revealed to me.

Keith's insight and concerns impressed us both. He has a simple faith in Jesus, but his child's mind and heart long to know the Savior better. Jesus is a *real* friend to Keith. He is more than a Christian theological term in his vocabulary. Jesus is important to children and they often will tell us adults about their Savior—if we give them a listening ear.

(Ed. note: The name Keith is fictitious, but the incident is real.)

The bunch of keys

Text: "I have kept the faith" (II Timothy 4:7).

The other day riding into Buffalo on the train, I picked up a morning paper and read the story of an old man who had been in charge of a gasoline station in that city. Robberies by automobile bandits had become alarmingly numerous. A few days before, speaking of these, the old man had said to his nephew, "No bandits will ever get a penny of my employer's money, unless they take it over my dead body." His nephew had remonstrated with him, saying "But, Uncle, you would not give up your life to save a little money, would you?" The old man had replied, "No! I would not give up my life to save a little money, but I have a trust committed to me and I intend to fulfill it."

That morning I read in the newspaper how the night before three bandits had driven up to the gasoline station and demanded the old man's money. He knocked one of them down and grappled with the second, when the third bandit shot him the back. Alarmed at what had happened, the three jumped into their machine to make their "getaway." The old man tried to wrench the license tag off the machine but was too weak to do it. He succeeded, however, in getting the number of the car. He dragged himself into the office and tried to make up his accounts for the day, but he swooned away on the floor, where he was found some time later by a doctor who had come to the station for gas. He was aroused and told that he must go to the hospital; but he refused to go until he closed up the books and put them in the safe. Then he went and locked up his gas tanks, and then he locked the door of the office, and then went to the hospital; and there the old man died.

But before he died, his employer came to see him. Looking up into the

employer's face, the old man held out in his trembling hand the bunch of keys that symbolized the trust that had been committed to him and said, "Here are your keys, and they didn't get a nickel."

As I read the story of this old man in Buffalo, I thought of another old man. He, too, is about to die. He is a weary, worn-out old man from much journeying in painfulness, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses. He has been in shipwreck oft, in perils of robbers, and beaten with many stripes. He is now in a Roman dungeon, for it is the apostle, Paul writing to his son, Timothy, he says, "The time of my departure is at hand. I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

"I have kept the faith." This was Paul's way of saying, "Here are your keys and they didn't get a nickel." Jesus had given Paul a trust to bear his name to the Gentile world. He had put his faith in Paul, and now at the end of his life Paul was able to say, "I have kept the faith. I have fulfilled my trust. I have kept the faith Christ had in me."

Life, our talents, our money, are a trust. We must say as the old man in Buffalo said, "We have a trust committed to us and we intend to fulfill it."

What a great joy it will be some day, when the time of our departure is at hand, if we can, with glad face, and without shame, look up to say to Christ, "I have finished my course, I

have kept the faith," and have Christ say to us as he says to all good stewards, "Well done, good and faithful stewards, enter into the joy of your Lord."

I say it will be a great joy if on that day we can hand back the bunch of keys which symbolize the trust—our talents, our strength, our time and our money—the bunch of keys which God has given us to use in opening the great doors of opportunity, of service, of the larger life of fellowship and partnership with God, and say to Him, "Here are Your keys and the world had nothing on us."

HYMN

Sing and memorize—"Can the Lord Depend on You?" Call particular attention to all stewardship implications in the hymn.)

Can the Lord depend on
you?
Can the Lord depend on
you?
Does He find you ever true?
Can the Lord depend on
you?

TO TEACH—That stewardship means that all life is a trust and cost what it may, we must say, "I intend to fulfill it." Christ has chosen us and appointed us to the work we are to do. He is depending on us. We must keep the faith.

—Guy L. Morrill,
Stewardship Stories,
Harper and Brothers Publishers.



Preparation for and frequency of communion

We have a very stern warning concerning the eating and drinking of the Lord's Supper in I Cor. 11:27-29, where it reads: *"Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."*

The church, or leaders in the church, have no ability to examine the hearts of men so cannot rightly determine who is worthy and who is not worthy according to the standards of Scripture. However, there are some precautionary measures which the church can take in trying to prevent the unworthy from taking part and devastating his own soul.

One, it should clearly sound the warning, and let it be known that it is not the church who sets the standard or determines who is worthy and invited to come, but Jesus Himself who is the host of the feast, and who offers His own body and blood for the remission of sin.

Two, the meaning of the Lord's Supper and how it relates to the whole truth of God's Word should be clearly preached and taught, so that

the individual participant can clearly examine his own heart to see whether or not he is worthy. It should be emphasized that some knowledge of Scripture, the way of salvation, and a clear understanding of the significance of Holy Communion definitely relate to being a worthy participant.

Three, the church needs to be careful so as not to tempt the unworthy to come before repenting of their sin and before making the proper preparations. In the past some churches had a special program in which the communicants were asked to participate in order to prepare themselves for communion. This program provided the communicant counsel from his pastor and prevented him from attending the Lord's Supper on the spur of the moment.

We do not seem to have time for such preparation in our day. Holy Communion is celebrated more often and with less preparation. In many churches it is offered monthly but little or no effort is made to help the communicant examine himself. Little is said at all about the meaning, and the warning that relates to communion. It pretty much becomes a routine performance which all faithful church members are asked to go through once a month with little variation.

I personally believe Holy Communion would be more meaningful to the worthy if celebrated less often and with more preparation and teaching concerning its significance.

In view of this, I question whether the Sunday morning worship service is the best place and time for serving Communion, especially when tacked on to the end of such a service as is often done. Truly the Lord's Supper is rich in meaning and has great significance for all who attend. There is much that can and should be said about it. It is worthy of the complete service with the celebrating of this holy rite as its only purpose. This may mean that it would be celebrated less often. But Jesus did not necessarily say that the Lord's Supper

should be celebrated often. He rather said, *"This do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me."* The "oft" here does not mean "often," but it relates to a condition that should be practiced when celebrated.

The Sunday morning worship service is designed to teach and preach the Word of God. Its purpose is to reach out and sow that Word into the heart and mind of as many people as possible. It is no closed meeting, whereas the Holy Communion service is designated to reach out only to the worthy. At least it should be so.

Another danger in offering Holy Communion at the Sunday morning worship service is that it could very well tempt the unworthy to come forward. This danger is especially acute when almost every one of the proper age participates, making the unworthy feel conspicuous if they do not participate. It becomes the thing to do.

There is also the danger of the individual, worthy or unworthy, coming to the Lord's Supper on the spur of the moment, or with giving it little thought before coming. This is especially true of visitors who happen to drop in on a Sunday morning when communion is offered. In our day such are often given an invitation to come without clearly warning them of the danger.

It is a sobering experience to come to the Lord's Table. Surely it is deserving of the forethought and preparation suggested here.

Rev. Gerald F. Mundfrom
Osceola, Wis.



editorials

THE READER'S DIGEST BIBLE

We received a copy of *The Reader's Digest Bible* for Christmas and would like to comment on that publication.

First, we must say that there was hardly a need for such a "Bible." While we don't want to impugn the motives of the producers of *The Reader's Digest Bible*, it hardly seems necessary to have gone to such expense just to shield potential readers from repetition and what may seem the less attractive passages of Scripture. And what one is left with is something less than the real Bible. It is to be hoped that all serious Bible readers will realize that sooner or later.

We aren't authorities on this "Bible" but can share some observations, begging that the reader will accept these as being not entirely scientific. In the Psalms, about 79 of them have been reproduced in whole or in part, mostly in whole. All of the universally favorite Psalms are included, but every Scripture-lover will question why one or another Psalm is left out.

As might be expected, the Book of Leviticus suffered badly at the hands of the condensers, as they like to be thought of, rather than abridgers. Approximately 40 per cent of the Book remains in *RDB*. Isaiah doesn't fare so much better, 43 per cent. The Book of Genesis has about half of the text preserved.

In a book such as *Philippians* snippets of text are omitted here and there. It is a great responsibility to determine what is not as essential in Biblical text as something else. Genealogy and the listing of names gets short shrift in the *RDB*, as might be expected.

Reader's Digest Bible is a handsome volume in hard cover. The language is that of the Revised Standard Version, one of the good modern day versions. There are no verse distinctions in *RDB*, that is, one must hunt for a particular verse such as John 3:16 and where one chapter ends and another begins. No numbering is given to the Psalms, a very strange situation.

We ought to treat *Reader's Digest Bible* as we treat the Bible story books and *The Living Bible*, as books which contain the Word of God but which are not synonymous with the Bible as a whole.

The Reader's Digest Bible obviously doesn't contain the whole Bible and doesn't pretend to. It is a *selection* from the Bible and the publishers haven't indicated where the omissions occur.

Bible story books give us stories from the Bible put in story form. No one will dispute the fact that Bible story books have filled a great place in children's lives, but we have not equated them with the Bible. The Bible remains the foundation book of the faith.

As to *The Living Bible*, an extremely popular volume in these days, it does the opposite of *The Reader's Digest Bible*, it adds to the Biblical text, saying more, sometimes, than the text does. It becomes in instances a commentary and that is hard for the purist to accept, who wants what the text states and nothing more. Usually the commentary is reliable, but that doesn't take away from the fact that it is added material. Furthermore, there is evidence of doctrinal bias in Kenneth Taylor's paraphrase, as in the case of Titus 3:5.

So as we said, we should treat *The Reader's Digest Bible*, Bible story books and *The Living Bible* as something other than the Scriptures themselves, strong as their good qualities may be.

If we've said it before, it bears repeating, with all the reliable translations and versions of the Bible available today, the Scriptures are well understandable to any reader with the will to learn. Condensations and paraphrases may serve an occasional purpose, but there is no need to replace the regular versions with them.

OPINION PAGE

With this issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* we are beginning a new feature which will appear as often as there is demand for it. It will be called "Opinion Page."

Opinion Page is to be a place where persons can express a point of view about a subject of their choice and in 800 words or less defend that position. It is our intention that only one writer and one topic would be presented in one issue. However, if two writers together have not exceeded the 800-word total for the page, the contributions of both could be used at the same time.

What sorts of topics can be dealt with on Opinion Page? It's hard to draw exact lines. They could deal with theology, doctrine, ethics, church policy and congregational practice, liturgics, music, interpretation of history, interpretation of prophecy, etc. The object of Opinion Page, as discussed by the Editorial Board, is to present an opportunity to air ideas that may be new, different (but not "far out"), provocative, especially provocative. Again, the viewpoint may not be new or different, but the writer will wish to go on record and assemble his arguments to that end.

What should be avoided? In addition to the already mentioned "far out," any subjects which are strictly political. And maybe we'd have to see them before it could be determined that they are such. Another "No-No" is to deal in living personalities. Opinion Page is for the purpose of dealing with issues.

Opinion Page doesn't replace Letters to the Editor. That column remains available and open to anyone wishing to respond to something that has been written or to express some opinion about something. We think of Opinion Page as a longer writing and as a more formal presentation.

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EDITORIAL . . .

How may one react to what is set forth in Opinion Page? By a letter to the Editor, certainly. Or one may wish to do the longer piece, up to 800 words, as another Opinion Page. Editorially, we reserve the right to answer some of the opinions expressed, just as any reader may, if we feel so led.

That brings us back to this, what is expressed on Opinion Page may not necessarily reflect the editorial viewpoint of the *Ambassador* or the majority viewpoint of the membership of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, but that has nothing to do with the fact of its being printed. It is the expression of opinion. It is up to the individual readers to decide where they come down in reference to what has been written. We hope Opinion Page will prove stimulating to our readers.

Our thanks to Pastor Gerald Mundfrom for being the first writer. He is sharing some thoughts about preparation for Holy Communion and the frequency and time of the Lord's Supper in congregational life. Pastor Mundfrom does a lot of thinking about many subjects and he gets the ball rolling for us now in this new *Ambassador* feature.

Writers for Opinion Page will not be solicited, but the page is here for you to use. Feel free to use it. Send your contributions to the Editor marked "Opinion Page."

PRAISE FUND

One of the encouraging things about the ingathering for the fiscal year just completed in the AFLC was the steady income of the Praise Fund. By the end of December it was far and away the closest to being fully subscribed—89%.

That was good news because for a long time Praise Fund was looked upon as a poor stepchild among the major funds. Many didn't seem to know what it was and although the goal was relatively small the contributions lagged.

Praise Fund comes under the Board of Trustees of the Schools. The monies are used to pay the debts and interest on the debts of the Schools. Slowly but surely those debts are being paid up.

Originally the Praise Fund was set up as a fund to serve all the areas of our church work: Schools, Home Missions, World Missions, whatever. It was to be a capital expansion fund, a "forward phase," continually gathering in money so that no major fund drives would ever be needed. That was the idea.

Over the years the Fund became the property of the Schools exclusively. It has served a useful purpose, but is not the large goal each year which would obviate the need for capital fund drives in the AFLC. And so we end up paying interest on loans and having to begin building fund drives for new projects from scratch.

February is the month for Praise Fund emphasis. Early in this new fiscal year begin contributing to this Fund which is very much needed in meeting the obligations still outstanding on the boys' dorm at Association Free Lutheran Bible School.

A LOOK AHEAD

Next time we are going to take a look ahead into the third decade for the AFLC. Some of the people involved in leadership in our church have been asked to take that look ahead for us. We think you will find it all interesting.

Perhaps you have been doing some of that thinking yourself. See how your hopes and dreams fit in with theirs.

God holds the future in His hands. The future is unknown to us, and yet we can dream dreams and take the long look, always under the motto, "If God wills."

FOR, OH, IT IS A SPLENDOR

For, oh, it is a splendor,
A glow of majesty,
A mystery of beauty,
If we will only see;
A very cloud of glory
Infolding you and me.

A splendor that is lighted
At one transcendent flame,
The wondrous love, the perfect love,
Our Father's sweetest name;
For His name and very essence
And His will are all the same!

Frances Ridley Havergal (?)

ASSOCIATION OF FREE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS 3110 EAST MEDICINE LAKE BOULEVARD MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55441

Budget Receipts February 1 - December 31, 1982

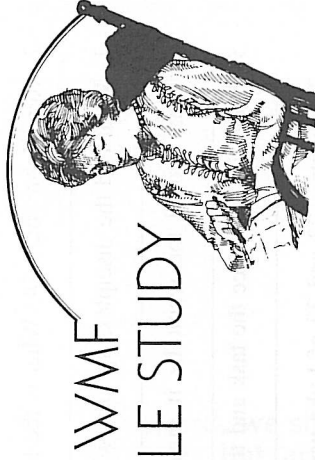
	TOTAL BUDGET	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% of TOTAL (Ideal 92%)
General Fund	\$170,000.00	\$131,499.80	77
Schools			
AFLTS	86,381.00	70,554.51	82
AFLBS	154,162.00	105,789.17	69
Home Missions	254,380.00	161,021.72	63
World Missions	218,880.00	161,699.31	74
Praise Fund	30,200.00	26,988.40	89
TOTAL	\$914,003.00	\$657,552.91	72
1981-82	\$809,206.00	\$662,397.48	82

20. What does God's Word tell us about the following:
- sorrow and joy — Psalm 30:5, 11; Jeremiah 31:13; John 16:20,22 -
 - faithfulness and joy Matthew 25:21
 - persecution and joy — Mark 13:13; Luke 6:22-23; Acts 5:41, 16:23-24
 - tribulation and joy — II Corinthians 7:4; James 1:2
 - loss of worldly goods and joy — Hebrews 10:34-36
21. From where do we receive the strength to live this joyful life? Nehemiah 8:10
22. Psalm 51 is a psalm of penitence, a psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came in to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. David prays for forgiveness of his sin and for restoration in Psalm 51:8, 12. How wonderful it is to know that there is forgiveness. In the parable of "the lost coin," Luke 15:8-10, we read of rejoicing and joy. Why?
23. What will the ransomed of the Lord do, in Isaiah 35:10?
24. In I Peter 4:13, what are we to rejoice in?
25. What does God's Word say about service?
- Is there joy in serving? Job 29:12-13; Psalm 126:5-6; John 4:36; Acts 20:24
26. Do we rejoice in the victories, accomplishments and Christian growth of others? Example: Acts 15:3, Philipians 4:1
27. What is one of the greatest things to rejoice in? Luke 10:20
28. The Lord rejoices, too:
- Psalm 104:31
 - Deuteronomy 39:9
 - Luke 15:3-7

Continued on page 14

March, 1983

WMF BIBLE STUDY



FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT JOY

Joy is one of the fruits of love in our hearts and it is the joy of Christ.

John 17:13. *Unger's Bible Dictionary* gives three classifications of joy:

- Natural Joy.** This is a delight of the mind arising from the consideration of a present or assured possession of a future good. When moderate it is called gladness; raised suddenly to the highest degree it is exultation or transport; when the desires are limited by our possessions it is contentment; high desires accomplished bring satisfaction; vanquished opposition we call triumph; when joy has so long possessed the mind that it has settled into a temper, we call it cheerfulness.
- Moral Joy.** There is a moral joy, which is a self-approbation, or that which arises from the performance of any good actions; this kind of joy is called peace, or serenity of conscience; if the action be honorable, and the joy rise high, it may be called glory.
- Spiritual Joy.** This is called a "fruit of the Spirit." — Gal. 5:22
 "the joy of faith" — Philipians 1:25
 "the rejoicing of hope" — Hebrews 3:6
Its objects are:
 God Himself — Psalm 43:4, Isaiah 61:10
 the promises — Philipians 3:3, I Peter 1:8
 the Gospel — Psalm 89:15
 the prosperity of Christ's kingdom — Acts 15:3, Revelation 11:15,17
 the happiness of a future state — Psalm 16:9-11, Romans 5:2
This spiritual joy is:
 permanent — John 16:22, Philipians 4:4
 unspeakable — I Peter 1:8

1. What is the reason for joy in Luke 2:10-11?

2. Read John 16:23-24. What is the background of these verses?

3. What had the disciples, up to now, not done before? John 16:24a

4. What would the result be if they did? John 16:24b

5. How did Jesus face the task and the goal set before Him? Heb. 12:2

In chapters 22 and 23 of Luke we read of the betrayal of Jesus, His trial and crucifixion. I am sure none of us can fully realize the sorrow and grief the disciples must have felt at this time. As we read on in chapter 24 of Luke the scene changes from one of sorrow and despair to one of hope and joy.

6. Why does it change? Luke 24:34a

When Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary, the mother of James, and other women come to the tomb they find it empty and two men in shining garments tell them that "He is not here, but is risen!" Peter and John also see the empty tomb. What would your thoughts and reactions have been at this time? Would they have been ones of doubt, questions, surprise? Would you have believed when the men in white told you, "He is risen"?

7. What was the reaction of the women? Matthew 28:8

Jesus then appeared to Mary Magdalene, to the women returning from the tomb, to Peter, to the Emmaus disciples, and then to the eleven gathered together.

8. What is their reaction when Jesus appears to them? Luke 24:37

9. What does Jesus do next to dispell their fears? Luke 24:39-40

In verse 41, we read, "And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered." It was just too good to be true. Have you ever had something happen to you that was so filled with joy you could not believe it?

10. Jesus does one more thing to quiet their fears and prove that He is not just a spirit. What does He do? Luke 24:41b, 42, 43

11. Jesus then ministers to them. They witness His ascension and what is the result? Luke 24:52

12. Are joy and happiness the same?

13. Where does happiness come from?

14. Discuss some of the things that happiness is dependent upon and why they are not lasting.

- a. People-family, friends, business associates. Proverbs 19:4; Jeremiah 20:10; Genesis 37 — example, Joseph.
- b. Wealth, possessions, property. Luke 12:16-21; Eccles. 2:10
- c. Good health, physical strength, beauty, sight, hearing, memory. Proverbs 3:7-8
- d. Successful career, outstanding social achievement. I Samuel 28:15-20; 31:1-6. When shall we have good success? Joshua 1:8

15. Where does joy come from? Romans 15:5

16. To what extent may we have joy? John 15:5

17. What is the fruit of the fellowship with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ? I John 1:3-4; Psalm 16:11

18. What are some hindrances to joy?

- a. Job 20:5
- b. Proverbs 15:21
- c. Matthew 19:21-22

19. What are some things that will help us to be joyful?

- a. Psalm 5:11
- b. Psalm 42:4
- c. Psalm 119:11
- d. Proverbs 10:28
- e. Romans 15:13
- f. I John 1:3-4

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

More questions about the Lord's Supper

We have tried to get before us the Lutheran teaching as to the nature of the Lord's Supper. On account of the high and holy view of this Sacrament which our Church holds, certain other questions emerge.

One of these is "What is the benefit of partaking of this Sacrament?" Luther gives this answer to the question: "It is pointed out in these words: '*Given and shed for you, for the remission of sins.*' Through these words for the remission of sins, life and salvation are given to us in the Sacrament; for where there is remission of sins, there is also life and salvation.."

Certainly as Christians we have the forgiveness of sins through baptism and the Word, but in the Lord's Supper we receive Christ's body and blood, which were offered for us, as a powerful pledge of the forgiveness of sins.

This Sacrament also has the effect of bringing us as believers into the most intimate spiritual union with our Savior, who imparts Himself to us, and thereby preserves and strengthens us in faith, hope and love unto eternal life.

Wonderfully rich, therefore, is this Sacrament in the possibilities of spiritual blessings for us.

Another pertinent question is: "Who should go to Communion?"

There are two extremes to be guarded against.

On the one hand, there is danger of looking on the Sacrament so lightly that many people go to the

Lord's Supper thoughtlessly and unworthily and thus, in Scriptural language, eat and drink damnation unto themselves.

On the other hand, the requirements for worthy participation may be set so high, that almost everybody is discouraged from coming.

Those persons should come to the Lord's Supper who are able to examine themselves and who in so doing find that they are really sorry for their sins, desire forgiveness, and believe that through the merits of Jesus Christ they are forgiven. Certainly the Sacrament is not for perfectly holy people. If it were, none of us could rightly receive it. The Sacrament is for repentant and believing sinners.

In order to receive the largest possible blessings from participation in the Lord's Supper, the Christian should carefully prepare for it. He should be much in prayer for the activity of the Holy Spirit to make him sincerely repentant and believing; read and meditate upon passages in the Bible and other books of devotion dealing with the Sacraments; and strive earnestly by the help of God to become spiritually attuned to loving and intimate fellowship with his Savior.

Why is it that many church members never or very seldom go to Communion? Some earnest Christian souls may possibly stay away through

timidity, fearing they are not worthy to go. But if the truth were told, we should find that the main reason is that many church members are not really Christians at heart. They live in sin; they love the world; they are really strangers to the grace of God. In such cases the course to take is not to urge them to come to the Lord's Supper, but to urge them to repentance and a sound conversion. If a real change of heart takes place, desire for the Sacrament follows as a matter of course. History shows that a period of awakening always brings with it a renewal of interest in the Lord's Supper.

May our Christian people therefore unite in fervent prayers for spiritual stirrings among us, that the Holy Spirit may awaken many sinners and lead them to the cross. Then shall many souls come to an appreciation of the spiritual blessings offered in the Lord's Supper and all other good things that come to us through the blessed church of Christ.

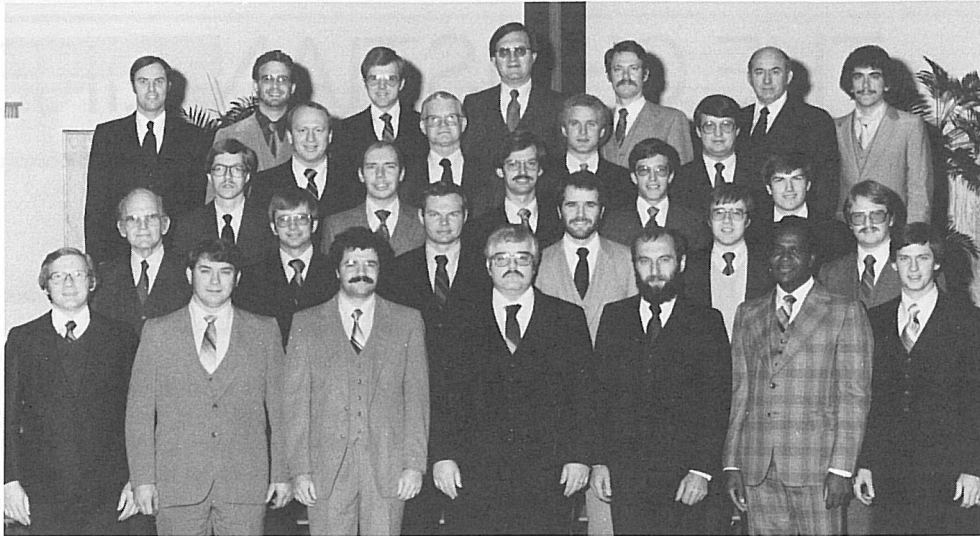
While the Lutheran Church does not hold that participation in the Lord's Supper is absolutely essential to salvation, we believe that it should be made large use of in harmony with Christ's words of institution. The spiritual health of the church depends in large measure upon the use of this blessed means of grace.

—From *Problems of Young Christians*

by Martin Hegland,,
Augsburg Publishing House

"The Sacrament is for repentant and believing sinners."

Next time: Why Do Not Lutherans Take Part in Union Services with Other Churches?



1982-83 AFLTS Students

Row 1, left to right: Lyle Aadahl, Jerry Mellem, Steve Kneeland, Kerwin Sletto, Jake Schaffhauser, Nathaniel Sam, Paul Abel.

Row 2: Harry Bodsberg, Ralph Erickson, Les Johnson, Martin Horn, Rodney Johnson, Del Palmer.

Row 3: Jeff Swanson, Tony Stockman, Brian Davidson, Lyndon Korhonen, Jonathan Strand.

Row 4: Peter Franz, Ted Berkas, Terry Wold, Frank Cherney.

Row 5: Mike Klenner, Todd Klemme, Joel Rolf, John Mundfrom, Daniel Giles, Harris Van Someren, James Johnson.

Aftermath of a snowstorm at AFLBS

Photo by S. Hjermstad



Snow sculptures emerged on campus during mild January weekends. Jane Johnson and Deborah Woimanen inspect the castle. The yearbook staff is sponsoring a contest with sculptures as part of Snow Days on Feb. 4.

FUTURE DATES TO NOTE:

March 18-20 — Campus Days. Alumni Basketball Tourney — March 26-27. Choral Club Tour — March 23-31. Choir Tour — April 3 - 17.

BIBLE STUDY . . .

There is also such a thing as counterfeit joy. This can come in several ways: Emotional mood, music, sensationalism in preaching, "sharing" sessions where undue emphasis is placed upon physical contact between persons. This joy is relying upon people or events. Have you ever stopped to think that one of the hindrances to our Christian witness is the lack of joy in our lives. Do we have a cheerful and optimistic outlook on life or are we known as "sad sack" Christians? As we close this study on joy, let us keep this one thought always before us: unless the Lord is "Lord of all, He is not Lord at all." He wants to be to you and to me all that He was to the psalmist, "our exceeding joy" (Psalm 43:4). Read Jude 24-25.

Hymn Suggestion: "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"

Roseau, Minn.



Honoray membership pins were given to Sadie Gustafson, Clara Kveen, Emily Erickson, Mabel Broten and Gunda Erickson (not pictured). Roseau Free Lutheran Church ladies gave a dinner and program in honor of the 5 ladies.

McIntosh, Minn.



At its annual Harvest Festival on October 31, 1982, the Trinity Ladies Aid honored 4 ladies with WMF Honorary Membership pins. The ladies are (left to right): Clara Grundy, Esther Jore, Selma Ramse, and Myrtle Langemo.

news of the churches

From here and there . . .

Badger, Minn.—The Young Adults from Oiland the Badger Creek met at the home of Lay Pastor and Mrs. Gustav Nordvall on Minnesota Hill, Roseau, for a wake night fellowship. As the old year ended the group was gathered in a devotional time.

Drummond, Wis.—Harris Van Someren began full-time ministry, upon call of the three congregations in the parish (Drummond, Faith, Moland), at Christmastime. He recently completed his work at the Association seminary in Minneapolis. He has served as a student pastor in the parish for some time.

Wyoming, Minn.—The film "Home Safe" was shown at Hope Lutheran Church at the family night program on Jan. 23.

Roseau, Minn.—The annual meetings of the four congregations in the parish were held during January. They were in this order: Roseau, Norland, Rose and Spruce.

Phil and Alice Lund of Roseau left on Dec. 30 for the mission field in Brazil to spend about a month. Mr. Lund assisted with construction work and Mrs. Lund was to help with younger children in vacation Bible school.

Kalispell, Mont.—"Christ Is the Heart of Christmas" was the program given by the Sunday School of Stillwater Lutheran on Sunday night, Dec. 26. Lunch was served afterward.

A combined choir from Faith and Stillwater congregations put on a cantata called "An Old-Fashioned Christmas" at Stillwater on Dec. 15 and at Immanuel Lutheran Home on Dec. 19.

Minnewaukan, N. Dak.—Antiochia Lutheran voted unanimously in annual meeting to subscribe to *The Lutheran Ambassador* for all contributing members. No worship services are being held during the winter months of January, February and March. The next service will be on Easter Sunday.

Thief River Falls, Minn.—The Senior Choir of Our Saviour's Lutheran presented its Christmas cantata "Night of Miracles" at Reiner and Emmanuel Lutheran churches on January 2. It had been presented at Our Saviour's before Christmas.

Minneapolis, Minn.—Christmas carollers from Rosedale and Faith Lutheran Churches visited shut-ins and elderly in their own congregations.

Dalton, Minn.—The January issue of the parish Newsletter carried an announcement about try-outs for the 1983 Minnesota All State Lutheran choir. The area one was held on Jan. 29, in Elbow Lake, Minn.

House to rent

House available for rent in a beautiful country village, a two-minute walk from the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis. Large wooded lot with fenced-in back yard. Three-bedroom bungalow with attached garage. Drapes, carpets, stove and refrigerator included. All fittings in place for a wood-burning stove. Contact Gene B. Smith, 206 1st St., Spring Valley, Wis. 54767.

"It never pleased me to see people merely drinking in opinions if they were ignorant of Christ and the value of His salvation. When I saw sound conviction for sin, especially the sin of unbelief, and saw hearts set on fire to be saved by Christ, those were the souls I counted blessed."

—John Bunyan

Luther books reviewed

Here I Stand, a life of Martin Luther, by Roland Bainton, Abingdon Press. The author shows the tenor of the German people at the time of Luther. They needed a true man of God.

The thing that impressed me most in reading this book was the prodigious amount of written material, sermons and all other necessities that Luther so diligently supplied to his people in his lifetime.

He was a man of many talents who was called on to be the spokesman for his depressed people. He had a seemingly complete lack of fear as he declared his belief in opposition to much of the custom of his time, especially indulgence buying. The author calls him "a man aflame with God." His feeling of contrition was ever evident throughout the historical study of his life.

One of his problems in his role was keeping the political end of life separate from the religious. He was tempted to take part in politics, but with prayerful decision he resisted.

Luther did not try to reason out the teaching of God, such as the Trinity, but accepted the full inspired Word. Because of this his teaching to the people of that time seemed unfathomable because it had not been revealed to them. They had no Bible to read or study until Luther translated the Word from Latin to German, and then very few could read.

God chose the right man for the right time, the man of "Here I stand," Martin Luther.

Our Neighbor: Martin Luther, by Elizabeth Rundle Charles, Moody Publishing House. The book shows the love for and trust in Martin Luther by the common people of his time.

One could feel the deep love for this unusual man, who had arrived as a spokesman for the deeply religious German families. See the leadership of this brave man who looked to God always for his help and the example he set for these beloved families and friends. Very enjoyable reading: a book you can't put down.

Both books reviewed by
Mrs. John Olson, Zion Lutheran
Library, Dalton, Minn.

CHURCH—WORLD NEWS

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minn. 55441

Second-class postage
paid at Minneapolis, Minn.

Scriptures for blind

NEW YORK, N.Y. (ABS) — Scriptures for blind people or those whose vision is impaired have long been a special concern of the American Bible Society.

It was a gift of \$1,000 from ABS in 1835 that helped Dr. Samuel G. Howe of Boston develop his pioneer system of raised Roman lettering known as Line Letter type that a person could read through the fingertips, later supplanted by Braille.

Now ABS has issued a 12-page catalog of Scriptures that lists 131 items designed just for use by the visually impaired.

The complete 18-volume Braille Bible comes to \$235.80, which is what it costs the Society to have it produced. But price is never allowed to be a barrier to a blind person who asks for one.

There are also Selections from the Scriptures in extra large print for the partially sighted at no more than a nickel apiece.

Complete Gospels in both the good News and King James versions can be ordered for only one dollar each.

Recorded English Scriptures on both cassettes and records, and Spanish readings on cassette only, are also among the items.

Zambian president cites 115-year old translator

NEW YORK, N.Y. (ABS) — Mr. Donald Siwale, believed to be the world's oldest Bible translator, was recently singled out for commendation by the president of Zambia for his part in translating the Bible into Ichinamwanga.

Mr. Siwale, living proof at a reported 115 years that age does not wither nor custom stale, was taking part in a service of thanksgiving in Zambia's Mwenzo Mission for the first Bible in that African language, of which he was one of the translators.

Guest of honor at the dedication was Zambian president Dr. Kenneth Kaunda. Mr. Siwale presented him with the first copy.

As he handed the new Bible to the chief of state Mr. Siwale remarked, with a directness only his years allow, "It is my sincere belief this book will help you in the leadership of this country if only you will read it, and not keep it as a decoration on the State House bookshelves."

Ichinamwanga is one of the Bantu group of languages. It is spoken by 150,000 tribal people in northeastern Zambia, who have had a New Testament since the 1930s. This is the first time they have had an entire Bible.

Ancient documents on display

MINNEAPOLIS — Nineteen original documents dating back to the early 16th century are now on public display for the first time in four centuries, Lutheran Brotherhood announced recently. The documents are on exhibit at the Lutheran Brotherhood Building in downtown Minneapolis.

Translated from the original German, the contents of the papers reveal that the men and women of that period struggled with problems of morality and money similar to those confronting society today.

Georg Spalatin, a close associate of Martin Luther, signed 10 of the letters and notes in the collection. The dates of the papers range from 1528 to 1542 (two documents are undated). During this period, Spalatin occupied a number of church administrative positions and was a supporter of the Reformation, the 16th century doctrinal revolution.

Documents containing the most

specific information about the religious society of the Reformation period include: a paper on parish visitation; a series of instructions to the peasants; instructions for pastors concerning their duties and personal conduct; and a paper outlining rules for public and private behavior.

The collection was purchased by Lutheran Brotherhood in the early 1960s from the Rev. T. R. Baudler, now retired and living in West Germany. Most of the letters signed by Spalatin were addressed to Heinrich von Einsiedel, an ancestor of Mrs. Baudler. The Baudlers received the documents from the von Einsiedel family, who resided in a castle in what is now East Germany.

David Preus meets pope

Presiding Bishop David W. Preus of the American Lutheran Church (ALC) met with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican last month and discussed the peace issue, ecumenical relations, plans for the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's birth this year and other issues. Preus, 60, leader of the 2.3-million-member and Minneapolis-based ALC, met with the pontiff in a private audience lasting 35 minutes. Preus discussed last May's peace conference in Moscow with the pope and future relationships between Lutheran and Roman Catholics growing out of the international and national theological dialogues. Plans were also discussed for Roman Catholic participation in the numerous conferences and events set for this year in honor of the 500th anniversary of Luther's birth.