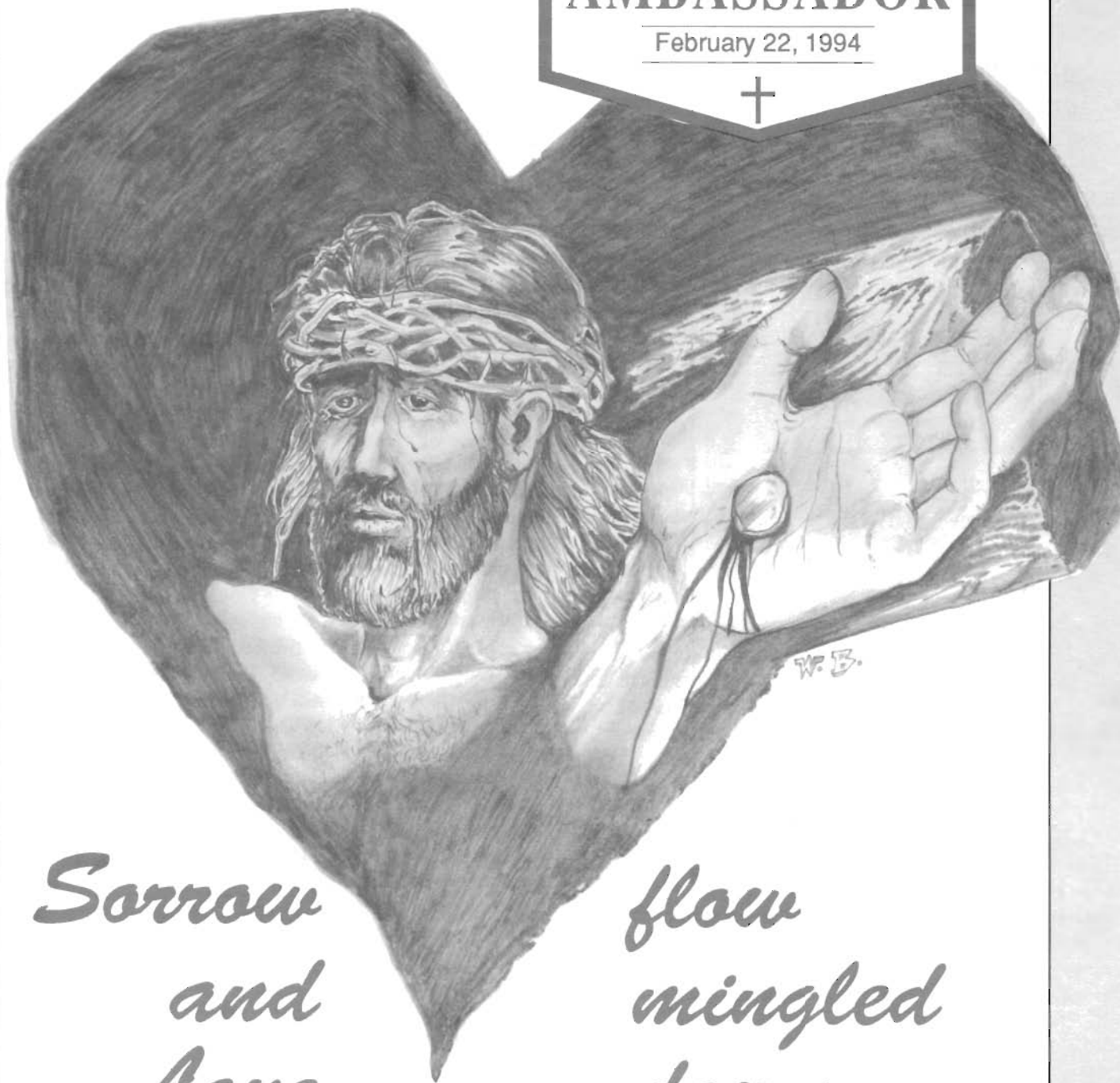




THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

February 22, 1994



*Sorrow
and
Love*

*flow
mingled
down.*

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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COVER: Artwork by:
Wayne Brown, Fridley, Minnesota

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Rev. Craig Johnson, Editor
Mrs. Wayne Hjermstad, Assistant to the Editor
Editorial Board:
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Mighty God

And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, **Mighty God**, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6b). What a powerful name for us to contemplate as we reflect upon the names and titles Isaiah gave the Messiah.

Jesus Christ is **Mighty God** — not only is that His name; during His life on our planet. He proved it to be dynamic reality! Nowhere was the proof more dramatic than when He calmed the raging storm on the Sea of Galilee one unforgettable night. All three synoptic gospels record the incident; it is Mark's version we will consider (Mark 4:35-41).

The day had been busy and exhausting for Jesus had spent it teaching a great crowd. When evening came Jesus told His disciples to cross over to the other side of the lake. While Jesus and His disciples were sailing along, a furious storm blew up which threatened to sink the boat. In fact, the waves were so high that the disciples (some of whom were experienced fishermen who had spent countless hours on that very body of water!) feared for their lives.

What was Jesus doing while the storm raged and the disciples' panic approached fever pitch? He was sound asleep! And why shouldn't He be? After all, He was **Mighty God**: He knew everything was under control!

Jesus slept peacefully, the disciples panicked mightily, and after what must have seemed hours, they woke Him with words implying rebuke: "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" What happened next? As Mark tells it, "(Jesus) got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be Still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm."

Jesus Christ is Mighty God! He controlled the wind and sea, just like the **Lord** (Yahweh) did in the Old Testament! Consider just one example: "For he spoke and stirred

Light on the Way

up a tempest that lifted high the waves ... Then they cried out to the **Lord** in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper: the waves of the sea were hushed. They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven" (Psalm 107:25, 28-30).

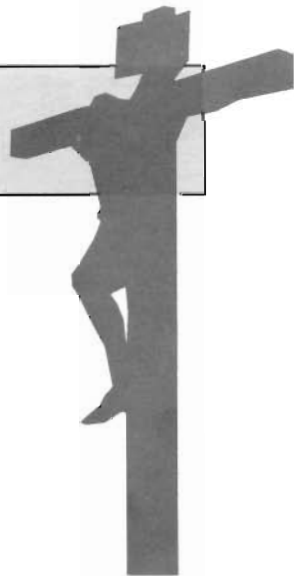
Jesus Christ is Mighty God! He rebuked the wind, just like He rebuked demons (cf. Mark 1:25 and 9:25 with 4:39: the same Greek word describes both reprimands!). He spoke the same command to the raging sea as He did to the demon-possessed man (cf. Mark 1:25 with 4:39). Since He is **Mighty God**, both what is natural (storms at sea) and what is supernatural (the demonic forces) are under His authority — they only rage as He allows: they are powerless to resist His command: "Quiet! Be Still!"

To you who cry out in the midst of life's raging storms, Jesus says: "I haven't forgotten you. You are not alone. Invite me to calm the storm you're experiencing and give you peace — I can do it, for I am **Mighty God!**" Troubled heart, never forget that Jesus, the **Mighty God** with unlimited power to calm every storm, is with you! In His time, He will quietly but firmly say: "Peace, be still!" to each storm you face. Once He speaks, the storm (whether natural or supernatural) will be powerless to rage any longer, for the **Mighty God** has spoken — and **He is the boss!**



—by Rex
Jerry Holmaas

At the Cross We See God's Grace



An old encyclopedia in my possession says grace means "free favor and love." Thayer's lexicon says that grace, with regard to God's giving to man, "is that to which all blessings, especially spiritual, are due."

In the cross we see that place which properly belongs to every one of us. That is because every one of us has sinned against a holy and righteous God and are deserving of His divine wrath and judgment.

In the first instance of sin in the human race, God had pre-warned Adam: "You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (Genesis 2:17). And elsewhere we read "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). So everything in this world tends toward death because of Adam's original sin. That is very evident, and we cannot deny it. Thus the cross, the place of divine judgment and wrath against sin, peculiarly belongs to Adam and his children — you and me. Divine justice insists that it be so and that someday we must appear before God, in the place of divine judgment, that our just due may be given to us. What an awful prospect!

But the cross, one day, shows up in human history, and we are not there. Rather, there is another, and He is the pure and spotless person, Jesus Christ. There He is enduring divine judgment, and we wonder why it is so. How can a perfectly righteous and just God so treat such a one? How can God, who never makes a mistake, do such a thing?

The Word of God teaches us that what is taking place at the cross is a sovereign and gracious act of God that makes it possible for Him to act toward sinners as though they had never sinned. It is at the cross that God takes our sins, and the sins of the whole world, and judges them in this perfect person, Jesus Christ, His eternal Son. The Scriptures teach us that Jesus Christ was to be "the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). They also say that God made Christ "who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (II Corinthians 5:21). Further,

Scripture records, that "we all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). And wonder of wonders, Romans 4:5 reveals that on the basis of the gracious work of Christ in our behalf, God justifies the wicked, that is, people like us who turn to Him for forgiveness through Jesus Christ our sin-bearer.

As we enter into this special season of the church year, wherein we deeply consider the grace of God toward us in Christ's dying in our place on that cross, let us allow its truth to sink into our hearts. It will transform our lives. It will transform our churches!

Oh, how wonderful and marvelous is God's grace to us in Christ Jesus hanging on the cross unto death, that we might have full forgiveness of our sins, and be God's blessed ones forever. Thanks be to God for this gift so great that it is beyond our ability and vocabulary to appreciate or describe! We can only say — we ought to say — with Paul, "Thanks to God for this indescribable gift" (II Corinthians 9:15).

Certainly we can join the hymnwriter who wrote of the marvelous grace of our loving Lord, and grace that is greater than all our sins. You who are living in this grace, shout "hallelujah," for you are blessed with a blessing out of heaven and unto the eternal salvation of your soul! You who have not received this blessing and grace, hear the call of God now and respond to it. It will transform you and your entire life. That is God's intent for you through His grace of Christ on the cross for sinners.

Again we say, "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift."



— Rev. Emerson Anderson
St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Cloquet, Minnesota

God's Holiness

Lent is a season in which we concentrate almost exclusively on the second person of the Trinity: Palm Sunday, the Last Supper, the arrest and trial of Jesus, etc. We contemplate the agony of Christ on the cross, and the suffering He must have gone through. But one Person who seems to have been left out of the dis-

At the
Cross
We See



God's Forgiveness

Peter said to them: "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission (forgiveness) of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Continuing on to Acts 10:43, we read: "To Him all the prophets witness that through His name whoever believes in Him will receive remission (forgiveness) of sins."

The word "remission" carries with it the thought of "sending away." This was exemplified on the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament when the High Priest offered one goat on the altar but sent the second one into the wilderness. For us today when there is true repentance and a living faith in Jesus, our sins are carried away in Jesus our sin-offering and sin-bearer. That which was dark and deadly to us is no longer there. Our sins are buried in

cussion during the Lenten Season is God.

Where was God when all of this was happening to His Son? God was at the cross, because at the cross we see the holiness of God. God's holiness is seen in His reaction to sin, His selection of the sacrifice for sin, and the completion of the sacrifice.

As he proclaims the goodness and holiness of God, the psalmist writes, "They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works" (Psalm 145:5). Reading this Psalm I must ask myself: "How can a mere mortal even meditate on the majesty of God?" In understanding the holiness of God we must all form a right idea of God's greatness. We must remove from our thoughts of God limits that would make Him small. One way that we make God small is by giving Him human characteristics. Instead of thinking of God in human terms, we must think of Him in terms of greatness.

As we come to understand how great God is, we realize that our great God cannot stand to be in the presence of sin. In Isaiah's vision in Isaiah chapter 6, God is called "Holy" three times. It is because of this holiness that Isaiah realizes he is undone by his sin. We see God's

the depths of the deepest sea. They disappear as far as the east is from the west. Along with peace, real peace with our God, we receive His most precious gift: the Holy Spirit.

To one who has been burdened with sin and uncertainty as to his relationship with God, this is of inestimable value. I John 1 has been used by God to bring many to this blessing: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The clear conscience resulting from such a cleansing is a mighty miracle of God. All of this goodness of God is rooted in His great mercy for sinners. As high as the heavens are above the earth so great is our Lord's mercy toward those who fear Him.

Luke 7 gives us an interesting account of a sinful woman. Jesus was visiting in the home of a Pharisee. This lady came in, washed Jesus' feet with her tears, kissed His feet and anointed them with oil. In his heart the Pharisee had a very condemning spirit toward this woman. But Jesus said to this man: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved

holiness at the cross in the way He turned away from His own Son. Matthew 27:46 says: "Jesus cried out in a loud voice 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?'"

God's holiness was also seen at the cross in the perfect sacrifice offered for sin. God could have sent one of His angels to be the sacrifice for sins, or He could have created a perfect animal to sacrifice on the altar for our sins. So why did He send His Son to die? Because no angel or animal sacrifice would do, only the death of His perfect Son would make perfect atonement for our sins. "Just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men" (Romans 5:18).

At the garden of Gethsemane Jesus asked His Father, "If it is possible, may this cup be taken from me" (Matthew 26:39). Do you ever wonder if God hesitated a bit? After all, Jesus is God's only Son. How difficult it must have been for God to hear His Son in agony cry out for His Father to take the cup away. In human terms, we can't understand God's holiness in this situation, but we can be thankful for the selection of a sacrifice that God made.

At the cross we see the holiness of God in His selection of the perfect sacrifice for sin.

The holiness of God is also seen in the completion of the sacrifice. As God saw His Son hanging on a tree dying for us, He could have at any time said: "Enough is enough, My Son is coming down, I'm not going through with it." Fortunately for us God let His Son die to complete the sacrifice for our sin. The completion of Christ's sacrifice means that our sins are wiped away without a trace. Psalm 103:12 declares: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."

This Lenten Season, as we contemplate all that Jesus has done for us, let's also remember the sacrifice His Father made by letting His Son die for us to put us in a right relationship with Him.



— Rev. James Molstre
Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
Zumbrota, Minnesota

much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." The more I see of my sin and sinfulness, and find the blessed peace of forgiveness from Jesus, the more I will love Him.

This suggests a great problem for most of us who are professing Christians — we do not see sin as we should. In the Scriptures we find the great Old Testament prophets crying out loud and clear against sin. In the New Testament, men like Peter, Stephen and Paul were sharp and pointed in exposing sin. This is a real aspect of true love. As Isaiah 58:1 shouts out: "Cry aloud, spare not (do not hold back), lift your voice like a trumpet. Tell my people their transgression."

With today's culture rapidly destroying the Judeo-Christian ethic, the command of Isaiah needs attention as never before. On every hand we are bombarded with the deception that sin is no longer sin, whether it comes from the government, education, media or elsewhere. Much of TV programming and advertising deceptively dulls our conscience to the terribleness of sin as God sees it. Christians, beware of this deception for ourselves

and our children. Shun those things that are tools in Satan's hands. By the grace of God and the power of His Spirit and word, begin to hate that which God hates. Pray for our pastors that they will do the same. Remember, "the fear of the Lord is to hate evil" (Proverbs 8:13). Then we can know the full blessing of repentance and forgiveness.

Receiving the Lord's forgiveness includes our relationship to others. At least every Sunday we pray: "Forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Do we truly realize the seriousness of this prayer? We are asking God to forgive us only to the extent we forgive others. "If you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses." Bitterness, jealousy, anger, evil speaking, and all such toward others do not belong to children of the Lord. Rather, Ephesians 4:32 admonishes us to "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you."

Oh, the peace and joy that floods our souls when we can pray with David in Psalm 25:11: "For the sake of your name, O Lord, forgive my iniquity, though it is great."

— Philip Grothe
Our Saviour's
Lutheran Church
Thief River Falls,
Minnesota

Our society is saturated with the cross. We find it engraved on books, hanging around necks, on the outside of nearly every church and above most church altars, and in various places, some of which are surprising

It does not matter how many crosses we have in our church or in our homes; it does matter if we know what the cross has done for our lives. The cross is the heart of God's love. John 3:16 exclaims: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son."

For a picture of what the heart of God looks like, look no further than the cross. God loves you and me so much that even if you and I were the only people on the face of the earth, He still would have sent Jesus to die for our sins that we might have life in all its fullness. Therefore, let us glory in the cross! Let us do as Jesus asked of us; deny ourselves, take up the cross and follow Him.

—Rev. David Skordahl
from *Parish News and Views*
March, 1993
Dalton, Minnesota

**But God
demonstrates
his own love
for us in this:
While we were
yet sinners,
Christ died
for us.**

Romans 5:8

Oh What Love!

Just what is His love? One would think this question unnecessary, with more books written about Jesus of Nazareth than any other figure of history, with more schools and churches dedicated to His name and work than to any other single endeavor. Yet how deeply tragic that masses in America, ... are spiritually illiterate, woefully ignorant of Christ; that even in many churches bearing the Savior's name His love is pictured merely as the devotion of a friend, the bounty of a benefactor!

In opposition to all this, we need modern Isaiahs and Saint Pauls, not to proclaim a man-made creed, but to preach, as they did,



In the cross
of Christ excess in
men is met by excess in God;
excess of evil is mastered by excess of love.

—Louis Bourdaloue

repentance, return to God only in Christ. We must go out to Calvary, as these Lenten weeks invite us, and there, beneath the cross, learn, as far as human understanding can comprehend, the true height and depth of Jesus' love. As He hangs there, His hands and feet riveted to the cross, agree that He is much more than a sufferer, a saint, a martyr, indescribably more than a misunderstood teacher, a mistreated leader, a misinterpreted messenger! There, as we once more come to the heart and hope of our Christian faith, its power and promise, believe that the Crucified, the only begotten Son of the Highest, willingly went to the cross, moved by His holy love for you!

There, suffering for your sins — since He had none of His own — bearing the guilt, the punishment, the curse of your transgressions, as your Redeemer, he gave Himself into the bitterest death men can ever witness. This atoning self-sacrifice, and nothing less, is the evidence of Christ's love. The shocking, inhuman cruelty of the cross, with the blessed message of its mercy — not the Ten Commandments, not the Golden Rule, not the "be good and do good" system, not some vague knowledge of God and some very real feat of His judgment — is the sum and substance, the pinnacle and pivot, of the real Christian creed.

— Walter A. Maier
in He Will Abundantly Pardon

Alas! and did my Savior bleed,
And did my Sov'reign die,
Would He devote that sacred head
For sinners such as I?

Was it for crimes that I had done
He groan'd upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown,
And love beyond degree.

— Isaac Watts

Believer in Jesus, can you gaze upon Him without tears as He stands before you, the mirror of agonizing love? He is at once fair as the lily for innocence, and red as the rose with the crimson of His own blood.

As we feel the sure and blessed healing which His stripes have wrought in us, does not our heart melt at once with love and grief? If ever we have loved our Lord Jesus, surely we must feel that affection glowing now within our bosoms.

— Charles Spurgeon
in Morning and Evening

The Law Heard and Fulfilled

"Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17).

Have you heard the holy law of God? Have you heard the requirements God's law makes upon you? Jesus said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). The law points its finger in your face and says you must live perfectly according to every commandment of God — that is, as perfect as God Himself. The law says you must do so in everything you do, everything you avoid, everything you see with your eyes, every thought in your mind, yes, your very heart must be absolutely perfect in the eyes of God.

Have you heard the law? The law says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). Sin is "the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). To everyone who has broken the law, the penalty is death. The law says that you must die as punishment for your breaking the law. There are no exceptions.

Only after we have heard the law and realized the death penalty that looms over us will Jesus and His mission, the gospel, mean anything to us. Jesus came to redeem those

under the law. In order to do this, He had to pay the death penalty that was ours. He had to go to the cross and bear the punishment that was ours because of our sin. Since God is too pure to behold evil (Habakkuk 1:13), He had to turn away from Jesus on the cross when He bore our sin in His body. The holy requirements of the law were met when Jesus shed His blood and died. Jesus redeemed us "with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death" (Luther's Small Catechism).

All the requirements of the law were met. The death penalty exacted. His righteousness is credited to our life. The law has been fulfilled.

*Not the labor of my hands,
Can fulfill Thy law's demands
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow
All for sin could not atone:
Thou must save, and Thou alone.*



— Rev. Jim Haga
Redeemer Free Lutheran Church
Cambridge, Minnesota

CAMPUS

Part I



Dan Klug

Son of Pastor Ray and the late Elaine Klug

Married to Marna Nelson, Drayton, North Dakota

Home congregation: Faith and Abiding Word Parish, Fairbury and Deshler, Nebraska, Ray Klug, pastor.

Education: Moorhead State University; Seattle LBI; graduate of Mankato State University, Mankato, Minnesota.

Personal testimony: God blessed me by providing a solid Christian family. Through Christ, my parents, Ray and Elaine, fostered a loving,

Bible-based home. It was through their love and Bible preaching that Christ instilled in me a deep heartfelt love and faith in Him. God also blessed me through my wife, Marna. Her strong faith in the Lord has been a source of love and support. Her parents, Merle and Marlys, have shown me Christ-like love and support. I truly am blessed by God.

Seminary experience: God has enriched me through the seminary. It has afforded me the time to be completely immersed in God's Word by which Christ has greatly strengthened my faith. He has also strengthened my faith through the Christian men that serve as teachers. During my time at seminary God has blessed me through my home parish. The Spirit has ministered to me by their prayers, letters, encouragement and financial support. Through God's Word, and His saints, He has clearly confirmed His call to preach the gospel. "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16).



Timothy Hinrichs

Timothy Hinrichs

Son of Pastor and Mrs. David Hinrichs

Home congregation: Calvary Lutheran Church, Everett, Washington, David Hinrichs, pastor.

Education: Graduate of Bethel College, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Special Interest: Music

Personal testimony: I was blessed to grow up in a very loving Christian home and have always loved the Lord. It is a gift from the Lord to have Christian parents who exposed me to the Word of God and helped me to understand the love of Christ for me and His forgiveness of



The 1994 Association Free Lutheran Bible School senior class.

my sins. It was at age nine that I began to cultivate a personal relationship with Jesus. The Lord was my best friend whom I knew would never leave my side. He became real to me through time in prayer and reading His Word. Although I continued to struggle with ups and downs in the years that followed, I never fell away from my love for the Lord and have remained in my baptismal covenant with Him.

Seminary experience: Going to seminary was a scary step for me — fresh out of college with no desire to be in front of people. I felt so inadequate to be in a position to lead the Lord's flock, but the Lord continued to spur me on and told me "my grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness" (II Corinthians 12:9). I took that big leap of faith and entered AFLTS in 1990. Since then, the Lord has provided for me in ways that I thought impossible. He gave me a zeal to save souls and preach the Word, the desire to minister to the hurting and to nurture individuals with God's Word. I thank the Lord, especially for my internship in Deshler and Fairbury, Nebraska which the Lord used to produce boldness and a great love for souls. I greatly look forward to being used by the Lord to make disciples and be a servant in the congregation.

Come and get to know us!
CAMPUS DAYS at AFLBS
March 4-6, 1994

Learn from the Past

Some (evangelicals) have fixated upon "me and the Bible, and especially me," so that what Bible reading becomes is primarily an assertion of inward feelings.

This has sadly prevented readers from ... learning that the Spirit has a history, and that the body of Christ

being called forth in that history has unity ... Beware of the "evangelical" who wants to read the Bible without the historic voices of the church, who is only willing to listen to his own voice or the voices of contemporaries in the dialogue.

Evangelicals have usually been

the losers when they have systematically neglected the saints and martyrs and consensual writers of the earliest Christian centuries.

—Thomas Oden
in *Good News*
January-February 1993

Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow

The words of the doxology seemed most fitting at the time as one of our pastors led us in singing them after I presented the final financial report for 1993 to the pastors' conference last month. The reason for our thankfulness to God was the announcement that total budget receipts had reached 91% of our ministry goals, compared to last year's 62%.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this encouraging report. Some may point to the fact that our budget goals had been reduced from the ones which we had failed to reach during the previous year, but this does not take into account the good news that total gifts increased by over one hundred thousand dollars. Also, the response to a reduced budget indicates that our AFLC friends are strongly supportive of efforts to bring spending in line with income.

World Missions tops the list in terms of percentages (112%) and this total is even more exciting when we remember that it does not include special gifts to debt retirement. Support of Home Missions is the next highest percentage (93%), with the General Fund a close third (89%). We need to remember, too, that the past fiscal year only had 11 months, due to a decision by the last annual conference, and that the goals were adjusted accordingly.

Those of you who noted the percentages printed in the last issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* should correct the Parish Education total to \$38,053.37 or 78%. The earlier figure included the sale of materials, which is not included in the budget request.

Budgets are personal to many people in the AFLC, since they represent the support of ministries in which we have confidence and people whom we have grown to love in the Lord. Receipts are personal, too, since they represent the commitment of congregations and individuals to the ongoing outreach of our church family. How thankful we are to the Lord for calling us to be a part of what He is doing through this fellowship!

Praise God ... yes, He is the source ... from whom all blessings flow ... surely we need to see His provision for all of our AFLC ministries as an undeserved blessing from a bountiful Father. Let's include one another in this list of blessings, too: thank you, faithful friends, and thank God for you all!



— Rev. Robert L. Lee

A Hurting Heart Becomes a Helping Hand

I was well aware of the Bible verse: "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord ..." (Romans 8:28). But I did not understand that it also referred to tragedies! At the age of 21 I was left a widow in the Amazon region of Brazil; then the Lord began to teach me many things of His love and His will.

In 1966, I was born into a Christian home near a small town called Iretama, where my family was a part of the AFLC congregation. When I was 13 years old, my family's coffee crop froze out so we moved up to the Amazon region. Seven years later I met and fell in love with a handsome young and hard working man who had moved to the Amazon area to find his fortune. We made many plans and dreams together during those first few months of our marriage.

Then tragedy struck our home and smashed our dreams. My husband was stricken with malaria that turned into hepatitis. His death came swiftly before we could get medical help. As for me, I felt my life had ended as well.

I remained in the community for another year and tried to fit the shattered pieces of my life together. God began to show me His plan. He opened doors for me to study at the AFLC Bible School in Campo Mourão.

The year at Bible school helped me see how the Lord never abandons

His own when we go through trials, but rather He strengthens our lives in Him. I left the campus, eager to work

(continued on page 12)

Meet David and Sarah Nelson — Missionary Candidates to Brazil

LA: When did your interest in missions begin?

DN: My interest in missions began when I was in high school. I was challenged by a Wycliffe Bible Translator film about the large number of people who did not have any portion of God's Word in their own language. This interest was strengthened as I attended an Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship missions conference called "Urbana '81." It was at that time that I realized that God wanted me to serve Him as an overseas missionary.

SN: I remember missionaries George and Helen Knapp and John and Ruby Abel visiting churches my dad served, and staying in our home when I was a little girl. While I didn't have a burning desire to serve as an overseas missionary at that time, I believe that is when the seed was planted. Through a mission trip to Mexico in high school, together with my time at AFLBS and participation on the 1989 FLY Team, the desire to serve God overseas became clear in my heart and mind.

LA: What about all the needs here in the United States?

DN and SN: There are a lot of needs here at home — and we do not want to neglect the needs here. At the same time we need to recognize that Jesus, in His Great Commission, commanded us to make disciples of **all** the nations. The number of Christian workers in the U.S. is so much greater than those in the other countries of the world, including in Brazil. If we want to obey the Lord Jesus, it is not "either/or" but "both/and."

LA: Why do you want to go to Brazil?

DN and SN: We have both been in Brazil and have seen the AFLC outreach in that part of the world. There is at the present time such an openness to the gospel in Brazil, especially among the young people. As the president of the Brazilian AFLC said, "the time for Brazil is now."

LA: The AFLC has several missionary families in Brazil. Why do we need more?

DN and SN: As you look at a map of the world you will see that Brazil is a very large country. The cities are growing at a fast rate. Many young people are moving to the cities for educational and job opportunities. With some of those big changes in a person's life comes more of an openness to the gospel. The Brazilian AFLC has as a goal to plant churches in cities with a population of 100,000 or more. They also have plans to send missionaries of their own into other countries.

LA: When were you in Brazil?

DN: My seminary internship was divided between Faith Lutheran Church in Shakopee, Minnesota and Brazil. I spent a total of four months in Brazil in 1990. It was a time for me to see what the AFLC mission work was all about. I was pleased with what I saw and was excited about being more involved with the work in the future.

SN: I originally went with a FLY Team, planning to stay for a six-week period. I stayed for a little more than one year, teaching Vicky and Chester Dyrud and helping out with a local church in Campo Mourão. It was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life and gave me a great opportunity to see God working in and through the lives of fellow believers in Brazil. It definitely gave me a global vision for the need of everyone to hear the gospel. It also provided a time to examine my own life, and discover areas that God wanted me to surrender to His will.



Rev. David and Sarah Nelson and Josiah.

letter to the editor

To the Editor:

It has caused great concern as we have read in the many recent issues of the *Ambassador* the need for upgraded youth ministries in our AFLC. The need for a full-time youth director has also been expressed.

I sincerely question the focus of our vision regarding the real need in our AFLC. What is the real need in our AFLC today? In my opinion the greatest need is revival. Revival begins in the heart of every true believer and follower of Christ as stated in II Chronicles 7:14 and I Timothy 3:15.

It seems our vision has become blurred. The question is asked, quoting from the article "AFLC 2000," October 26, 1993, "How shall our church fellowship prepare to meet the crisis and challenge of this crucial hour?" It is encouraging to see in the third phase of our vision the reinstatement of a past ministry of a full-time evangelist. Should not this be our first goal? In II Corinthians 8:1-5 we note the Macedonians gave themselves first to the Lord and then they gave with liberality. Vision number two is taken care of.

In Ephesians 4:11-16, note where the ministry starts in verse 12 for the quipping of the saints and culminates in verse 16 with church growth! In all the Scripture, the various ministries listed, do not include one called "youth worker" or "youth director." God has a specific plan and calling for youth workers. He calls them parents (Proverbs 1:8; 4:1-4; 13:1; 12:1; Ephesians 6:1-4 and Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

The reason our youth groups have been failing is because of a lack of involvement by the parents. I am certainly supportive of youth work and realize the many needs and temptations facing our youth today. I have
(continued on page 12)

LA: What type of work will you be doing in Brazil?

DN: The first year will be language school for both of us. After that, I anticipate being involved in church planting work in one of the larger cities.

SN: I view my primary ministry as being a wife to David and a mother to Josiah. Certainly I will be involved in church activities, i.e., women's and children's ministries, but my main interest is in providing a home that is a haven for my family.

LA: What are the AFLC congregations like in Brazil?

DN and SN: First you will notice the services are usually much longer than what we have in the U.S. Often the churches have Sunday School on Sunday morning and the worship service in the evening. Sometimes they last between one and a half to two hours each. You will also notice that most of those in the congregation are young people.

LA: How will you receive your support?

DN and SN: Some people do not see the AFLC World Missions as "faith-mission." In a very real sense it is a faith-mission. The way our AFLC is structured, each congregation is free to give as much or as little as they desire to the work of world missions. Pastor Enderlein and the World Missions Committee have been establishing some new plans for missionary support. Districts are encouraged to adopt a missionary couple and support a certain number of "units" of support for their ministry. This will enable the missionaries to spend more time in one or more districts when they are home on furlough. This will also help those in the congregation to identify with certain missionary families. They can "adopt" a missionary family.

LA: Is it dangerous to live in Brazil?

DN and SN: The most dangerous place for any Christian is outside of God's will; the safest place to be is in God's will.

LA: When are you ready to go?

DN and SN: We will be moving from Tucson, Arizona, where we have served Living Faith and Body of Christ Lutheran parish since 1991, to Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the beginning of March of 1994. After that we will be on deputation until we have all the prayer and financial support needed to go to Brazil.

(Note: To make arrangements for the Nelsons to speak in your church, contact World Missions, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441 (612) 545-5631.

YOUTH

Wallace, South Dakota — On a Saturday in December, Calvary's youth went to Sioux Falls to assist in preparing and serving the noon meal at a soup kitchen called The Banquet. The young people spent an afternoon baking and packing 25 dozen cookies to take along to donate to The Banquet.

Northome, Minnesota — "It has been a great year for the youth group in 1993! Our youth group has grown over the past year from about ten people to nearly 25!" Anna Cornish, vice president, continues: "I feel the reason for this is because of the great time we have together while learning about our Creator. Christ is making a difference in the Northome community!"

Wheatland, Iowa — Christian Free Lutheran's TAC (Teens Alive for Christ) are planning ahead for a three-day ski trip to the ARC and nearby Trollhaugen during Christmas vacation 1994. One dollar per week for each skier planning to go is being deposited into the TAC treasury so that by the time December arrives, the cost will be paid. Whole families are encouraged to participate. It will be a spiritual retreat as well with a special speaker being planned for.



The author with her children at the Miriam Infant Home.

HELPING HAND

with the Sunday school in our congregation at Iguacu Falls. There I was able to continue my secular studies.

Again my plans were interrupted. I was called back to the Campo Mourão area to help care for my grandmother who was paralyzed and failing in health. One day as I was helping her to sit up and be more comfortable, she passed away in my arms. Psalm 90:5-6 became even more real to me as I saw our lives on earth so fragile and so quickly gone.

Soon thereafter, I received a call to be the matron or housemother for the orphan children in the Miriam Home. I love the work and the children. Daily I pray for them and with them, teaching them to pray to Jesus who loves them and died to save them from their sins. The children's home has now become my home and

the little orphans filled that tragic emptiness in my life.

The Lord prepared another wonderful Christian man for me and we were married in January, 1994. He loves the children as I do and I know the Lord will give us only His best as together we serve Him.

Now I know that indeed: "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord."

— by *Luci Vania
Pereira de Oliveira*

(Note: The AFLC-Canada has taken on the support of the matron of the Miriam Infant Home; the AFLC-U.S.A. helped build the home and supports individual children monthly; and the AFLC-Brazil maintains and supplies the home with student help and education.)

LETTER

been involved in our district Bible camp the past 16 years and I have found the breakdown of our youth directly related to the breakdown of the family. That is directly proportionate to our compromising churches and pastors (II Timothy 4:3-4).

Could it be that the reason the church seems so ineffective to the world is that there is too much world in the church? Let us be more concerned about drawing people to Christ and less about increasing our membership.

What is needed in churches today is whole-hearted commitment to the Word of God, consecrated living and obedience (Hebrews 5:9; I Samuel 15:22). We need to live in response to God's Word. This does not mean we are saved by our living (legalism) but we want to obey out of love for Christ. That is holy living.

I am reminded of a statement Pastor Monseth made while attending a parents' weekend at AFLBS a few years ago while my daughter was a student there. He said if our churches did not preach the soon return of Christ with frequency, it was a sign of a dead church as so much of Scripture points to His Second Coming. Who is Jesus coming for? His bride, the true church; those who know Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord. Amen.

Marty Johnson
Badger, Minnesota

Camarillo, California — David Lusk resigned as the Youth Director of First Lutheran Church effective December 31. David is attending the Police Academy in Santa Maria. The congregation's Youth Commission is seeking a replacement. During two Sunday afternoons in January, the Junior and Senior Youth Groups headed for the mountains to enjoy sliding in the snow. It is reported Intern Kevin Olson was challenged to find enough sleds for the young people!

Your input wanted — The Free Lutheran Youth Federation Council will meet on Tuesday, July 19 at 10 a.m. in the seminary classroom on the AFLC Schools' campus in Minneapolis. Youth Board Representatives plus youth representation from each district of the AFLC is encouraged to participate. The AFLC's youth ministry program and strategy will be discussed at this meeting. We want your input!

— *Rev. Dennis Gray*
Youth Director



Astoria, Oregon — Pictured are those who attended the West Coast Youth Rally last fall. This was sponsored by Bethany's youth group called HEART which led the annual Christmas candlelight service for the congregation on December 5.

1994 Youth Leadership Conference

"Foundations for Life"

July 18-22

AFLBS Campus, Minneapolis

For more information contact AFLC Youth Ministries,
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441

(Register by May 1, 1994)

In Memoriam

Eula Mae Swenson, 63, Fargo, North Dakota, passed away on December 31, 1993, after a short illness. Funeral services were held on January 4, at St. Paul's Free Lutheran Church in Fargo where she was an active longtime member. Always the gracious hostess, Miss Swenson will be remembered by many in the AFLC who were involved in the many meetings at Fargo, especially in the early history of the AFLC. She taught as a missionary on a Navajo Indian reservation in Rock Point, Arizona from 1953-57. After teaching in Grafton, North Dakota, she was the dean of girls and taught Bible classes at Oak Grove High School in Fargo. She then taught in Fargo elementary schools for 25 years before her retirement in 1989. She is survived by a brother, Carroll, Miles City, Montana, and her step-

mother, Sophie Swenson, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Mrs. Elmer (Betsey) Nelson, 96, lifelong member of Aadalen Free Lutheran Church, rural Fairdale, North Dakota, passed away on December 17, 1993. Funeral services were conducted at Aadalen with Pastor Roy Mohagen officiating.

Herman Solberg, 84, a longtime member of Calvary Lutheran Church, Everett, Washington, passed away on November 16, 1993.

Nettie Vesta, DeKalb, Illinois, passed away on November 10, 1993. She was a longtime member of Grace Free Lutheran Church.

Reuben Nelson, 70, Tabor Lutheran Church, Webster, South Dakota, passed away on December 23, 1993.

St. Louis Park, Minnesota — Medicine Lake Lutheran Academy has received a \$300 grant from Aid Association for Lutherans to be used for faculty in-service training. A ministry of Medicine Lake Lutheran Church in Plymouth, the Academy has 127 students enrolled in its pre-school through 8th grade classes.

Cloquet, Minnesota — On March 20-24, St. Paul's Lutheran Church will host a Prophecy Conference. Rev. David Barnhart, Melbourne, Florida, will speak at the 6:30 p.m. evening services.

Ferndale, Washington — "Praying More in '94" is the theme for the year at Triumphant Lutheran Church. This year's Lenten services are developing the theme as well with district pastors preaching on the Lord's Prayer in a pulpit exchange.

PEOPLE and PLACES

Philip Grothe, Thief River Falls, Minnesota, has resigned from the Coordinating Committee of the AFLC due to health reasons. Mr. Grothe has served on the board since 1991. His position has been filled by **Mr. Marlin Benrud**, Goodhue, Minnesota, by Coordinating Committee appointment through next summer's annual conference.

Rev. James Asp, Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, is the interim pastor at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Dickinson, North Dakota.

Rev. Don Voorhees, Dannebrog, Nebraska, was placed on the regular AFLC clergy roster by action of the Coordinating Committee on January 17, after being on the Fellowship Roster since 1992.

Rev. Dennis Brostrom, Math-owa, Minnesota, has been removed from the Fellowship Roster due to his acceptance on the roster of another Lutheran denomination, with whom he is currently serving.

North Royalton, Ohio—Abiding Savior Lutheran Church, one of the AFLC's newest congregations, is currently seeking to call a pastor. Rev. Jim Herbert, who has been serving the congregation during the transition from the ELCA, resigned on January 23, effective immediately.

Rev. Kelly Henning, Outlook, Saskatchewan, has accepted a call from Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Salmon Arm, British Columbia. Pastor Henning was accepted on the roster of the AFLC-Canada through colloquy from the ELCIC, and will begin serving his new parish in April.

Rev. Oskar Salge, Boerne, Texas, was admitted by the Coordinating Committee to the AFLC clergy roster. Formerly a member of the ELCA, Pastor Salge retired several years ago after a long ministry among Mexican-Americans in southern Texas.

Kevin Garner, Watseka, Illinois, accepted the call to serve Fox River Lutheran Church, Norway, Illinois. A graduate of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois, he also completed an internship as well as the Luther House of Studies program through the AALC. He will fulfill additional study requirements as a part of his colloquy process with the AFLC Coordinating Committee.

Rev. Thomas Gilman, Milford, Illinois, accepted a call to Redeemer Free Lutheran Church, Canton, South Dakota, and plans to begin his new ministry in June. Pastor Gilman has served St. John's Lutheran Church of Schwer for the past three years. His father, Rev. Richard Gilman, is the interim pastor at Canton until June.

AFLC - Canada Annual Conference

April 8-10, 1994
Living Word Lutheran
Vernon, B. C.

Maplewood, Minnesota — Victory in Christ Lutheran Church has purchased a telecomputer to aid in contacting members and the community with an invitation to a service or special meetings. It can be used for survey work with an incoming message tape to record responses to the questions asked. Personal outgoing messages can be recorded with whatever message or invitation the church may desire. It has also been used to invite people to special services at Living Word, Eagan; Faith, Shakopee; and Medicine Lake, Plymouth.

Rev. Wendell Johnson, Spicer, Minnesota, submitted his resignation as pastor of Green Lake Lutheran Church to their annual meeting on January 23. His future plans have not been finalized. He has served Green Lake Lutheran Church since 1991.

Rev. Mel Meyer, Amery, Wisconsin, has accepted the call to serve Amery Free Lutheran Church. He has served the congregation as interim pastor since last November. His new address is 311 Montgomery, Amery, Wisconsin, 54001, (715) 268-4330.

London, Minnesota — Faith Lutheran Church recently held a Children's Recognition Service for all of its children under six years old. All but one of the 24 children in this age group were present; absent was Amber Young, daughter of Seminarian Victor Young. Pictured are the parents and their children who were introduced, prayed for and received a Christian storybook during the special Sunday morning service. The sermon was entitled: "God's Blessings for Children," from Numbers 6:22-27. Following the service, an older, charter member of the six-year-old congregation remarked: "Seeing this group of young parents and their children in front of us today made all of our work worthwhile."



Remember This

A songwriter asks the question, "When I am gone what will they say? Will I leave behind a witness that will carry on?"

What will they and what do they say about you and your congregation? What do you emphasize? What are you known for?

Some congregations and individuals are known more for what they are opposed to than what they believe in. They have taken stands that are scripturally sound. They have failed to emphasize, however, the main point of The Book.

It has been said that a scarlet thread runs throughout the pages of Scripture. That thread is the blood of Jesus. The centerpiece of God's Work and Word is Christ's death and resurrection. The cross causes everything else to make sense. Without it, the Bible is like a big puzzle with the main piece in the center missing.

Paul was inspired by God to write about a lot of things in his first letter to the Corinthians. As he comes to the end of the epistle he wants to be sure his readers have not become distracted and forgotten what is "of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Corinthians 15:3, 4). He wanted them to know many things. He had many directions for them to follow. Most of all, however, he wanted them to know the great love of Christ that demonstrated itself in Jesus dying on the cross and rising again so that we can have forgiveness of sin and eternal life.

I want to be known for emphasizing the cross. I would like people to say about our congregation, "They keep talking about how Jesus loves us and died on the cross for our sins and rose again." That's what I want to be known for. How about you?

A Time to Celebrate

For many in this world the days before the beginning of Lent are a time to party. They believe they need to do all the celebrating they can before Lent comes and brings with it an end to all their fun. This attitude is the result of ignorance of the nature of real happiness and a tragic misunderstanding of the true meaning of Lent.

For the child of God, Lent is not to be a sad and woeful time, absent of all joy. It is a time when we remember in a special way the greatest demonstration of love this world has ever seen. Jesus Christ, the holy and perfect Son of God, suffered and died on a cross in our place. He freely chose to shed His own blood to wash our sins away. He paid the penalty we deserve. We can now be forgiven and made clean and righteous and acceptable to be in the presence of God as His child. That is reason to celebrate!

Lent most certainly is a time of seriousness and introspection. It is a time to consider what sacrifices God may call on us to bear. It loses its meaning, however, if we fail to keep our focus on the sacrifice Jesus made. The confused ideas many have regarding Lent comes from only dwelling on what we are to do without reflecting on what Jesus has done.

When things are in proper focus Lent can be a wonderful time. I have great memories of my high school years, going to Wednesday evening Lenten services and being pointed to Jesus and the cross and being amazed at what God has done. It was a season full of joy and encouragement.

Lent is a time of focusing not on when the fun ended, but when it truly began. At the cross our sin, the cause of such sorrow and heartache, gloom and despair, is dealt a deathblow. Forgiveness and wholeness can be ours. The celebrating can begin!

The Son Still Shines

The fog was dense and visibility low. Then I came around a corner and saw the sun. It had just risen. The thick cloud cover was being quickly pushed aside. It was the start of a beautiful day.

In our lives as well as on the highway, we can often feel like we are in a fog. At times the visibility as to what to do is low and the confusion is high. We must not give up, though. Jesus, the Son of God and the Light of the world, is still shining bright. His Word promises that we can be sure of that, even when the circumstances seem cloudy. He invites us to look beyond the clouds and see the Son shining forth in all His brilliance. The child of God can go through the fog with confidence that just around the corner is beauty and light.

Is Jesus the Only Way to God?

During the 1988 presidential campaign between then Vice President George Bush and Governor Michael Dukakis, I remember watching CNN's "Larry King Live" television talk show on a night when his featured guests were Mrs. Marilyn Quayle and Mrs. Kitty Dukakis. During the show, Larry King asked Marilyn Quayle a question about her Christian beliefs. As I recall, she gave a very sincere and honest answer as to how one becomes a Christian. But then Larry King, who appeared a little annoyed with her answer, probed with this follow-up question: "Does that mean that if someone does not trust Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, that person then goes to hell? Does that mean that Kitty Dukakis who is seated next to you and who is Jewish is going to hell?"

What seems to confuse and anger people are those who state that Jesus Christ is somehow the only way to God. Polls have found that many people simply believe that if you are sincere about your faith, whether it be Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, or anything else, that as long as you sincerely believe, that is what really matters. Today it is politically correct and very popular to believe that all religions point to and put you in reach of the same God. So if you maintain otherwise, that Jesus is the only way to God, that is viewed by many to be a very narrow-minded belief.

It needs to be pointed out that those who profess that Jesus is the only true way to God are not the ones who invented this claim. Jesus Himself makes the claim! This is what He told His own disciples: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6). So the real question is, does Jesus Christ have the right to make such a claim?

Consider the following evidence:

Ever since Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the garden of Eden, God said He would make things right again between Himself and the people. Throughout the Old Testament, God promised that He would send to this earth a "Messiah/Redeemer" who would restore the broken spiritual relationship we have had with God since the fall of man.

God was very specific in describing what to look for as a way to identify this "Redeemer." If one takes the time to study all the prophecies that describe who this Redeemer would be, the only person who could possibly fit the description is Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament there are approximately 60 major Messianic prophecies and they were all fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The Old Testament gets very specific about the details of the Messiah. For example, it reveals the exact lineage, the place of Christ's birth, the time of His birth, the unique nature of His birth and conception (the Messiah would be born of a virgin — Isaiah 7:14) and the manner of his death (execution by crucifixion — Psalm 22:6-18). The chance of having all these prophecies come true and through just one person is mathematically mind-boggling to say the least. Winning the lottery by chance would be simple by comparison.

Skeptics have contended that some of the important prophecies were written down after Christ lived and therefore were fabricated to correspond to His life and His life alone. But there is a significant problem with that contention: the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, was translated around 200-150 B.C. The Septuagint would then reveal that there is at least a 150-200 year gap between the Old Testament prophecies and the time Christ was born. To say that all these prophecies came after Christ in order to explain this wonder does not hold any credible weight.

The reason Jesus Christ can be the only way back to a right and holy relationship with God is that only He has the right credentials. If we could be made right with God in any other way, He would not have had to go through all the effort to bring Christ into the world. Not only is He the only way to God, but by the fulfilling of all the prophecies, He has also eliminated all other possible "saviors" who dare make the claim of being a way to God.



—Rev. Jim Ritter