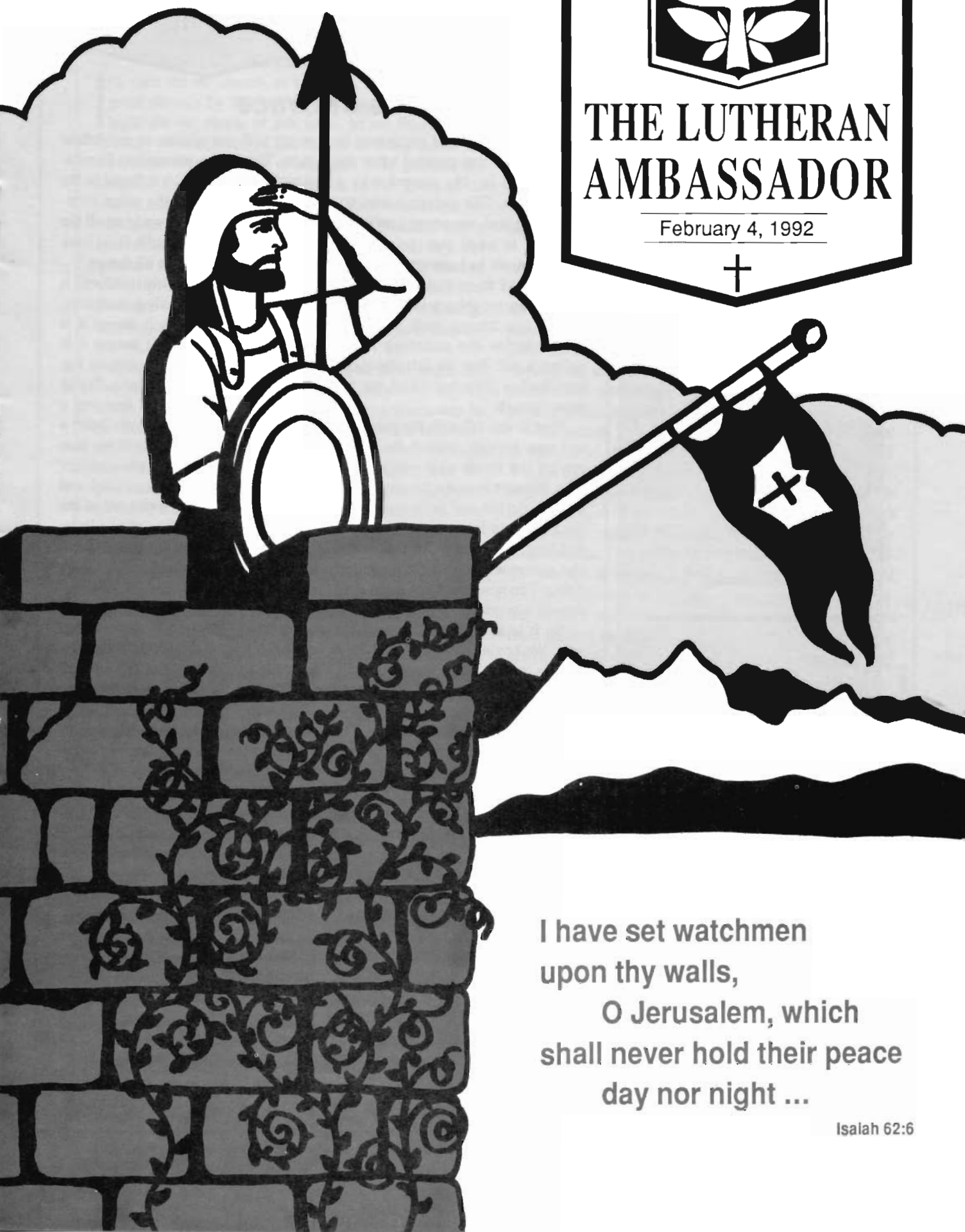




THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

February 4, 1992



I have set watchmen
upon thy walls,
O Jerusalem, which
shall never hold their peace
day nor night ...

Isalah 62:6

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

February 4, 1992 • Vol. 30, No. 3

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

CONTENTS

Who Are God's Watchmen on The Walls?	p. 3
The Battle is The Lord's	p. 5
Bold As A Lion	p. 7
The New Age and You	p. 9
Meet AFLTS Seniors	p. 13
People and Places	p. 16

Cover art by

Linda Schierkolk,
New Hope, Minnesota

Subscriptions: \$12.00 per year.

Write to:

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

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

USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413

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

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

Rev. Robert Lee, Editor
Mrs. Wayne Hjermstad, Assistant to the Editor

Editorial Board:

Rev. Wendell Johnson, Chairman
Dr. Francis Monseth, Secretary
Mr. Robert Knutson

Light on the Way

The Sweetness of Grace

The living room of our house in Williston was paneled when we bought it. The carpet was a dark brown. The previous owners had a dog and we never could get the room to smell very good. After four years, we had enough of the old and wanted to remodel. We were warned by neighbors that we may not be too happy with what we found under the paneling if we pulled it off. But we felt the room was darker than we liked, so we went to work.

First it was off with the paneling, and sure enough, behind the paneling on the north wall was a large hole. In order to make the room new, though, the old had to be torn away; carpet, window frame, carpet padding, etc. The more that went, the more we found that needed doing. The new could not come until the old was gone.

So it is as God makes our lives new. We begin to see the need for a change, so we look to God for help. He begins to tear away the surface layers and all that can be found underneath is more corruption. The tearing continues until there is nothing left, for nothing is found worth keeping! To bring us to where we find no hope in ourselves is the work of God's Law (Romans 3:20, Ephesians 2:1-3).

Luther uses the Ten Commandments to place God's Law before us. He explains each of the commandments based on the entirety of God's Word. As he places God's mirror clearly before us, we find there is no area of our lives where we can say, "At least I am doing well here."

The first three commands have to do with our relation to God, the last

seven with our relation to our fellow man. The first command is foundational. Its explanation is found in the explanations of all the other commands. If we keep it, we keep all the others. So, "We should fear, love and trust in God above all things."

Do you see what this involves? It means that it is not only a weakness, but it is sin to worry. It means it is sin to question God. It means it is sin to give anything or anyone but God first place in our hearts. Try to stand before this Law. Are you a Christian? Have you never been a Christian? It doesn't matter! No man but one, living or dead, can consider his life before this law of God and stand! And this law looks not at the surface, but at the core of our lives. Even the greatest of Christians knew that he could not stand before God's holiness (Romans 7:14-24, I Timothy 1:15).

Before God's Law, we see that "remodeling" is impossible. There is nothing to remodel. But the work of God's Law is still a gracious work because it keeps us from looking to ourselves at all for help. It makes us ready to look to the grace of God in Jesus Christ only.

And here we discover a secret; the Christian life gets old and tiresome because we take grace for granted. We progress and are tempted to think we are doing well. But when we see God's Law clearly in all its fullness, we become the condemned with grace as our only hope. "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me ..." Grace is sweet only to a wretch. Thank you, God, for the sting of your Law.

—Rev. Jon Wellumson

Who Are God's Watchmen On the Walls?

Isaiah 62:6 says, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night ..." Ezekiel 33:6 says, "But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand."

Who are these watchmen appointed by God? What are the walls of Jerusalem where they stand, and what is their God-given task?

Some wrongly interpret them as preservers of civil righteousness within secular society, but really they are the ministers of Christ's church. The "walls of Jerusalem" where they stand is the church itself, and their calling is to sound forth the trumpet of God's Word to protect Christ's people from spiritual danger.

Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms:

In 1526, Martin Luther published "Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved." In that book, Luther wrote:

For God has established two kinds of government among men. The one is spiritual; it has no sword; but it has the word, by means of which men are to become good and righteous, so that with this righteousness they may attain eternal life. He administers this righteousness through the word, which he has committed to the preachers. The other kind is worldly government, which works through the sword so that those who do not want to be good and righteous to eternal life may be forced to become good and righteous in the eyes of the world. He administers this righteousness through the sword ... God himself is the founder, lord, master, protector, and rewarder of both kinds of righteousness. ("Luther Works," 46:99-100)

In that statement, Luther sets forth his doctrine of the two kingdoms. Luther shows that God has established Christ's spiritual kingdom to give salvation and eternal life to those who trust in Christ, and God has established worldly

government to maintain order in sinful human society. The two kingdoms are alike in some ways and different in others.

The similarities are that both kingdoms are established by God. The officials in both kingdoms are given their authority by God and are accountable to God for how they fulfill their duties, whether they realize it or not.

The chief difference is that Christ's spiritual kingdom employs the Word of God to seek the salvation of souls. It does not use physical force. Worldly government, on the other hand, uses physical force to compel ungodly people to live peaceably in this world. Worldly government is not meant to minister to people's souls.

Now when Isaiah 62:6 and Ezekiel 33:6 speak of divinely appointed watchmen on the walls, to which kind of authority are they referring? Are the watchmen secular authorities, or are they spiritual authorities?

The Watchmen are Preachers

The contexts of Isaiah 62:6 and Ezekiel 33:6-7 indicate that the watchmen are spiritual authorities. Isaiah 60:18, for example, states, "... but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise." The walls are called salvation because they consist of those who are saved by faith in Christ. The walls are the ministers of Christ's church.

The context of Ezekiel 33:6 also shows that the watchman is a spiritual authority and not a secular authority. God says in Ezekiel 33:7, "So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me." The watchmen is specifically told to hear and declare God's Word, which is the task of spiritual authority.

The Watchmen's Job is to Warn of Danger

Watchmen are to guard Christ's people against any sword, meaning danger, which threatens their souls. When a watchman sees a spiritual threat, he is to sound the warning against it. He alerts Christ's people about where the danger is, what it consists of, and how to defend against it. The watchman gives his warning with the trumpet of God's Word.

Sin and false doctrine are the sword which

"The watchman gives his warning with the trumpet of God's Word."



—by Rev.
Ralph M. Rokke
Minneapolis,
Minnesota

*Wake, awake, for night is flying;
The watchmen on the heights are crying,
Awake, Jerusalem, arise!
Midnight's solemn hour is tolling,
His chariot wheels are nearer rolling;
He comes; prepare, ye virgins wise.
Rise up; with willing feet
Go forth, the Bridegroom meet;
Hallelujah!
Bear thro' the night your well-trimmed light,
Speed forth to join the marriage rite.*



*Zion hears the watchmen singing,
Her heart with deep delight is springing,
At once she wakes, she hastes away;
Forth her Bridegroom hastens glorious,
In grace arrayed, by truth victorious;
Her grief is joy, her night is day;
All hail, incarnate Lord,
Our crown and our reward!
Hallelujah!
We haste along in pomp of song,
And gladsome join the marriage throng.*

WATCHMEN

the devil uses to destroy Christ's people. Consequently, a watchman's duty is to warn against sin and false doctrine. If a watchman sees the devil's sword threatening a soul and does not provide warning, then God requires the sinner's blood at the watchman's hand. The life and death of souls is at stake, and a watchman must be faithful to his task.

The Watchmen's Sufficiency is Christ

No watchman is sufficient in himself to recognize spiritual dangers, to give warnings about them, or to induce hearers to heed the warnings. The watchman's sufficiency comes from Christ

alone and is present when the Word is preached.

The Word is the means which Christ has chosen to build and preserve His Church. Christ who died and rose again to save sinners builds His eternal kingdom through the preaching of His Word, and so He blesses the watchmen's work. He empowers it. He does more through it than we ask or think.

Through the work of the watchmen, God makes sinners into "the holy people, The redeemed of the Lord ... A city not forsaken" (Isaiah 62:12). What a glorious work of God, and how gracious God is to appoint watchmen for His Church!

*Hear Thy praise, O Lord, ascending
From tongues of men and angels, blending
With harp and lute and psaltery.
By the pearly gates in wonder
We stand, and swell the voice of thunder,
In bursts of choral melody;
To mortal eyes and ears
What glory now appears!
Hallelujah!
We raise the song, we swell the throng,
To praise Thee ages all along.*

— Philipp Nicolai



Michael Bray
A Faithful Watchman

The Battle Is The Lord's

— by Mike Colvin

Members of Pastor Mike Bray's church in Bowie, Maryland, sometimes joke with one another about starting up a prison ministry. The unspoken premise is that about half of the members have already spent time in prison or jail as a result of pro-life activities, so it is more of a reality than a joking matter. The high-water mark probably came in January of 1988, when five church members (including both pastors) were locked up in four different jails in three different states.

Pastor Bray himself has logged the most time behind bars, as a result of a felony conviction on "conspiracy" charges stemming from the destruction of numerous abortion facilities in the Washington, D.C. area. He spent 46 months in federal prison, while his wife, Jayne, with the support of their church and other Christian friends, learned the difficult job of being a single mother of three, making monthly visits to her husband, 600 miles away.

Many Christians are uncomfortable when they see other Christians "breaking the law." To such people Mike Bray would offer a secular answer and a theological answer. The secular answer is that the law itself recognizes, in the "necessity defense," that a lesser statute may justifiably be broken to further a higher purpose, such as saving human life. The classic example is ignoring a "no trespassing" sign to rescue a toddler drowning in a swimming pool. The theological defense is that, if unborn children are indeed our neighbors, as Jesus taught, then our response to their violent deaths at the hands of abortionists must be more than to "wish them well" (as James says). The shedding of innocent blood in our

◇

THE BATTLE

communities should be a call to action, as well as to prayer.

This 39 year old pastor has several themes in his ministry, a ministry that began even before he left Denver Theological Seminary in 1979. The first theme is the high view of the local church that he sees in Scripture. God desires to be glorified by the actions of his "body," the church, and the good deeds of individual Christians and parachurch ministry are subordinate to the light that the church ought to be shedding into a dark world. A second theme is the importance of community life and the building of relationships among church members. Reformation Lutheran Church stresses the importance of the weekly "home group" meetings, where members can share their successes and failures and develop a sense of responsibility for one another as they walk out their Christian life together.

A third theme is the role of the church in the transformation and reconstruction of society. For those of a theological bent, this is a reflection of Pastor Bray's eschatology. The *Kingdom of God has already come*, in the person of Jesus, but it is also destined to spread, even as the Gospel spreads, and the church, by its "salty" influence, prevents society from decaying.

Mike Bray makes no apology for what appears to be a focus on the issue of abortion. Not all Christians are called by God to the same kinds of service or sacrifice, but one reason Jesus prayed that the Father not take His people out of the world was so that the Church could confront the enemy wherever the enemy is strong. One hundred and fifty years ago, Christians were in the forefront of the abolition movement, and today a new generation is confronting what may be a greater

evil: the slaughter of innocent children. Pastor Bray was one of the founders of the local Crisis Pregnancy Center in 1982, through which over 600 women each year are provided Christian counseling, material aid, and the Gospel of Christ. He and other members of his church have also opened their own homes to pregnant women in need. Such ministries are essential, he says, and so is political activism, for the battle is great and there are many fronts.

Mike and Jayne Bray now have five children. Their oldest, Elli, is a student at a small Christian school that Mike founded this past fall. His wife provides a Christian education to the others by home schooling. Jayne recently heard "her" case argued before the Supreme Court (there are actually eight other plaintiffs, including her husband, but the alphabetical listing has caused the case to be known to lawyers and headline writers as "Jayne Bray vs Alexandria Women's Health Clinic"), and the court is expected to hand down its decision in early 1992. The question is whether pro-life activity at abortion clinics is really a form of discrimination against women and whether people like Jayne are conspiring to deprive women of their "rights" or acting in good conscience to save lives.

Reformation Lutheran Church had its beginning in 1983, when the Brays and several other families left an ALC congregation that was preparing to merge into the ELCA. When the new congregation looked around for an orthodox and congenial body to affiliate with, the AFLC was there with open arms. Mike Bray appreciates the AFLC stance on congregational autonomy and the inerrancy of Scriptures.

Pastor Bray is indeed a watchman, and his trumpet call does not waver. He remains humble, yet thankful and confident, because the battle is the Lord's.

Both Mike Colvin and Mike Bray serve as part-time pastors of Reformation Lutheran Church, Bowie. The congregation publishes a quarterly newsletter, "Capital Area Christian News," 2927 Tarragon Lane, Bowie, MD 20715.

David Grothe A Faithful Watchman

—by Loiell Dyrud

When news first came that a multi-million dollar gambling casino was being planned for the middle of town, I thought, 'What next!' A statement kept coming to mind: 'the only thing needed for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.' I felt an inner need to oppose it, if nothing more than as a test to see what God would do. We know that God's kingdom is not of this world, but why should such blatant wrong enter a city unchallenged? Proverbs says that the wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion."

This comment by David Grothe expresses the way many people felt in the Thief River Falls, Minnesota, community, but few had his courage and tenacity.

Early last fall the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians sought permission to establish a two million dollar gambling casino in an abandoned supermarket. The Chamber of Commerce jumped at the opportunity to boost the local economy and voted overwhelmingly to urge the city council and

Actors in the Kingdom

These essays were written by Michael Bray during his four-year imprisonment (1985-1989) following the destruction of several abortion clinics in Maryland, Virginia, Delaware and Washington, D.C.

Actors in the Kingdom — Not Clappers in the Audience

—by Michael Bray

\$9.50 includes tax and shipping for U.S. and Canada.

Mr. Bray has remained a pastor of a local church which he helped found in 1984. The essays reflect his zeal for the growth of the Kingdom of God and particularly the reformation of our republic as one nation under God.

Send Orders To:

Reformation Press: 2927 Tarragon Lane, Bowie, MD 20715

**"Not all Christians
are called by God
to the same kinds
of service or sacrifice, ..."**

Bold as a Lion

county commissioners to enter into an agreement with the tribe. A town of about 8,000 in the northwest corner of Minnesota, Thief River Falls has been suffering from the recent agricultural slump. With the boundary of the Red Lake Indian Reservation a mere 30 miles east of the city and the area a frequent shopping center for Canadians, Thief River was a logical choice for the casino.

Though charitable gambling, state lotteries and horse racing have become legal in Minnesota during the last decade, it is the overwhelming growth of casino-type gambling that has caused the greatest concern. Eleven compacts with various Minnesota Indian tribes had already been approved. This is more than any other state. Eighty miles to the north, Warroad has a two million dollar casino, and 60 miles to the south of Thief River is a ten million dollar casino in Mahanomen.

The United States Supreme Court ruled in 1987 that Indian reservations are exempt from state and local gambling laws. In 1988, President Reagan signed a bill creating a mechanism through which states and tribal governments may enter into high stakes gambling agreements. The state governor

and the secretary of the interior must, however, ratify the agreement. Furthermore, in Minnesota, the governor requires that both the city and the county must invite the tribe. The best way, then, to stop the building of a casino rests with persuading local governments not to extend the invitation.

Early in September, the ministerium sent a letter to the local newspaper opposing the casino. As public concern grew, the city council held an informational hearing. Between 500 and 600 people attended and it was broadcast live on a local radio station. Supporters of the casino spoke of the enormous gains for the "dying local economy." Those who opposed it saw it as a moral issue. Several pastors spoke in opposition, including Del Palmer of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. David Grothe said he did not want to raise his family in a town whose main industry was based on vice. He called it "a choice between money and values."

Though the majority seemed to be for a vote on the issue, legal opinion was that the city and county could not spend money on a vote that would be essentially advisory.

Ultimately, the decision to organize and finance the advisory vote was

undertaken by Grothe and a small group of concerned citizens. Costs amounting to a thousand dollars were met largely by contributions.

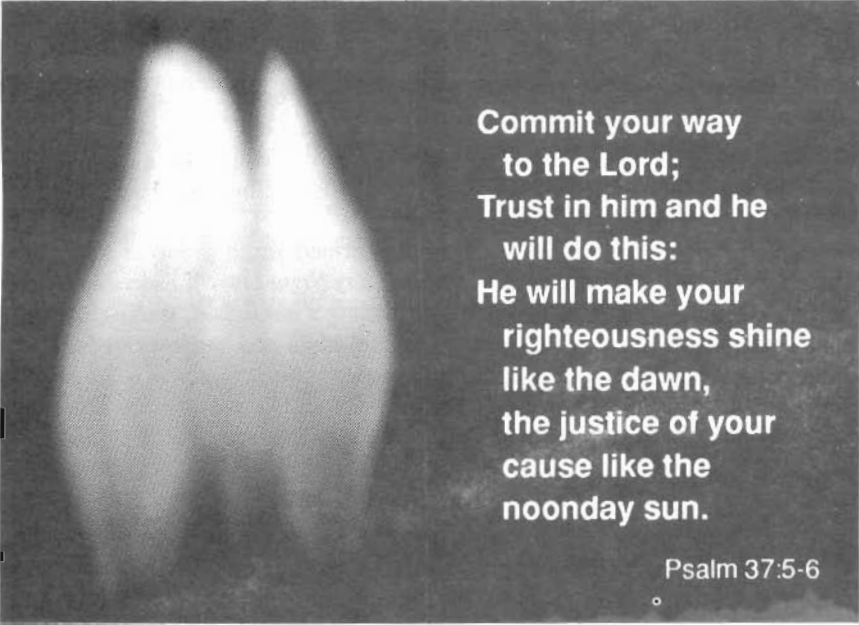
An articulate, sincere, mild-mannered man, Grothe became one of the spokesmen. "I was determined to strive against this in a biblical way, by showing respect for each human authority since every authority is established by God, abiding by the law, making no personal judgments, giving soft answers and relying on the truth. Lincoln said, 'Right makes might.'"

A lifelong member of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, David is the son of Philip and Delores Grothe. After graduating from the local high school in 1975, he attended the AFLC Bible School. Since returning to Thief River, he has worked as a self-employed carpenter. Married to the former Eunice Rokke, the Grothes are the parents of four children. Since 1989, he has served as lay pastor in the Hegland Lutheran Church (AFLC) of rural Strandquist.

Grothe asked the county commissioners and city council to wait until after the October 19 county-wide advisory vote before they made their decisions. The county board agreed to wait.

Two weeks prior to the vote, a strange turn in the democratic process occurred. Some members of the local business community who were for the casino bought several radio and newspaper ads urging citizens **not** to vote in the upcoming election! They felt the vote discriminated against a business and was not binding anyway. It was a campaign, however, that largely backfired.

Over 1,200 votes were cast last October 19 — 191 for the casino and 1,017 against. Both sides claimed victory. Since five and six thousand votes are normally cast in a county election, backers of the casino claimed thousands of people had stayed away and should be considered part of the "silent majority" in favor of the casino. The local newspaper took issue with that view: "In our opinion, non-voters are no voters ... Those who vote are the



**Commit your way
to the Lord;
Trust in him and he
will do this:
He will make your
righteousness shine
like the dawn,
the justice of your
cause like the
noonday sun.**

Psalm 37:5-6

only ones to really express their opinion. To claim otherwise is to merely speculate, and speculation is proof of nothing."

The results of the vote were sent to the governor's office, the city council and the county board. Both boards were urged to vote accordingly. They waited, however, until after the November elections before they finally voted in favor of the casino.

Finally, after nearly a month had passed, the tribe made its decision. The vote was a unanimous **no**! The Red Lake Band decided to look elsewhere, citing racial discrimination as the major reason for not building their casino in Thief River.

The business community was outraged that a few narrow minded bigots had prevented the greatest economic boost in years from coming to the community. What had begun as a money vs. morality issue had suddenly become a progress vs. prejudice issue.

But not all Chippewa Indians were for the casino. In fact, Reiner Lutheran Church, a sister congregation of Our Saviour's, which stands a few miles from the reservation, has several fine Christian members who are also members of the Red Lake Band. They believe the casino is a moral issue and not racial. Unfortunately, many casino backers fail to realize that those who oppose the casino on moral grounds oppose a casino no matter who sponsors it — Norwegians, Germans or Indians. Nevertheless, several letters to the editor in the local paper denounced Grothe as a racial bigot. He has also received phone calls to that effect.

But Grothe remained steadfast: "We need to realize that the heart of the contest is between right and wrong. It is not men against men but God's Spirit against the spiritual forces of darkness."

The whole incident these last months demonstrates what God can do through a few individuals. They are "watchmen on the walls" who are willing to stand up for a moral cause; a cause that in human eyes seemed impossible.

Parish Education

We Can Help You With VBS

It's not too early to be planning for VBS or Backyard Bible Sessions. And even though there are not VBS materials available from the Parish Education office yet, you can call or write to our office for a VBS Curriculum Evaluation Guide to help in your selection of materials. If VBS materials are carefully evaluated and the entire program prayerfully prepared, many lives will be changed by God.

There is a resource for arts and crafts to supplement any materials which will be used for your summer program, S & S Arts and Crafts, P.O. Box 513, Colchester, CT 06415-0513 offers a 164 page full-line color catalog of projects and supplies. For a free copy, call toll free 1-800-243-9232. This company also will send a 42-page supplement catalog which may be sufficient. Projects/crafts range in price from 5¢ to over \$2 each. Many projects are marked indicating an appropriate age group.



Pastors Gray and Severson, Kellie Nelson, Jennie Dahl and Jeremy Erickson.

Rev. Dennis Gray, AFLC Youth Resources Director, is presenting the officers of the Rose/Spruce Church congregations of Roseau with the first copy of "Leadership Helps for Youth Groups."

"Leadership Helps for Youth Groups" is a revision of the Augustana Synod's handbook called "Handbook for Better Luther Leaguers" or "Luther League Handbook." Rev. Larry Severson, pastor of the parish, is holding a copy of the book. His copy was printed by the Augustana Synod before the "Handbook for Better Luther Leagues" was printed.

The presentation was made to the newly formed youth group at Rose and Spruce Churches. They call themselves *Wednesday Night Live*. "Leadership Helps for Youth Groups" also includes articles on leading a discussion, leading singspirations and worship services plus many helpful hints and suggestions for programs and special events in the youth group.

The material is geared to the youth themselves. The previous publication, "Good Counsel for Counselors" is a leadership book for adult youth group leaders. "Leadership Helps for Youth Groups" is a companion to the "Good Counsel for Counselors" book.

Both books can be purchased through AFLC Youth Resources, P.O. Box M, Greenbush, MN 56726, for \$5 per book plus postage.

— Rev. Dennis Gray
Youth Resources Director

The New Age and You

—by Ross S. Olson, M.D.
Minneapolis, Minnesota

What is the New Age Movement, anyway? There seem to be people everywhere wearing crystals or doing Yoga. Some even say things like, "I am God," without getting locked up.

The new Age Movement is basically a set of ideas, very appealing to many people, but not new. The thoughts can be traced all the way back to the Garden of Eden. They did not come from God, although they are close counterfeits. The source is that master of deception, Satan.

The New Age that is dawning is astrological, the Age of Aquarius. (Kids, ask your parents about the 60s.) It is superseding the age of Pisces, which has lasted 2000 years, interestingly coinciding with the Christian era.

New Agers believe that there will be an outbreak of love, peace and psychic powers in the next few years. The entire human race will undergo a leap of "spiritual evolution" so that all who "survive the shift" will become super people. No wonder they are so excited!

But where do they get these ideas? The sources are ancient mystery religions with a view of the universe called "Pantheism," which literally means "All is god." If god is everything and everything is god, then god is impersonal, ("the force be with you"), and we are all therefore god. This sounds special until you realize that everybody else is god, too. In fact, mother earth, the dolphins and even cockroaches are god.

If all is god, then why do we think

there are differences and distinctions? "Ah," say the gurus, "It is because of your habits of linear thinking." What we insist on calling "reality" is actually an illusion created by our minds. We must "break free of the shackles of reason," they say. (Into the blinding white light of stupidity," responded one Christian thinker.)

Believing that they can change reality by changing their minds, New Agers try to "visualize world peace" and think that enough "positive energy" will make it a "reality." But since all is one, peace and war are actually the same thing.

"Relativism" is a natural consequence of this thinking because each person creates his own reality with its own set of rules. Yet, reincarnation, which is also part of the package, says that whether you come back as something "better" or not in the next life, depends on your "Karma," the accumulated weight of your deeds in all past lives.

If this is getting confusing and you wonder why these people worry about changing a world that is not even really there, good for you! You still have some functioning left brain.

The appeal of the New Age Movement is that it gives hope and dignity to human beings who have been told by evolutionists that they are nothing more than elaborate accidents, happening over billions of years, with no real meaning or purpose. Yet it leads to intellectual suicide if a person throws away his mind and listens uncritically to the teachings of gurus or "ascended masters," (who may turn out to be demonic spirits).

"Well," you say, "It doesn't affect me, I can't even get **into** the lotus position." Still, you must be wise and observant.

These thoughts have thoroughly infiltrated our culture. "Guided imagery" has become an accepted instructional technique in schools. It is fine to imagine yourself in a beautiful place for relaxation or have positive thoughts about the upcoming game. But if you start to believe that you can change reality with your mind or if you try to consult "an inner guide," then you have clearly crossed the line. Also, the original purpose of Yoga was not to relieve stress or stop smoking but to achieve an altered state of consciousness which will allow you to see that "all is one."

Business seminars and "self help" courses are hotbeds of New Age teaching. The ideas have even penetrated the church. "Visualize what you want from God," say some misguided Christian teachers, "and it will be yours." This is a clever parody of true faith in which we claim God's promises and make our case before Him but ultimately trust the Almighty and Sovereign One.

As Paul tells us in Romans 12:2, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will."

In addition, we must recognize that people who grasp at the New Age Movement are **actually** hungry for the **truth**, although they may not recognize it. We should follow the instruction given through Peter to "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect ..." (I Peter 3:15).

Dr. Ross spoke at the first Minneapolis "Win Teens" Seminar, held at Living Word Lutheran Church on September 28, 1991. He may be available to speak on the New Age Movement in your church.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Deadline to apply for the 1992 FLY teams to Brazil and Mexico is the middle of February, 1992.

Contact Rev. Eugene Enderlein, AFLC Headquarters
(612) 545-5631 or Rev. Dennis Gray (218) 782-2249.

Plan now to attend the AFLC Youth Leadership School,
July 13-17, 1992, at the AFLBS campus.

From the Miriam Infant Home



Maria Christina



Christiano



Adriano

My name is Maria Christina das Dores and I'm five years old. I have two brothers: Christiano is three years old and Adriano is one year old. We lived together in a one room shack. Daddy was always drunk. When he did come home he would hit us and mommy. Mommy had to work so we could eat. She would leave us alone all day, but still we didn't have enough. We were always hungry and in the winter time we were cold.

All our relatives would not help us because they were ashamed of us and thought our situation was hopeless. We became malnourished and very sickly. Then someone noticed that we were literally abandoned and reported us to the authorities. We were taken away before it was too late.

Today we are happy in the Miriam Infant Home. We have plenty to eat, warm clothes to wear, and are well taken care of. We are so thankful to learn that Jesus is not ashamed of us nor does He think our situation is hopeless. It is written in the big black Book, "... as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things" (II Corinthians 6:10b).

Missionary Connely Dyrud is missing his new brief case, which must have been accidentally taken by someone at the Pastors' Conference. Please contact him immediately if you have it, as there are important documents inside. Call (218) 681-3647. Thank you.

Join Us In Prayer

AFLC HOME MISSIONS

Pray for:

1. Wisdom for the Home Missions Committee as they consider requests from new areas.
2. Funds needed to finish present year without debt and adequate funds to begin new fiscal year.
3. Vacancies and calling of pastors at Warroad, Minnesota, and Spokane, Washington.

Praises:

1. Paul Nash's acceptance of the call to Wichita Falls, Texas.
2. Richard Long's acceptance of the call to Arlington, Washington.
3. Seminary instructors and students who serve Home Mission congregations on weekends.

WORLD MISSIONS PRAYER NEEDS

Pray for:

- Ricardo from the "Miriam Infant Home" was kidnapped by his drug addict mother and boyfriend before Christmas. Pray for him as the police are searching for them.
- The over 250 souls in Brazil who came to Jesus in recent weeks through the ministry of the National church and missionaries.
- The financial situation of World Missions, that needs may be met.
- Wisdom for World Missions as this is not our work but "Jesus only."
- Tom Baker's father who is fighting cancer. Continued strength and full recovery following surgery.
- Missionaries on deputation — safety and wisdom.
- Good health for our missionary family in 1992.
- Our three military chaplains and families as they serve the Lord.
- Dan Giles brief/quick return to minister and assist in some needs with the work in Aguascalientes.

17. What, finally, is another indication of a disciple as seen in Mary? John 13:35

Life Response

On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the highest) how would you score your love:

- a) to the Lord?
- b) to your fellow Christians?
- c) to your unsaved neighbors?
- d) to someone you don't particularly like?

"Love to Mary of Bethany was not just a part of her existence; it was the very breath of her life ... she reflected God's image in her very being, a quality Martin Luther called 'the living essence of the divine nature which beams full of all goodness.'" Edith Deen

Women of Wisdom and The Word

MARY OF BETHANY

Study Verses: Luke 10:38-42; John 12:1-8

"The soul of woman lives in love." Lydia H. Sigourney

Three words can be used to describe Mary — "she loved much." We first encounter Mary in a place of festivity, a banquet where Martha served and Mary sat at Jesus' feet, feasting on His every word. (Luke 10) In John 12, Mary is once again at a banquet, a banquet of gratitude. Sandwiched between these two happy occasions was one of great sorrow, the death of Lazarus, followed by great joy in the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Times haven't changed much. One day we are raised to the heights of joy, while the next day we can be plummeted into the depths of despair, just as Mary and Martha were. Even so, we can be thankful to the Lord that He is with us in all circumstances of our lives.

Contrary to what you might think, Mary was not a dreamy, starry-eyed impractical person. Her most outstanding characteristic was love for her Lord. This all-encompassing love for the Savior drove her to learn from Him.

Mary — Learned From Jesus

1. We first meet Mary with her sister, Martha. What is she doing? Luke 10:39

The phrase "sitting at one's feet" came to mean "being a disciple of someone." An example is Paul, who sat under (the feet of) Gamaliel. (Acts 22:3)

2. Did Jesus consider what Mary was doing as important? Why or why not? Luke 10:42

Simply put, a disciple is a learner, a follower. By allowing Mary to sit at His feet as a disciple, Jesus was doing a radical thing. The Rabbis generally thought of women as being inferior and never consented to a woman learning. Jesus totally ignored the old standard by allowing women to follow Him and to learn under Him. He spoke with them, healed them, and accepted them.

Mary was a true disciple of Christ. Many others were seeking after Christ. Were they all disciples? What constitutes becoming a disciple? Are you a disciple of Jesus?

Clarifying thought: A definition of a disciple is not to be found in listing characteristics of a disciple. For the list of characteristics could vary from person to person. It is a call from Jesus and your response to that call. Jesus gives directions for your life and you follow those directions.

There Are Those Who Are Inquisitive About Christ.

3. Who are called disciples in Matthew 4:23-5:1? What was their relationship to Jesus at this point?
4. Did just listening to the teachings of Jesus make the multitudes “true” disciples?

Before one becomes a disciple, one must first become a Christian. According to Bill Hull in his book, “The Disciple-Making Pastor,” disciples are born to be made. When a person is spiritually born again, he technically becomes a disciple of Jesus. However, this does not necessarily mean that the person will automatically become a mature follower of Christ.

5. According to John 8:31, what qualities demonstrate that a Christian can also be a disciple?

Some People Go Beyond Being Inquisitive About Christ to Being Intellectually Convinced Of Christ.

6. Jesus’ first miracle, the turning of water into wine, illustrates this point. What was the response to this miracle? John 2:11

The disciples believed what Jesus said (because of the signs He performed) but Jesus knew that they still were not “true” disciples. One more test had to be passed.

7. The test came as a result of Jesus’ teaching in John 6. Read verses 47-58. What is that test?
8. How did the disciples respond? v. 60, 61, 66

9. How did the Twelve respond? (Note Peter as the spokesman.) v. 67-69
10. There is an interesting progression in the response of the multitudes to Jesus’ signs and words. What is it? John 6:15, 66, 67, 70

Intimacy With Christ

11. What is Jesus’ definition of a “true” disciple?
12. What does it mean to “take up the cross and follow Jesus”? Are there any consequences of “taking up the cross and following Jesus?” John 15:18, 20
13. What other qualities does a disciple display? John 15:4, 8
14. What does it mean to “abide in Christ”?
15. What does it mean to bear fruit? John 15:2, 5, 8; Galatians 5:22, 23
16. Name two results of bearing much fruit. v. 8; Romans 8:16
 - 1.
 - 2.

Life Response

Jesus has called you to be His disciples just as He called Mary, Peter and the others. He wants you to be committed to Him. Think about your level of commitment to Jesus. Where does He fit in? If you made a list of everything that has meaning to you, what place would Jesus occupy: first, second ... or on down the list? Are pastors and missionaries more committed to Christ than say, lay people?

Mary longed to hear every word that Jesus said. She enjoyed a special closeness to Him. How can we, too, become intimate with Christ? This requires a lesson in our A-B-C’s. (Answers found in NASB version.)

Abide — John 15 (word found ten times in verses 1-10).

Bear Fruit — John 15:1

Commit — Psalm 37:5

Meet AFLTS Seniors



Name: Scott Gray
Address: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Son of: Mr. and the late Mrs. R.T. Gray

Married to: Denise Sahlin
Children: Expecting their first child.

Home congregation: Living Word Lutheran Church, Eagan, Minnesota; David Barnhart, pastor.

Graduated from: Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Pennsylvania. AFLBS.

Special interests: Music, biking, skating and computers.

Personal Testimony: I was raised in a Christian home and in the Lutheran Church. By God's gracious act I was brought to Him in baptism. However, in my teen years, I walked away from God. Several years later I became very disappointed with what I had chosen to put first in my life: a career. Through an amazing series of providential events, the Lord brought me back to His Word and with that back to Him. All of the years of trying to ignore the consequences of my actions had passed by. By God's grace I was given the faith to know and trust that, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). A personal testimony is a testimony of what God has done in an individual's life. God has shown me His patience, wisdom, strength, and love. Christ is the author and perfecter of faith and of my faith, and it is because of Him that I am where I am and that I am who I am.

Seminary Experience: Seminary has been a blessed opportunity to study



Name: Ted Hansen
Address: Chaska, Minnesota
Son of: Mr. and Mrs. Leo H. Hansen

Married to: Cindy Wille
Children: Sarah 9; Heidi, 7; Jesse, 5; Rachael, 3; Kristy, 1 month

Home congregation: King of Glory Lutheran Church, Eden Prairie, Minnesota; Les Galland, pastor.

Graduated from: St. Paul Bible College, St. Bonifacius, Minnesota

Special interests: Astronomy, camping, hunting, fishing, skiing.

Personal Testimony: Although I was raised in a good home and am thankful for loving parents, I did not see my need of Christ and His gift of salvation, until after I left home. One evening in 1974, as I was watching Billy Graham on my television, I realized I did not have any direction or purpose in my life, or assurance that if I died, I would be in heaven. When Mr.

God's Word as taught by godly men. One of the highlights for me was seeing daily that God's Word is both the one true source for understanding God, and also that it provides the only accurate and powerful cure for man's problems. Seminary also provided opportunities to minister the Word. Weekend preaching while on campus and, more extensively, internship in Valley City, North Dakota, proved to be an excellent "lab experience," giving me a time to try and to use what had been taught in class. Denise and I look forward to God's leading in our life, knowing that His will is perfect.

Graham gave the invitation to receive Christ, without hesitation I fell to my knees and invited Christ to be my personal Savior. I think back and recall that as far as I was concerned, it was just another ordinary work day. Little did I realize what God had in mind for me that evening; an evening that was a new beginning for me and changed my life. I am forever grateful to the Lord for what He did that night because I knew that salvation was God's work alone, as I discovered from the words of Jesus in John 6:44: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Seminary Experience: Seminary for me has been, not only a time to study the Word of God, but also a very wonderful time to grow in greater appreciation and understanding of His love and grace toward me. God has instilled in my heart a deep sense of the need for myself and other Christians to answer the call of the Great Commission to "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." I am so thankful for the professors that God has called to the AFLTS who are men of deep conviction in God's Word, and are committed to teaching and upholding it in all of its truth and purity. I also thank my wife and family, as well as the many faithful friends who have given me their loving and generous support in their prayers and words of encouragement. I interned at Green Lake Lutheran Church in Spicer, Minnesota, and am prayerfully awaiting the opportunity to serve the Lord in whatever way He chooses to use me, following completion of seminary this spring.

"Count it a blessing when God delays the answer to your prayer for a time in order to enlarge your capacity to receive."

— Keith L. Brooks

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

I wonder if other readers caught the significance of the casual mention on page 14 of the December 24, 1991 issue: "Due to a treasury surplus, congregations (in AFLC's Illinois District) were requested not to send any donations to the district until further notice."

In today's recession-prone economy, with every conceivable organization scrounging for funds to stay afloat, here is one church group that says: don't send us more money, we have more than we need? That is almost incredible enough to send to Ripley's, or maybe to the Guinness Book of Records. I never expected to read this in the *Ambassador*!

The series of articles on "I Look Not Back ..." the poem by Annie Johnson Flint, is quite well done and a unique idea.

Rev. Edward A. Johnson
Marion, Indiana

To the Editor:

I commend the wisdom ... of selecting Pastor Kermitt Grundahl to do the "Light on the Way" series. I read each one with delight. As I have told Pastor Grundahl at least half a dozen times since I had him as a teacher at LBI in Minneapolis, I thought he

was "my best prepared teacher." His lectures were filled with verse by verse insights ... gold does not float on the surface of the stream.

I also know his family, and rejoice in their walk with the Lord. What beautiful stepping stones Pastor Grundahl has and is laying for those of us to walk on as we press towards the goal of the upward call of Christ. Truly, his students respect and love him. I hope he is still used for Bible camps and conferences, and for future articles.

Pastor Grundahl, may every gift God has given you mature and grow and flower. May fragrances of His best will surround you in this hour.

Dale M. Stone
(LBI class of 1961)
Maple Grove, Minnesota

To the Editor:

Our sincere thanks to everyone who prayed for Bernhard Anderson several years ago when he was very ill with rheumatoid arthritis.

We began to attend Hosanna Free Lutheran Church, St. James, Minnesota, in 1987, when it was organized. Dr. Monseth and Seminarian Steve Snipstead served us along with others. We appreciate all the prayers on our behalf from our congregation.

For over two and one-half years now, my husband's illness has been in remission. Our doctor says there is no doubt it's from a "higher power" as he expected Bernhard to be in a wheelchair by now. Rather, he is farming again and does not take any medication for arthritis.

We are so grateful to God for His lovingkindness to us.

Lucille Anderson
Madelia, Minnesota

The AFLC February Promotion Calendar Parish Education

Pray for the Director:
Mrs. Katha Tjelta
and the Board Members:
Rev. Wesley Langaas
Dr. Mary Lindquist
Mrs. Barb Stueland
Mrs. Barb Moland
Rev. Richard Anderson

AFLBS Awarded Grants

Association Free Lutheran Bible School (AFLBS) of Minneapolis has been awarded two grants totalling \$10,000 from Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL).

A \$6,300 grant will be used to provide scholarships to 16 students in need. The grants will provide half the tuition for one quarter. The remaining funds will be used to print brochures and posters describing the opportunities for learning and service that AFLBS offers to students. In 1987, AAL funds were used to print similar materials.

"In the past, our brochures were distributed by gospel teams, Christian ministry teams and choirs, and the result was an increase in the number of students attending AFLBS," said the Rev. Donald Greven, project director, "The grants will also be a source of real encouragement to all who receive them"

A \$3,700 grant will be used by the AFLBS choir for travel to congregations in Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Maryland, New York and New Jersey. In 1989-90, AAL supported the choir tours to other states.

CAMPUS



Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) representative Barbara Hendricks is pictured presenting a grant to Dr. Francis Monseth, seminary dean, for the support of the special continuing education program at AFLBS.

Bible School Schedule

February 2-5 — Missions Conference

February 3 — Day of Prayer

February 20-23 — Quarter Break

February 24 — Spring Quarter Begins

March 27-29 — Campus Days

April 4-17 — Choir Tours. The Choir will travel to the East Coast, and the Choral Club will visit Canada and the West Coast.

April 4-20 — Easter Break

May 22 — Spring Home Concert (8 p.m.)

May 23 — Graduation (1 p.m.)

AWAKE, JERUSALEM, ARISE!

It's time for the church to wake up. The words of the great chorale by Philipp Nicolai are a fitting way to highlight the theme of this issue, as we focus on the ministry of watchmen in our midst. In Bible times, the watchmen were soldiers or sentinels who guarded the walls of a city to sound the alarm in the event of an enemy attack. The word can also be used in a contemporary sense to describe pastors and lay Christians with a special sensitivity to some of the dangers in our day, and who are called to warn God's people that it is time to wake up. Sometimes they find themselves forced into positions of leadership, usually not of their own seeking, and frequently they are misunderstood and misinterpreted, even by other Christians.

The ones of whom you will read in these pages are few in number, but far-reaching in influence. Others could have been included, who serve as watchmen in our local congregations and communities with considerable effectiveness but less public attention. Perhaps some of our readers will not completely agree with the positions where these men have drawn the line and purposed to stand. This is our privilege, of course, but then it becomes our obligation to state where the line should be drawn.

It was one of the great evangelists who said, when confronted by a critic of his evangelistic methods, "I prefer my way of doing it to your way of not doing it!"

The days are dark, and there are countless challenges for the church to face. You can't do everything, but you can do something. Maybe God is calling you to wake up and be a watchman, too.

If not here, where? If not now, when? If not this way, what way? If not me, who?

THE LADIES AID

The caption above probably dates the author, for our churches rarely refer to their women's organizations by this name anymore. Today there are WMF's and LCW's ... my congregation is certainly the only one with a DWWC ... and "ladies aid" begins to sound a bit quaint and old fashioned to our modern ears. But is the concept as well as the name also in danger of becoming outdated?

My credentials for daring to address this issue include attendance at more women's meetings than many women. I can recall almost 30 years of changes in this area of church life, having ministered in congregations where the ladies aid once served regular dinners to the community, and where many of the meetings brought both men and women together for the good pro-

grams and generous lunches. One rural congregation used to depend on the aid to cover the fuel oil bills during cold winter months, and more than a few church treasurers have turned to the women's organizations for financial help during hard times when the Sunday offerings were slim.

Times have changed. Today it is highly probable that most of the women in an average congregation are employed outside the home (56%, according to a recent study), and those who aren't often find themselves locked into the incredibly fast lane of racing back and forth to school and community activities multiplied beyond the imaginations of an older generation. Some predict that time itself will soon be perceived as our most priceless resource.

This means, of course, that many women will choose to opt out of the WMF's and circles in our churches. The decision will be made by some due to the demands of a full schedule; unfortunately some will also decide that the value of the meetings and activities does not deserve the commitment required of their more valuable time resource. One of the factors that inspired this editorial was the news that a fine Lutheran congregation of 500-600 members in our county witnessed the disbanding of their women's organization, as well as reports from pastors of other ladies' groups where most of the active members are so advanced in years that they may be only a few funerals away from a similar drastic step.

Some of our patient readers will protest that their WMF's are functioning just fine, thank you. Great! If something isn't broken, don't try to fix it. Others, however, will closely identify with the comments in this editorial, and seek to find solutions to the challenge of encouraging vital and vibrant women's organizations in our congregations. The executive committee of our local ladies' fellowship met a couple of months ago to face some of these same issues, and creative responses for 1992 were formulated, including a closer relationship with the national WMF, unique and useful projects (a kitchen shower for one of our district home mission congregations), and a variety of meeting times. What may be old for one church could be new for another.

The day of the old fashioned ladies aid may be long gone, but the need for living and active women's organizations has never been greater. Our resources are abundant in Christ and adequate in the congregations. May our response be acceptable to Him and appropriate to the changes and challenges of this closing decade of the century.

PEOPLE and PLACES

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Second-Class

The furlough address for Missionary **Dan and Debbie Giles** is 12825 15th Avenue North, Plymouth, MN 55441.

Rev. Richard Long, Chillicothe, Illinois, has resigned as pastor of Our Savior's Church which he has served since 1988, in order to accept a home mission call from Atonement Lutheran Church, Arlington, Washington. His last Sunday in Chillicothe will be February 16.

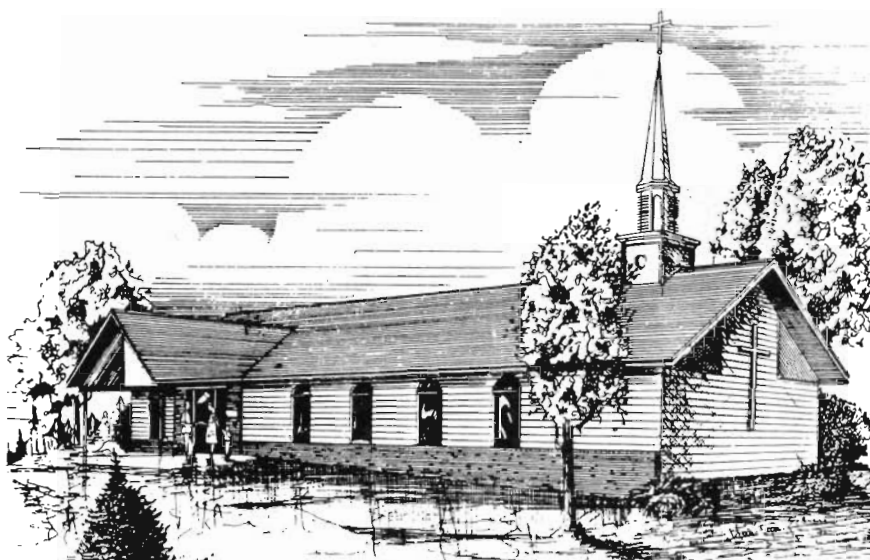
Bible Conferences

Fargo, North Dakota — St. Paul's Free Lutheran Church, 1603 North 5th Street, will host a midwinter Bible conference for congregations from a four-district area on February 7-9. The theme is "Declare God's Wondrous Works — Generation to Generation," and the speakers will be Dr. Craig Jennings, Pastor Merle Fagerberg, and AFLC President Richard Snipstead.

Minot, North Dakota — Bethel Free Lutheran Church, served by Pastor Jerry Moan, will host a regional midwinter Bible conference on February 7-9, with the theme, "Great is Thy Faithfulness." Speakers will be Dr. Francis Monseth and Rev. Jon Wellumson, and Mrs. Candice Johnson will address the Saturday afternoon WMF luncheon.



The construction of the AFLC Administration Building is well underway. Volunteers to help with the inside work are needed. Call Rev. Les Galland (612) 545-5631 for more information.



Janesville, Wisconsin, Trinity Congregation dedicated their new church home on Sunday, December 1, during a 3 p.m. festival service, with AFLC Home Mission Director Elden Nelson officiating. Approximately 250 people from that southern Wisconsin community and neighboring Illinois District churches filled the sanctuary to overflowing, and a fellowship dinner was served to members and guests following the program. Pictured are (L. to R.): Rev. Elden Nelson, local Pastor Ken Thoreson, and Herb Durner, Chairman of the congregation.