

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

February 5, 1991



LIGHT on the WAY

meditations on God's Word

COVER

Artwork by Cary Dietsche

Volume 29 Number 3

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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

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Subscriptions: \$11.00 per year.

Write to:

The Lutheran Ambassador

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

All communications concerning contents of this magazine should be addressed to: Editor, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441.

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

USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413

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

Sanctification

Jesus said of the Holy Spirit in John 16:14, "He (the Holy Spirit) shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." I Corinthians 1:30 reads, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." When we consider what sanctification means, then we will also see that it is provided for us in another Person outside of ourselves. Our sanctification is provided in Christ Jesus.

We understand that we do not become sinless, but we sin less. We recognize our sins and deal with them according to the Spirit's guidance. Our desire will be to forsake sin and conduct ourselves so that we are not a stumbling block to those who have not yet entered into the new life that is to be had in Christ Jesus. This is what it means to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ. This is the sanctification process in our life here on earth.

We are not talking here of just living a better and cleaner life. Many are able to do this in their own strength, and we thank God for all those living good and moral lives. Surely it makes for better living conditions. We are speaking, however, of spiritual life — the Holy Spirit dwelling within us and making us children of the Heavenly Kingdom. This life is revealed in us and through us by the work of the Holy Spirit. We cannot accomplish this without His guidance and direction. We must always remember what it says in I Corinthians 4:7, "And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hast not received it?" The apostle Paul is warning believers that it is by the work of God

that we become the children of God and it is God who gives each of His children what they need and therefore none can boast of what they have accomplished. This is why Paul says in I Corinthians 15:10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am." And in the last part of the same verse he says how he laboured in his service for his Lord but is quick to add, "yet not I but the grace of God which was with me." Yes, if we are to glory let us be sure to give the glory to God.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to sanctify us through the reading of the Word so that we will live, talk, and act according to God's will. We need to pray as David, "Teach me thy way, O Lord and lead me in a plain path..." (Psalm 27:11). Ephesians 4:30 reads, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. In Galatians 5:25 we are commanded "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." We must be willing to be obedient to the Spirit's guidance in order to grow in grace and knowledge. Then it will be as the psalmist writes in 16:11, "Thou wilt show me the path of life, in thy right hand there are pleasures for ever more."



— by Rev.
Alvin Larson

The chaplain of the United States Senate, Dr. Richard Halverson, phoned me recently to share his concern for revival in our nation. During our conversation he made this keen observation: "There is a revival in our land of the need for a revival."

Strangely, though, churches are missing revival even while they are praying for it; missing it while quoting Scriptures — like II Chronicles 7:14 — which promise it; missing it like a person searching for gold and not seeing the precious nugget in front of his eyes!

Our Focus

We miss it by *generalizing*: praying for "a great revival in our land." Or by *futurizing*: "When revival comes mighty things will happen." At the same time we fail to heed plain Scripture which calls us to repentance — a repentance which will bring awakening to our churches. A minister friend of mine related how he went to hear a man of God preach on revival. He was shaken when the preacher began to pray for some big, *general revival*. "We are here to *be revived!*" In that very hour renewal began in my friend, and he has been used in revival ministries ever since.

The New Testament does not focus on some "great, general revival," not even on revival in the total Body of Christ, as much as this is needed. What appears consistently in the New Testament is an emphasis upon the *local congregation*. The Church began this way in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost and then continued to mother other churches after its model.

The local church is the basic unit for the major working of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.

There we read of "the church of the Thessalonians" ... "the church ... at Corinth" ... "the churches of Galatia." Finally, in Revelation God clearly sounds out His last word: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Seven times! There is nothing else like that emphasis in all the Bible. One would think we would wake up and get the message!

GOD IS CALLING US TO REVIVAL

— by Rev. Armin Gesswein
Used by permission from
the Alliance Life.

Is it not strange, in a day when we fight for the inerrancy of Scripture, how we fail to heed its plainest commands and promises? God has designed holy Scripture so that the main things are the plain things and the plain things are the main things. And no instruction from God is plainer than that which calls individual churches to repentance and renewal.

The problem is with our priorities. We procrastinate and postpone terribly. Secondary concerns crowd out the primary things. We major in minors. Desires get the better of holy disciplines. First things are no longer first. *Things* become first and use up our time.



"The local church is the basic unit for the major working of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament."

Jesus counters all this with one very plain and penetrating word: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness".... It is mightily important to make the distinction between praying for a general widespread awakening in the land and a specific local revival in a congregation.

I nearly bounced out of bed one morning when this thought came to me: *The only thing our blessed risen Lord left behind on planet earth when He ascended to heaven was a little prayer meeting!*

I could not get over it. "Dear Lord," I thought, "I can't believe it! Is that all? Don't you have something else? Some alternate route? What on earth are you going to accomplish with that little meeting, especially in the city of Jerusalem where they crucified you?"

His reply was swift and sharp. "What am I going to do with that little prayer meeting? Just read the Book of Acts and watch! You will quickly see what I am going to do with that little flock. I am going to change the world with that little prayer meeting!"

God continued to speak. "And I am going to teach you what a prayer meeting really is and what I can do with it. Very quickly that praying group is going to become my new Church on earth. It will be my greatest wonder in the world, the most powerful force I have ever put together — so mighty that even the gates of hell will not prevail against it! It will be my model for all churches and for every revival in churches to the ends of the earth and to the end of the age."

We Can Do Something

It all comes down to this: *Revival in our churches is as near as our prayer meetings.* Not only Scripture but all church history shows that no revival has ever come any other way.

This would seem to make it all quite simple — but not easy. Right here we need all the encouragement and help we can get.

We must repent and reset priorities. We must quit procrastinating. We must build up the prayer life of our churches





Did Revival Come?



An important part of the AFLC's 25th anniversary observance was "A Year of Prayer" followed by "A Year of Revival." As we observe our current situation, we ask, did revival come? I believe, if we are honest, we must admit that all things are as they were from the beginning of our AFLC. Is this too harsh an evaluation? There have been some little "pockets" of revival here and there; but nothing that can remotely be called a widespread spiritual awakening.

Did we not pray enough? Only God can know how many of us earnestly prayed. Perhaps the most revealing test of our desire for revival is whether or not we are still praying for such a visitation today. I shall always remember Pastor Bob Lee's question, "How do you promote a prayer meeting?" The answer is obvious. You cannot, and if you try, it really does not work. Only our blessed Holy Spirit can move us to pray, and our first prayer should be, "give me a burden of prayer." Even so, we should encourage each other to pray!

Is revival really needed? Again, if we are honest, we must admit that it is. I personally must answer some searching questions. The answers reveal whether or not I need to be revived. Do I have a burden for souls? Is my prayer life fulfilling, or just barely "observed." When was the last time I witnessed to anyone? Am I filled with resentment, jealousy, and envy? Am I quick to believe ill of my friends, or my pastor? Do material things possess me, or am I

yielded to my Lord in tithing? Do I practice secret sin? Is my thought life pleasing to my God? Do I practice daily repentance of sin? The questions pertaining to our daily life truly do measure our spiritual temperature.

Perhaps our need of revival may be measured in our corporate congregational life. Are we satisfied with status quo? Are we militantly correct orthodoxically, but less than alive spiritually? When was the last time a soul was saved? Is it easier to attract a crowd to a concert than to a prayer meeting?

I believe we must respond yet today to the theme verse of our 25th year. "If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (II Chronicles 7:14).

I praise God for our blessed AFLC and for my own church. I am grateful for our Seminary, Bible School, missions, and our God-fearing leadership. I am grateful that the Word is preached in truth and purity. I am most blessed with the countless gifts our loving Father has given; most of all for salvation in Christ Jesus. All of us have been richly blessed. In gratitude, then, let us continue to pray for real, widespread Holy Spirit wrought revival. "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!"

— by Clifford Johnson
Esko, Minnesota

GOD CALLING

in every way — the personal prayer life, the praying of prayer partners, the family altars, every kind of group praying and prayer fellowships and meetings of the total assembly.

In this vein, well-planned *prayer conferences* throughout our churches can be a mighty help. Just as well-planned missionary conferences have maintained and increased the vision of

missions so also conferences on prayer can refocus our understanding of the importance of prayer.

Can we possibly improve on Jesus' plan for revival in our churches? John Chrysostom said, "God can refuse nothing to a praying congregation!"

Rev. Gesswein, founder and director of the Ministers Prayer Fellowship, lives in San Juan Capistrano,

California. He was trained for the ministry in the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, and has served for many years as an interdenominational revival evangelist. His teaching on the relationship between prayer and revival will long be remembered by those who attended the 1986 Summer Institute of Theology at our AFLC Seminary, when he lectured together with the late Dr. J. Edwin Orr.

A South Dakota

Pastor's Wife Recalls the Revival that Continues to Bless

— by Mrs. E.W. Brandt
Garreston, South Dakota

"There were those who thought it foolish to have meetings in June when farmers would be busy putting up hay. But we went ahead anyway with prayer meetings in preparation. Rev. Hax was a quiet man. When the second week of meetings began, he keenly sensed a special moving of the spirit. That's when he gave altar calls and things really began to happen."

— Mr. Earl Nelson
on the Lake Preston
area revival.

PROPHETIC BIBLE CONFERENCE
Coming Events in the Light of Scripture
June 6-18, 1965
Speaker: Rev. Theodore B. Hax
Lake Whitewood Lutheran Church
North Preston Lutheran Church
Everyone Welcome
Plan — Pray — Attend

Little did we know when this flyer was spread throughout the communities surrounding Lake Preston, South Dakota, that it was announcing a revival which continues today!

My husband had been reading articles written by Rev. Theodore B. Hax of the Lutheran Bible School in Los Angeles. One day during my husband's prayers for his parishioners in Lake Preston, the Holy Spirit prompted him to ask Pastor Hax to come for special meetings. Pastor Hax was a student of Bible Prophecy and my husband had read that, to encourage revival, preach on the Second Coming.

I will never forget the day we received word that Pastor Hax would indeed be coming to Lake Preston.

Preparations for these meetings began immediately. We gathered weekly for Bible study on the Second Coming. We prayed. Revival means restoration to life and to use! Claiming Philippians 2:9-11, we prayed believing that God heard us and that He has all power in heaven, on earth and under the earth. Our fervent prayer was that God would bring a work of repentance and faith to each of our hearts and lives.

June 6, 1965, had arrived. As the evening services went by, we saw things happening. We started singing about one-half hour before the service began. People arrived earlier and earlier each evening ... in order to get a seat. One farmer was overheard asking another farmer, "Why are you here? Your alfalfa is really high and ready to cut." The response: "I just can't stay away. I want to hear what is being said."

The Holy Spirit was at work. Rev. Hax had never had an altar call, but he knew there was now a need for it. Many came forward each night while we sang "I Surrender All."

Over eighty souls came to the altar those two weeks. Likely there were more who also invited the Lord Jesus into their hearts and lives during that week who never came to the altar. Two older men in our parish had been praying for revival for many years. They were filled with thanksgiving for the joy of living to see it actually come.

The effects of this revival continue today. Many of these people have become members of the new AFLC congregation in Arlington, South Dakota. One lady recently joined the Home Mission congregation in Sioux Falls. She, too, had given her heart to the Lord during those meetings in 1965.

Three AFLC pastors came out of this revival: Rev. Elden Nelson, Rev. Michael Brandt and the late Rev. Norman Tenneboe. Though God has taken Norman home, the memory of the Lord's work through his life continues to bear fruit in the lives of many.

Can revival continue? Yes, when we truly mean business with God, He hears us.

"Come and hear all you who fear God, and I will tell what He has done for me. I cried aloud to Him, and He was extolled with my tongue. If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But truly God has listened. He has given heed to the voice of my prayer. Blessed by God because He has not rejected my prayer or removed His steadfast love from me!" (Psalm 66:16-20)

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom; preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction (II Timothy 4:1-2).

I yearn for a revival in the Lutheran Church. Not a renewal or a season of encouragement, but a genuine Holy Spirit revival which will resurrect the church. This revival will not come by man's innovative programs. It will not sneak in through tricky advertising or through subtle images in sermons preached by master orators. Revival will come only by prayer and faithful preaching of God's Word.

In 1735 Jonathan Edwards preached his sermon, "Sinners In the Hands of an Angry God", and the Great Awakening was ignited by the Holy Spirit and spread like a burning fire. History tells us that Edwards read his sermon from a manuscript in a dull voice, and

A Solemn Charge

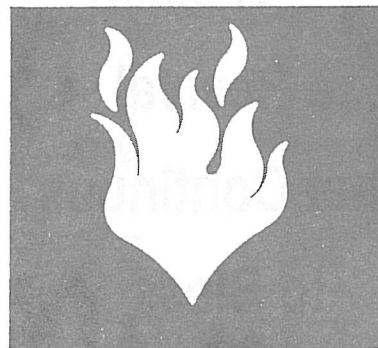
at its conclusion, he gave no emotional appeal in the form of an altar call for the people to respond. Yet that night in the community of Northampton, scores of people cried out to God for mercy and their voices filled the town and echoed off the streets.

Edwards described the Awakening: "From day to day, for many months together, might be seen evident instances of sinners brought out of darkness into marvelous light, and delivered out of a horrible pit, and from the miry clay, and set upon a rock with a new song of praise to God in their mouths" (**A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God**).

I confess I have fallen prey to the inviting ploy of the TV preachers, relying on music to stir the emotions of the people, preaching a sermon filled with beautiful images, and then finishing with a breath-taking story that brings tears to even the hardest of hearts. May

God forgive me whenever I rely upon my feeble wisdom and rhetoric at the expense of prayer and utter dependence on the Holy Spirit!

We have no right to "rebuke, reprove, exhort," until we have preached as if our life depended upon it, because the lives of our people do depend upon the Word of God. We dare not prance into the pulpit like a rookie horse to the gates of the Kentucky Derby, if we haven't prayed our



**A testimony
by Harvey Dyrud**

Spiritual Revival in the Newfolden Minnesota Area

We, the children of Petter and Marie (Hanson) Dyrud, were brought up in a Christian home with devotions morning and evening. Mother was of a loving and tenderhearted disposition, and father of a stern nature, but both were concerned for our spiritual welfare, not wanting us to be overcome by worldly pleasures, but that we personally yield our hearts and lives to Jesus. By the grace of God, this became a reality.

I was confirmed December 2, 1920, at the age of 14, but the vows were not

taken seriously. I felt more at home with unsaved friends than with Christians, although evangelistic meetings brought conviction of sins. The years of 1921-23 were spent mostly at home and working for neighbors. All of the next farming season was spent working away from home. In the spring of 1925, Dad needed me at home. An incident occurred, which made a deep impression on me. While plowing the garden with a team of unruly mules, I lost my temper and swore a horrible oath, not seeing mother approaching. She confronted me with mixed rebuke and sorrow. "Just think, Harvey, if you should die now." This was food for thought. Little by little, the Lord Jesus was preparing this erring and rebellious young sinner for a better day. Within a couple months, he will have to come to the crossroads, where the most important decision in life was to be made.

On a Sunday evening in July, at the last session of a series of revival meetings conducted by two students, Adolph Pederson and Thorval Terge-

son, from the Lutheran Brethren Bible School in Grand Forks, North Dakota, the preaching was such that the Holy Spirit's convicting power was keenly felt. I was leaving the church, but a good friend, William Lein, followed and pleaded with me to be saved by accepting Jesus. My resistance was broken at last, and I was prayed for and accepted into the loving fellowship of believers. By God's grace, the new life in Christ was mine.

After a few days of enjoying my new-found life in Christ, I entered into several weeks of agonizing spiritual struggle, which has not been my lot since. I lost all assurance and felt the agony of separation from Jesus, which will be the fate of all who reject God's salvation — Luke 16:19-31. I became physically weak for some time. Mother's prayers and counsel never ceased, including the concern of all our family. Also the counsel and prayers of our Pastor John Hjelmeland and other faithful Christians were a great help. Little by little, assurance and peace came to my troubled soul. Thanks be

way through the sermon before we preach it. And I mean really pray.

It is one thing to casually fling a few prayers at the throne of God and hope our preaching is full of fire and the Holy Spirit. It is another to fall in the dust on our knees, remembering we are mere clay without the breath of God. Preaching without praying may be a privilege for the smooth talkers, but for those who take God's charge seriously, these two cannot be separated.

Preaching is a solemn charge. Because it is a responsibility that involves the lives of people who hang in a balance between heaven and hell, we dare not depend upon our wisdom, but upon the Holy Spirit. Personally I read Revelation 20:15 before I enter the pulpit. "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." Needless to say, my steps are much slower now when I walk up the steps into the pulpit.

—by Rev. Joel Lohafer
Bruce, South Dakota

to God for His wonderful mercy and grace. He does not leave us in any hopeless state. The recovery can be likened to a slow return to health from a deepseated, lingering illness. Why had I gone through such agony of soul, while others had accepted in childlike faith the salvation and peace through Christ? My assumptions are 1) I needed to experience that hard event in order to be kept from backsliding, 2) to be able to help others who are going through similar trauma.

Philippians 1:6, "Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." I'm joyful to claim the above precious promise.

Harvey Dyrud, who served on the first Board of Administration (Coordinating Committee) for the AFLC, has compiled a booklet on the Newfolden awakening entitled "An Ongoing Revival." Copies are available for \$2.75 including postage by writing to him at Route 1, Box 179, Newfolden, MN 56738.

The Word We Shy Away From

—by James L. Johnson, Intern Pastor
Elim Lutheran, Lake Stevens, Washington

Sometimes the word seems a little out-dated:

Repentance.

We don't like to use that term. It doesn't sound right. Doesn't flow off your lips.

Sounds like the 1930s.

Repentance.

Something your grandma used to say.

Dwight L. Moody wasn't afraid to use it. The great Chicago evangelist, the former shoe salesman, made it his message. Soon after he was saved as a young man, Moody told an audience, he thought he would cruise, take it easy, relax, "I thought when I became a Christian I had nothing to do but just lay my oars on the bottom of the boat and float along," he said. "But soon I found that I would have to go against the current."

That's repentance.

Going against the current.

Repentance means: turning around, stopping the old sins, walking away from the old life; letting the Lord make you different.

A mayor in our city tells a pastor in his home that he can stay — as long as he doesn't talk about religion. Soon after he's talking about religion himself. He and his wife receive Jesus Christ as Savior. They turn around.

A local athlete pursues professional football with his whole heart — leaving eternal matters out of the picture.

Jesus was left on the sideline.

After getting cut from the Pittsburgh Steelers the last day of training, he comes home where the Lord cuts his heart with the Gospel. He's changed. Instead of making gains downfield, he seeks to gain opportunities to witness for Jesus Christ.

Repentance.

Turning around.

Today in the high-tech, pop-psychology world of modern evangelicalism and mega-church thinking, we avoid such terminology. Repentance sounds uncomfortable. It doesn't sell. It's bad marketing.

Silly of us. God never abandoned the idea. He got Paul to preach to people "that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance," says Acts 26:20.

Martin Luther didn't give up on repentance, either, 1,500 years after Paul. Luther said that "only a repentant sinner may have this faith in Christ." And what does it mean to repent, according to Luther?

Answer: "He who truly repents, feels his sin with shame and sorrow, he freely confesses his sins to God, and earnestly seeks the grace of God in Christ."

We don't do that much anymore.

What would happen in your life if you began to feel shame and sorrow for your sin every day. What would happen in your workplace? What would happen to your fellow students at college or at your high school if a pack of Christians started to hate, despise, feel shame for sin.

Most of the time we, unlike Moody, just go with the flow ... and there stands Acts 3:19: "Repent therefore and return, that your sins might be blotted out, and that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord ..."

An ARC Update

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As we begin the new year we would like to share with you an update on what is happening at the ARC in preparation for the Annual Conference in June.

Good News Lodge — A library has been established in the lower level Chapel. We are looking for good reading material to fill the shelves. Perhaps you have some good books that you have read and could share with us as a donation to our library.

Tabernacle — In an earlier edition of *The Ambassador* there was a call to come and work with Leroy! The call was answered! Floors have been jack-hammered and a new ladies rest room complete with lounge and changing area for babies is in the process of completion.

Manna Inn — At this time plans have been drawn up for a 1,900 square foot addition to the Inn. As we look to the future of ever increasing use of the ARC with larger retreats, conferences, etc., seating for our meals is a major concern. The addition proposed will include areas for up to three separate groups to meet in privacy with the use of folding curtains.

It is with much prayer and hard work that the basic "shell and floor" could be finished in time for the Conference. Completion would continue as an ongoing project as funds are available. It is the desire of the ARC Board that funds would be in hand before construction begins and borrowing would not be necessary.

As you read this, perhaps you will be reminded to help in some way; first, pray that the Lord's will be done in all matters, then donate your labor or give financially so the work may be completed on time.

If you would like to share in this project, your contributions may be sent to The ARC, Route 1, Box 92, Osceola, WI 54020, ATTN: Manna Inn Addition. Thank you in advance for your help.

— by *Cliff Seldal*
Chairman, ARC Board

OUR PRESIDENT WRITES

Finding Your Life By Losing It

Then Jesus said unto his disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 16:24, 25).

Christ spoke these words on the occasion of His announcement to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem to suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and the scribes. He shared with them that He would be killed, but also that He would rise again the third day. What He was showing His disciples was that the way to life both for Him and for His disciples leads through suffering and death.

I well remember that in my teen years, these words of Christ to His disciples were the most uncomfortable words in the Bible. I struggled for many years about who was going to control my life. I felt that my life was mine, and I wanted to do with it what seemed to have the promise of the greatest rewards in life.

But Jesus' words are unmistakable. If we make a profession of faith, and claim Christ as Saviour, He must also be Lord in our lives. That involves denying of self, and the "taking up of our cross" and following Christ. There may be among our readers some who still struggle with a surrender to the Lordship of Christ.

What is involved in denying oneself? It basically means that I no longer live for self but for Christ. It involves renouncing all that I desire for self-gratification. I forsake all for Christ. I place my life and all that it offers in service for Christ and His Gospel whenever and wherever He needs it.

The motivating power that leads an individual to such a point in his life is that Christ is given preeminence in one's life. It is done for Christ's sake.

This is the true meaning of the stewardship of Christian life. It involves giving oneself to Christ and forsaking all to follow Him.

Jesus also told His disciples that they must "take up their cross" in order to follow Him. This involves a willingness to suffer all that befalls a Christian either for doing the right or refusing to do the wrong. It becomes a "daily" bearing of the cross that we might share in the fellowship of Christ's suffering and be made conformable unto His death.

Why is it necessary for me to "take up my cross" daily? I do it for Christ's sake. It is a response of gratitude and love to Him for the matchless price He paid on the cross for my redemption. It becomes a witness of my life as well as by my lips that I belong to Jesus.

Is not this where Christian stewardship begins? Christ demands the consecration and the dedication of my life, my all, to Him.

— *Richard Snipstead*

EDITORIALS

REVIVE US AGAIN

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations has revival roots. It is difficult to fully comprehend our emphasis on the freedom of the local congregation unless one remembers that the Fundamental Principles were formed in the fires of spiritual awakening.

Our heritage as evangelical Lutherans is rich with movements of revival in the lands from which our forefathers came ... Spener and the Pietists in Germany and Scandinavia, Hauge and Johnson in Norway, Ruotsalainen and others in Finland, Rosenius in Sweden, Grundtvig and Beck in Denmark.

Revival was more than a memory to the founders of our churches. Many new spiritual springtimes marked the life of Lutheran congregations in this land, too, during the past and present centuries. This issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* is a witness to the relevance of our revival heritage today.

Some students of revival remind us of the sad fact that movements of spiritual awakening are often short-lived. Our studies of the Old Testament confirm this conclusion. "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (II Chronicles 7:14).

Our heritage of revival should be a living hope that leads us to call upon the Lord in all times of spiritual coldness to revive us again.

Revival is not the crowds of mass evangelism. Revival is not the ministry of famous preachers. Revival is not the multitudes converted to Christ.

Revival is something that happens to Christians. The real meaning of the word itself is "to live again." It is to return to our first love through repentance and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Charles Finney called it "a new beginning of obedience to God."

Many critics have pointed out that our church polity in the AFLC is not very practical, listing the perils of a lack of central control over the congregations. The critics are right, and the dangers are real. But they have missed the mark.

The positive side of our polity is that, due to an emphasis on spiritual life instead of organization, a free association of congregations is forced to rely on the power of the Spirit of God rather than constitutional protections. Revival, therefore, becomes essential to our existence as a church body.

This is the ideal, of course. It is tragic but true that a free association can survive without revival, as freedom becomes an empty slogan or an excuse for self to reign.

May God help us to claim the psalmist's prayer as our own: "Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?" (85:6)

FROM ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER

The theme of spiritual awakening brings another verse from the Psalms to mind: "One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts" (145:4).

Elsewhere in this issue a testimony is included, sent to us by one who was converted during a time of revival. Mention is also made of the fact that the author, Harvey Dyrud, has compiled a booklet that tells the story of this awakening.

Are there others who should be writing?

My recent thesis research discovered record of many revivals among our forefathers, but few have taken the time to record their memories of these "seasons of refreshing" to pass on to the generations to come.

There are some of our readers who still remember. Perhaps the Lord would use you to declare His mighty acts to a generation that desperately needs another new springtime. Don't delay!

IN CONCLUSION

The new editor of the *Forum Letter* (12-25-90) suggests a simple rule for the readers of his magazine who wonder about the authorship of various items: "If the piece carries no author's name — and you liked it — then, clearly, the editor wrote it. Conversely, if you did not like the piece or it reveals a gross grammatical, typographical, syntactical or factual error, then we haven't the slightest clue as to who put it there. If we ever find the guy, we will give him a severe reprimand."

I like it!

PRAY FOR OUR SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN IN THE MIDDLE EAST!

Plan Now to Attend Your Annual Conference

Canada: April 5-7, 1991

Faith Free Lutheran Church, Lake Alma, Saskatchewan

U.S.A.: June 12-16, 1991

Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wisconsin

The Soviet Union and Baltic States are in extreme danger after some 70 years of communist rule. As more freedoms are demanded, there is a danger of civil war. The United States is demanding to have a say in the Arabs' oil on their land. The United States, a debtor nation near the edge of collapse financially, is on the verge of total destruction as a free nation by going to war for dollars and oil!

Well, in the last century, we have seen bloodbaths in Russia, Germany, most of Europe, in fact in most of the world. Sure, we have been involved in much of this, too, but we are not a bunch of savages! Most of those people are worse! Is that so? Have you studied and read the documented account of the Civil War, when American brothers murdered brother in the most sickening, unbelievable manner. For what? Free the slaves? Partly, yes, but also the North needed the revenue from the export of cotton.

The point is this! Our country today, government and citizens, faced with the greatest debt in the world, demand part control of the Arabs' oil on the Arabs' land. You are asking for the financial collapse of our nation as it was intended. I am writing to prevent a civil war in our country!

My suggestion is this: that we, and any nations willing to cooperate, develop all our own oil fields which are much more than adequate for the free world's needs — by all means learn to conserve oil and all commodities the Lord has given us. Hussein will have lost all leverage on the world, perhaps he would need help from others for many of his needs! If we as Christians had been as dedicated to our Lord as the Arabs have been to Allah, we probably would not have been in such a mess.

Eisenhower made the statement "I am more afraid of the military industrial complex than I am the Communists." He sure was right. If we as Christians will agree to plead with our Heavenly Father to stop this senseless race, He can stop the whole works — unless this is to be the final war of

A Preacher in Need

I have heard, this word before, just inside the churches' doors,
I wonder why we can't find, a preacher that is in line
with the beliefs of the church, in his mind.

But as far as I can see, this is God's way for plea,
Just to really see, if we know how to pray,
about these needs of today, and to see if we will stay,
with the little church we love, and the man from up above.

Now I'm sure, the right man will come someday, if we all get down and pray,
because the Lord won't let us go astray, as long as we are headed the right way,
The best thing I can see to do, is be good to your fellow man,
and always shake his hand.

Because the preacher is just a man, who tries to help us understand,
the Word of God, you see, the rest is up to you and me.
so if we just hang together, through all kinds of weather,
I am sure we'll be blessed, with the very best,
that the Lord has got for thee.

— by Fred Joens
Eagle Butte, South Dakota

Administration Building Progress Report

With heartfelt gratitude, we are so glad to inform you that giving to the Rise Up and Build Fund has continued to grow. As of January 18, we have received a total in cash and pledges of \$321,000.

We have already reported to you that the decision to build has been made by the Coordinating Committee. Construction will hopefully begin this spring. A good, talented Building Committee is already hard at work.

Please continue to pray much that all the needs of our varied ministries will be met.

Armageddon when Jesus will return!
I'm sure we all want all our service-men home on their feet, not in body bags!

"... but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the Eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey Him" Romans 16:26.

Valdemar Hovde
Minot, North Dakota

In Memoriam

Mrs. Elsie Annala, 85, Ishpeming, Michigan, passed away on November 18, 1990. She was a member of Hope Free Lutheran Church.

Karl Henderson, 78, Devils Lake, North Dakota, a long-time member of Aadalen Free Lutheran church, Fairdale, passed away on October 16, 1990.

Mrs. R.J. (Inga) Huglen, 97, mother of Rev. Raynard Huglen, former editor of *The Lutheran Ambassador*, passed away at her home in Newfolden, Minnesota, on January 2. Her funeral was conducted January 6 at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Newfolden, with burial in the Oak Grove Cemetery.

The widow of a Lutheran Free Church pastor, Mrs. Huglen is also survived by three daughters, Cordelia Agrimson and Irene (Mrs. Merton) Strommen, Richfield, Minnesota, and Valborg, Newfolden; one other son, Rev. Erling Huglen, Roseau, Minnesota; twelve grandchildren, and seventeen great-grandchildren (the youngest of whom was born on January 1); one sister and one brother.

Blessed by her memory.

The Growing Seed

THE PARABLES OF JESUS

We have studied the parable of the sower, the seed, and the soil. There Jesus described how the growth of His Kingdom was stunted by stubbornness of hard or thin or weedy soil; only the good soil produced a crop.

Shortly thereafter, Jesus told this parable, often called the Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly (or silently). Perhaps Jesus wished to teach His listeners that undue emphasis should not be placed upon the condition of the soil. Here emphasis is shifted to the inherent power of the Word. Even in the poorest of soils, the seed has a good chance to survive and grow. That is because growth is of God.

We will find this parable, recorded in Mark 4:26-29, to be one of great encouragement.

1. In review, what does the seed represent?

What does the soil represent?

2. What is said about the farmer that would indicate that, in this case, the sower is not Jesus?

3. Then who does the farmer represent?

THE NATURE OF THE FARMER

4. According to the parable, which of the following character traits of the farmer produced the harvest?

- His skill? His diligence?
- His energy? His intelligence?
- His wisdom? His imagination?

5. Instead, what is said about the farmer's understanding of the growth process?

21. Who is the father of discouragement?

22. What Words of hope and assurance are found in Isaiah 55:10-11?

23. How does this parable teach us that glory belongs to God?

Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. James 5:7-8

God's Word is our great heritage

And shall be ours forever;

To spread its light from age to age

Shall be our chief endeavor;

Through life it guides our way,

In death it is our stay;

Lord grant, while worlds endure,

We keep its teachings pure,

Throughout all generations.

—Martin Luther

Next month we will study "The Wheat and the Weeds."

HYMN SUGGESTION: "God's Word Is Our Great Heritage"
(Concordia Hymnal #91)

THE GROWTH OF THE WORD IN THE HEART OF MAN IS ALSO A GREAT MYSTERY KNOWN ONLY TO GOD.

6. What are the requirements for those who sow the "good seed"? Who must he or she know? John 10:14; 17:3

What must he or she know? II Timothy 3:15-17

How must the seed be sown? Acts 20:27; II Corinthians 4:2; II Timothy 2:15

7. Whose words are crucial to effective witnessing?
Our words? God's words?

8. What did the farmer do after he had planted the seed?

9. What are characteristics of the true farmer/sower of the Word?

- a. Psalm 39:7
- b. Jeremiah 17:7
- c. Hebrews 1:11
- d. James 5:7-8

10. What ought we be doing as God's Spirit works? Luke 18:1; Philippians 4:6-7

11. It is a great comfort to know that someone far greater is also praying. Who? John 17:20

THE NATURE OF THE SEED

12. What do the following Scripture passages tell us about the power of God's Word?

- Psalms 119:11
- Mark 13:31
- John 15:3
- Acts 20:32
- Romans 1:16
- Romans 10:17

Can any of the above references apply to your words?

GROWTH, THOUGH WE KNOW NOT HOW

13. In the parable, how does Jesus describe the step by step process of plant growth?

Conversion to Christ is often a gradual process. C.H. Spurgeon, the great nineteenth century evangelist, wrote, "Some of the best of Christians do not know the exact point at which they were converted; it was a gradual process, from green blade to ripe ear, and they cannot tell exactly when the actual fruit of faith was formed in them."

14. What are the dangers when we forget that growth is of God, and take things into our own hands?

15. The growth of Christian character (sanctification) is always a secret and gradual process. Refer to II Thessalonians 1:3; II Peter 3:18a

16. We must never forget that it is "in Christ Jesus" that we are sanctified. How is this thought expressed in I Corinthians 1:2 and 30?

17. Christian growth is always a growth "in Christ". What desire did John the Baptist express in John 3:30?

18. What sign of Christian maturity was expressed by Paul in I Timothy 1:15?

19. The infant or child who has been brought into fellowship with Christ through baptism must like-wise be taught the Word, diligently and faithfully, in order that he or she might be kept in the faith, and might "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ".

What is the scriptural admonition to parents found in Deuteronomy 6:6-9?

THE HARVEST IS ASSURED

20. What are some of the discouragements Christians encounter as they witness to family, friends and associates?

A Missionary Challenge to Youth

—by Rev. Craig Johnson
Eugene, Oregon

I write this having recently wiped tears from my eyes. I do not cry too often. But I found myself starting to do so while watching the evening news. A special report was given concerning children in Brazil. The government estimates that eight million children in that country have no place to call home. Eight million children are living on the streets, begging and stealing money to buy food, having no bed to crawl into at night, having no regular dinner table to which they can go, knowing no one who will truly care for them and love them. This is something to cry about.

I saw some of these children when I was in Brazil. I remember in particular a little boy in Foz do Iguaçu. His one eye did not look right. He was dirty and it clearly was not because he had just had fun playing. He was wearing clothes in worse shape than the shirt I use for checking my car's oil. He stood there, asking me for money. The image of that little boy is fixed in my mind.

I hope you have a similar image fixed in your mind. I hope you have a vision of the millions of children who are hungry and hurting, lonely and lost. I hope you realize how many children need to be loved and need to hear of the One who loves them so much He died for them.

When I returned to the States from Brazil I became aware of something else that should cause one to cry. I took note of the attitude of some who confess Christ and, sadly, my own attitude at times. We sit in our warm, comfortable homes with little room left in either our bellies or our clothes' closet and we think we have it tough. Many of us live in areas where books, magazines, radio, TV, and churches in large numbers provide us with abundant opportunities to hear what God has done and yet we complain because it is not presented in as interesting a manner as we would like. As we complain

the world starves for physical and spiritual food.

It is difficult to know which is more depressing: the situation of those who are hungry and apart from Christ or the attitude of the one who sees the world's condition and does not care. It all seems to lead to despair. For the child of God, however, despair does not need to be the tune we sing. We can instead have joy and optimism because of the nature of our God. Jeremiah 32:27 says, "I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?" We look at all the needs in the world and then consider our seemingly limited resources and say, "What can I do? It's too big a job for me." It is too big for us, but not for God! Equipping us and providing for us is not too difficult for God. He can send us forth and do amazing things through us.

We can look at ourselves and think, "I could never be someone God could use. I lack the compassion, humility, and Christ-like attitude I need." When we see our sinfulness and our need for God then He can use us. He can change us. He can make us into an instrument fit for His use.

Let us have a clear view of the problems and be humbled. Let us confess our sinful attitudes and lack of compassion. Let us rejoice in God's forgiveness. Let us strive to understand

the power, the compassion, the patience of God and be encouraged.

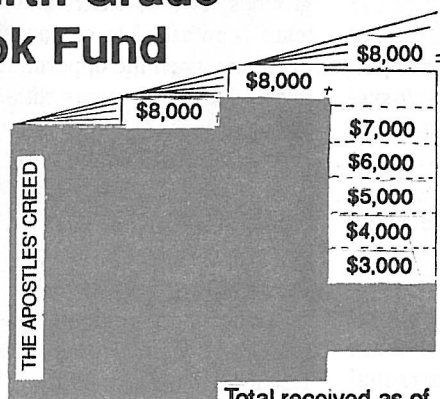
William Carey believed God's call to preach the gospel to all the nations was a command not just for the first Christians but for all Christians. He urged the Church to do more to bring the good news of Jesus to other lands. He met indifference and hostility in 18th century England. The task seemed too big. The people felt too small and other things seemed more important. With courage and confidence, Carey pressed on and God did much work through Him.

Our Church needs young people like William Carey. We need youth with vision and faith who will challenge and encourage the Church to take bold steps in bringing the gospel to those who have never heard. We need people with a motto such as Carey's who said, "Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God."

(In 1992 the Luther League Federation, in connection with our World Mission Department, is sending two Free Lutheran Youth teams out; one to Brazil and one to Mexico. For more information, contact your pastor, youth director or Luther League advisor. The teams are open to young men and women who have completed their junior year in high school.)

Youth Resources Director

Fourth Grade Book Fund



**\$24,000
by April, 1991**

Thank you for
your faithful
prayers and
gifts to the
ministry of
Parish Education

Total received as of Jan. 8, 1991: \$17,889.24



Valley City, North Dakota

The WMF of Zion Free Lutheran of Green Township honored Mrs. Helen Berntson, Mrs. Alma Hager and Mrs. Vivian Welken with Honorary Membership pins.



TIOGA, NORTH DAKOTA

Olga Sather was honored by the Norman Lutheran Ladies Aid in November, 1989, for her faithfulness in serving as treasurer for 39 consecutive years. When she retired, she said, "It was time to let someone else enjoy it."

At the 1950 Ladies Aid Annual Meeting, Olga was elected president and another lady, treasurer. In a later conversation between the new officers, Olga shared her fear of taking the office of president. The treasurer stated that she was fearful of handling figures but did not mind leading the group as president. The officers agreed to switch positions.

For 39 years numerous capable presidents have come and gone, but only one faithful treasurer, Olga. In her retirement, Olga remains an active member.

(Ed. note: Apologies are offered for not printing this item last year.)



Grand Forks, North Dakota

Trinity Free Lutheran WMF presented Honorary Membership pins to Anita Dunham, Dee Gabrick and Adeline Qualheim.

Getting Women Involved in the Ministry of Hospitality

Over the years, the Emmaus Lutheran Church Women, Bloomington, Minnesota, delegated the responsibilities of serving in the church kitchen to the local Circles. An estimated 20-30 per cent of the women actually participated. Nearly three years ago, a new system was initiated with an estimated 90-95 per cent currently involved. Whether your congregation has 20 or 200 women, those are enviable statistics.

Eight food service teams were formed. Every lady on the church roll was called and the coordinator made notations on the list with personal comments such as: "Likes to clean up

... Works nights ... Will bring food only." Each team was made up of women of various ages and backgrounds. Two co-chairwomen for each team were asked to contact their team members when the opportunity to minister arises. The teams rotate and the joy of service is shared. One lady commented, "I just love to come and help. This is the first time I have ever been asked."

Fergus Falls, Minnesota

Two pastors' widows were recently honored by the Home Health Care Department at Lake Region Hospital in Fergus Falls. Mrs. Sylvia Molstre and

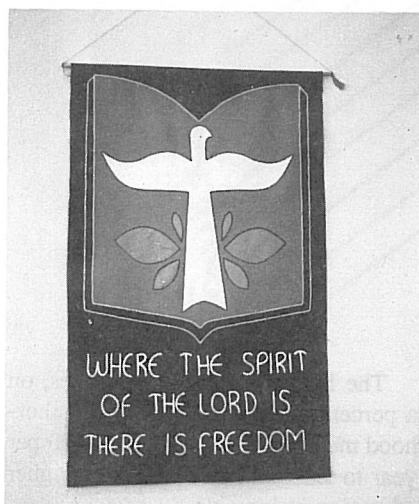
WMF In Memoriams

Mrs. Henry Jackson, Greenbush, Minnesota
 Johnnie Hanson, Battle Lake, Minnesota
 Gloria Lisell, Roseau, Minnesota
 Mrs. Saima Filby, Cloquet, Minnesota
 Harold Olson, McVile, North Dakota
 Melvin Kvilvang, Valley City, North Dakota
 Ole Hermunsle, Abercrombie, North Dakota
 Marie Iverson, Sisseton, South Dakota
 Carl Rasmussen, New Auburn, Wisconsin
 Andrew Hanson, New Auburn, Wisconsin

Mrs. Ida Walla have spent numerous hours working with the Senior Companion Program. They have provided companionship to those confined to their homes.

NEWS OF THE CHURCHES

Christmas is over, but here are some ways AFLC congregations enjoyed the festive season.



BANNER KITS UPDATE

The ladies of Christ Lutheran Church, Wichita Falls, Texas, wish to express their thanks to all who have ordered a banner brochure or a banner kit. The monies received from the kits have gone to Home Missions and our missionaries, the Giles family. Thank you for assisting us with our support of our AFLC projects, AFLC missions and Christ Lutheran Church outreach.

We are in the process of updating our banner brochure. We will include the Lent and Easter season. For those who have received our brochure, you may wish to order our new brochure. We will still include all the other banner kits that we have in the past, but there will be a few changes in addition to the Lent and Easter banner kits.

Again, we state that we offer banner kits and completed banners. However, the completed banners will be more costly.

There is no charge for the banner brochure. If you wish to receive the banner brochure, we ask that you send a **business size self-addressed stamped envelope**. Our address is Christ Lutheran WMF, 4300 FM 1954, Route 6, Wichita Falls, TX 76301.

Thank you for helping to support our ministry!

Trinity Lutheran, Grand Forks, North Dakota, had a 5 o'clock Sunday School Program, fellowship dinner then the 7:30 p.m. Choir Concert all on one Sunday evening.

First Lutheran, Camarillo, California, enjoyed dinner, which featured dishes from Mexico, Scandinavia, Germany and America. The Chancel Choir's Christmas Concert followed at 7 p.m.

Grace Lutheran, Bruce, South Dakota, had both a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 10:30 p.m. and 10 a.m. Christmas Day Service.

Our Savior's Free Lutheran, Drummond, Wisconsin, hosted a Parish Christmas Program put on by Our Savior's Sunday School, Adult Choir and parish members, which included **Drummond Free Lutheran**.



Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran, Calgary, Alberta. On November 11, 1990, an ordination service was held for Pastor Jim Winter. Guest speakers were: AFLC Canadian President Lay Pastor Gene Sundby, and Pastor Al Pinno of Bethel Lutheran in Frontier, Saskatchewan, who performed the Installation Service of Pastor Winter. Also in attendance were many other pastors and greeters from the city of Calgary, and the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Morris, Illinois, sponsored a children's and youth overnight retreat held at the church, Friday and Saturday, December 28-29, during the Christmas vacation holiday. Forty-eight young people, grades three through eight, were present for a time of fun, food, fellowship ... inspiration, instruction and challenge to know Jesus and live for Him. A message was given by a representative from Child Evangelism Fellowship ... games and swimming were held at a local recreational center. Bob and Kim Marx (Supt. of Sunday School) helped to organize this most successful endeavor within the congregation.

Zion-Sarpsborg Lutheran, Dalton, Minnesota, has a Building Committee meeting every two weeks. The congregation hopes to build a new church beginning this spring.

Bethel Lutheran, Frontier, Saskatchewan, has about 25 young people attending the Trailblazers Club, which meets every Friday night. The congregation also has a "Moms in Touch" chapter, which meets every week. The chapter consists of concerned mothers who meet for one hour of prayer for children and the schools.

Emmaus Lutheran, Bloomington, Minnesota, has a ministry to those 55 and above. The monthly meetings for "Young at Heart" (YAHs) features special speakers, Bible studies and lots of fellowship over potluck meals.

United Free Lutheran Church, Greenbush, Minnesota, started a special youth group for grades 4-7. It began just before school started, and over 300 flyers were distributed telling people about United's released time classes, Kids Club, Sunday School, worship services, and confirmation instruction. Meetings for the new group are scheduled every other month.

Light fixtures available: Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Zumbrota, Minnesota, has 10 indoor light fixtures available to give to another congregation. Contact Our Savior's, 1549 East Avenue, Zumbrota, MN 55992, if you are interested.

1991 SCHEDULE FOR EVANGELIST JOHN H. ABEL

February 9-13 — Newark, Illinois (R. Lee, pastor).

February 23-28 — Pukwana, South Dakota (W. Johanson, pastor).

March 1-6 — Radcliffe-Garden City, Iowa (J. Rolf, pastor).

March 9-13 — Willmar, Minnesota (H. Johansen, pastor).

March 16-20 — Bismarck, North Dakota (K. Sletto, pastor).

April 6-10 — Colfax, Wisconsin (M. Bateson, pastor).

April 13-17 — Escanaba, Michigan (J. Nikunen, pastor).

May 4-8 — Canton, South Dakota (R. Knutson, pastor).

May 11-15 — open.

Please pray for these meetings!
"And He spoke for a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1).

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Second-Class

AFLC Schools Continue to Receive IMPACT Aid

The Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary, Minneapolis, has recently received \$1,875 from Lutheran Brotherhood's IMPACT program (Inviting Member Participation in Aiding Lutheran Colleges and Theological Seminaries). The latest payment covers 22 gifts of Lutheran Brotherhood members made during the fourth quarter of 1990.

AFLBS received \$2,675 from the same program during this last quarter.

The IMPACT program matches, on a percentage basis, Lutheran Brotherhood members gifts of \$25 to \$100 per year to Lutheran institutions of higher education nationwide.

Since the beginning of the IMPACT matching gift program in 1979, \$53,278 in IMPACT funds have been received by Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary. The Bible School has received a total of \$125,188. During that same period, Lutheran Brotherhood has allocated more than \$14.2 million on behalf of the 69 participating Lutheran colleges

Ishpeming, Michigan

The program for matching funds from Lutheran Brotherhood was recently used by Hope Free Evangelical Lutheran Church to raise money for AFLC Home and World Missions. "It was exciting to dedicate these gifts in prayer."

HOME MISSION NEWS

Remember the Red River Valley

Christ the King Lutheran Church,
East Grand Forks, Minnesota

"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations" (Mark 11:17).

It is hard to believe that it has already been a year (November 17, 1989) since we dedicated the building we now worship in to be a "house of prayer." I tend to be an idealist at heart and would dearly love to say, "That we have lived up to that commission without detour." But to be honest, this house has at times been a house of hurriedness, a house of frustration, a house of fear and a house of heartache. That should not surprise us, because the "Church" that inhabits the building brings these commodities every time

people walk in the door.

However, that is the church we continue to rejoice in! We are thankful for a floor and walls, especially having spent two years in a hotel across from a "peanut bar." But we are much more thankful for the people that God has led and is leading to be a part of this congregation. That is exciting!

At the present time, we have some 40 member families in Christ the King. A few come from as far as 40 miles away, but most live within the greater Grand Forks area. They come from a variety of backgrounds bringing a great diversity of gifts to minister to the Body and the community.

It is hard to believe that only three years ago this congregation was simply a Bible study group seeking God's direction regarding a variety of mutual concerns. That was the fall of 1987. A few months later, worship services

began at a local motel. Since that time, there have been many steps forward: the beginnings of various ministries to the congregation; the "joys" of erecting a church building and the initiation of a number of outreach ministries (i.e. discipleship ministry, ministry to the hungry, and to the residents of the apartments nearby). During all that time, there have been two constants: the emphasis on God's Word and prayer.

Much has changed in the past few years, but our prayer is that our foundation — being a people of prayer — would never change. It is wonderful to know that in the Father's sovereignty and infinite wisdom He uses the "hurriedness ... frustration ... fear ... heartache" to remind us that we are to "walk on our knees" and not on our feet. We truly praise God who gives all things liberally.