



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

January 11, 1994



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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CONTENTS

Preparing for the Storms	p. 3
Getting in Line with God's Will	p. 4
Getting Free from the Grip of Guilt	p. 6
Baltic Bulletin No. 4	p. 8

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Light on the Way

What a Child!

Have you ever asked yourself the question: "If I could only have one book to read, which book would I choose?" I am an avid reader of a wide variety of books, yet for me the answer comes in an instant — my choice would be the Bible!

How about a second question: "Suppose you could have only one of the 66 books that make up the Bible; which book would you choose?" This question is harder, for the entire Bible is "God-breathed" and "useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16). However, if I had to choose just one book from the Bible to sustain my spiritual life, I would choose the book of Isaiah.

You might ask me: "Why Isaiah? Wouldn't you want a book from the New Testament, a book that tells about Jesus, a gospel like Matthew or John? Or wouldn't you at least choose a solid book of theology, like Romans or Ephesians?" To such questions, I would respond: "Yes, I'd want a book of solid theology ... and Isaiah's writing is saturated with profound truths about God and His plan of salvation for the entire world! Yes, I'd want a book that tells me about Jesus ... and Isaiah's work gives me compelling prophetic pictures of my Lord and His ministry on this earth!"

In this and subsequent columns, I wish to explore with you the names and titles of Jesus as given Him by Isaiah, a prophet who lived about 700 years before Jesus was born. My prayer is that the Savior prophesied by Isaiah will become as real and precious to each reader as He obviously was to the prophet who so beautifully described Him.

As we begin the new year of 1994, we consider a Christmas text: "For to us a child is born, to us a

son is given ..." (9:6). These familiar words take on new vitality when we remember their context. The closing words of Isaiah 8 are saturated with crushing distress, darkness, rage, and gloom. With Isaiah 9, however, the picture changes completely: dazzling light bursts forth and joyous celebration envelopes the entire nation!

What accounts for the incredible change? Three reasons are given in verses 4-6, with the third reason being the greatest of all: a child is born, a son is given. Significantly enough, the Hebrew text clearly places the major emphasis on this child's birth: "For a child is born to us, a son is given to us." Who would ever imagine it? A boy-child is born ... and an entire nation is transformed from gloom to gladness. Clearly this child must be someone special, someone out of the ordinary: this son must be like none other — and indeed He is!

The prophet calls him Immanuel; Wonderful Counselor; Mighty God; Everlasting Father; Prince of Peace; a light and a covenant, a witness, leader, and commander; a Savior and Redeemer; the Root of Jesse and the Branch; the Messiah; the Suffering Servant; and finally the King. What a breathtaking list of names and titles for the child who is born! What an astounding portrait of Jesus, the God-man who came in precise fulfillment of Isaiah's prophetic expectation! What blessed names and titles to ponder as we live in 1994, still awaiting this Son's coming again!



— by Rev.
Jerry Holmås



Preparing for the Storms

— by Stephen Jameson
Freedom Lutheran Church
Earlville, Illinois

A law of nature is that things get worse, not better. This is also quoting Murphy from "Murphy's Law." Those of you with a science background understand the Second Law of Thermodynamics which loosely states that objects do not improve, but instead deteriorate. For example the sun is not going to last forever but will someday burn out.

Viewing the societal environment in which we exist, we see a plethora of moral decay. Words like personal responsibility, shame, sin, dedication, and loyalty are laughed at and ridiculed. Toleration is the "buzz word," toleration of everything, but Christ and Christians.

This is a unique time in which the call to diligence is to be heard and heeded. Bobby Knight once said, "The will to win is not nearly as important as the will to be prepared to win." He was speaking in basketball terms, but we can draw the apt analogy to Satan prowling around as a roaring lion, seeking to devour the unprepared.

Our example is Christ as He, in Matthew 4, dealt with Satan by using the Word of God. According to Ephesians 6 we must be effective swordsmen in this spiritually destitute battlefield.

Looking to the future, I see the need to be positive and give glory and honor to the risen Son of God. When we become disheartened, distressed, or depressed, we take the glory and honor away from Jesus, the winner of the most impressive victory ever recorded. As imperfect man we will not achieve total refinement of character until we meet Jesus face to face. While we are here, we must not let ourselves become slaves to sinful mind sets. We must repent and focus on our Lord, and depend on Him to carry our burdens for us.

We need to dwell on these things we know are true:

1. He loves us more than anyone else does.
2. He is the most powerful entity that has ever been.
3. He created the world with just a word.
4. He won the victory over Satan and death.
5. He strengthens His saints, from Adam until His return.
6. He has given us a Bible full of promises.
7. He has given us forgiveness and a reason to hope.
8. He has made eternal life possible.
9. The list continues ...

Provided we come with a humble heart, Jesus will lead us through the dangerous spiritual battles of life. The battles ahead are many, as this country, that has a rich heritage of being Christ-centered, has now fallen apostate. We are seeing more anti-Christian activity each year. We are living in a nation where those with an active, living faith, or even moral convictions, are in the minority.

Imagine if we were in a world where no one owned shoes. Now picture a man with a monopoly on the new shoe market. He would be extremely excited about the profit to be gained. The shoe salesman has a few problems though: A) Transportation; B) Marketing; C) Advertisement; D) Government intervention; E) Taxes; F) Robbery; G) Insurance; H) Employees/Unions, etc. Yet, the shoe salesman is still focused on his final reward and is not daunted by these obstacles. Why are we as people with the ultimate power of God behind us, entangled by the storms of life, often changing our focus from Jesus?

Looking at the future, being 25 and newly wed provides an exciting outlook amidst the

"Looking at the future, being 25 and newly wed provides an exciting outlook amidst the ominous storms."

Getting in Line with God's Will

I am Pastor David Hesje of Bethel Lutheran Church in Frontier, Saskatchewan, Canada. My wife, Debbie, and I have three children, Michelle, age 11, Daniel, age 9, and last but not least, Turbo Tim, age 2. I am the son of a Lutheran pastor. My wife is the daughter of a Lutheran pastor. We both have uncles who are Lutheran pastors.

Coming from such a background you might think that the decision to become a Lutheran pastor was an easy one. Let me assure you, it was the most difficult decision my family and I have ever made. I have, however, learned to look at three components in knowing God's will for our lives.

God in His Word

The Bible is God's will for us written on paper. This is the most objective way there is to know God's will for us, so we must begin here.

In the Bible, it is clear that God's will is that He wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). In the Bible it is also clear that Jesus has given to us the work of sharing the message of salvation (Matthew 28:19-20).

The Bible tells us that we all have certain God-given gifts which we are to use to fulfill this task (1 Corinthians 12). I see these gifts as

tools. We must discover which tool, or tools, God has given us so that we have a starting point to know what God has prepared us to do (Ephesians 2:10). For me, this was done somewhat through trial and error.



PREPARING

ominous storms. There is present youthful exuberance, but also the reality check of moral decay surrounding my every touch with the world. I am looking at a glass that is half full and half empty. The decisions I make as the head of a young family are dependent upon much prayer and seeking the will of God.

One part of me desires not to bring children into a world that is so vile. Another, that will more than likely win, hears the words, "Be fruitful and multiply." This is done in faith that God is keeping His promises to all generations. This I fully believe. Proper

preparation for the future includes raising up the next generation of missionaries, pastors, and active, responsible laymen and women.

To be properly prepared for the future we need to understand our ultimate goal. Our goal is eternity with our bridegroom. When trials come, and they will, it is imperative that we maintain our focus on Jesus as found in Hebrews 12:2. If the problems take over this focus, we will be lost in the storm. By maintaining our constant contact with Jesus our faith will be a witness to others. Like that shoe salesman, be excited to share this with a world that is desperate for a satisfied soul.

God in us

In John chapter 14 we learn that God's Holy Spirit lives in Christians. We also learn that this Spirit is the Spirit of truth; therefore, we know He is dependable. We also learn in John 16:13 that the Holy Spirit is our guide. As a guide, He is gentle. He will not control us, or force us to do His will. It is particularly important that we learn to recognize His leading and guiding if we are to know what His will is for our lives.

There are two ways to recognize the leading of the Holy Spirit. The first is by the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). If you are following the leading of the Spirit, you will experience the fruit of the Spirit in your life. I pay particular attention to the fruit of love, peace and joy. I am confident that I am following the Holy Spirit's leading when I love what I am doing, when I experience peace in what I am doing, and when it brings God's joy to others and myself. The second way is God in His Word. The Holy Spirit will never lead us where God in His Word forbids us to go. There was a time when I was convinced that God had called my wife and I into public ministry. So far the process was rather easy for us.

God in the circumstances

I believe that God opens and closes doors of opportunity. We have a good example in Acts 16:7 of circumstances convincing Paul that God did not want him to go through the door that led into Bithynia. All we know from this verse is that the door was closed. Paul walked away from the closed door and waited for God to open another door for him. God opened the door to Macedonia so Paul confidently went through it.

This third component of knowing God's will is the one where my wife and I have struggled. It takes wisdom and discernment to recognize open and closed doors. Our difficulty was knowing when a door was shut enough to walk away from it; and when two or more seemed wide open, knowing which one to go through. We have come to understand that when God shuts a door, the fruit of peace will leave. When God opens one or more doors for us to go through, as long as the one we choose lines up with God in the

Message of Hope

As yet another year draws to a close,
I pause to reflect on time's swift passage.
I wonder how we kept up the pace,
Through all the seasons, how did we manage?
Pressures from near and far
Are apt to trap us so we feel alone.
When you feel exposed to the storm's elements,
And, unsheltered from the tempest's attack.
Look up! Jesus is waiting with outstretched hands
And standing firm as a rock He beckons:
"Come to Me, all who are weary and faint;
No problem is too hard, no pit is too deep.
Give Me your burdens and you will find rest,
Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me
For I am gentle and humble of heart,"
Don't give up, saints; don't give in to the stress.
Jesus offers hope against hopelessness,
Be strong and let your heart take courage,
Keep your eyes on Jesus as you run the race,
Know that with Him, all things are possible.

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow!

—by Karen Holte
Word of Life Lutheran Church
Mankato, Minnesota

Word and God in us, we are confident that we are in God's will by going through it.

Let me end with an illustration. A man was out on a huge sailing ship. The ship was heading for harbor at the darkest time of night. The man was concerned because there were large rocks and reefs in that part of the water. The captain calmed the man's fears by pointing out to him three lights that shone in the harbor. From where they were it appeared as if one light was off to the left, one off to the right, and a third light in the middle of the other two. The captain told him they could be certain that they would be safe in sailing into the harbor when all three lights lined up as one. The captain invited the man to watch as he maneuvered the ship so that the three lights lined up perfectly. Once they were all in line and appeared as one, the captain could sail confidently through.

When the light of God's Word and the illumination of God in us, line up with the light of God in our circumstances; we can joyfully and confidently go through the open door knowing that we are in God's will!

—Pastor David Hesje
Frontier, Saskatchewan

Getting Free from the Grip of Guilt

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My load is light,"
(Matthew 11:28-30).

Guilt is such a heavy burden to carry and yet, so many times people try to carry the load of guilt all by themselves. It may be guilt over something you have done in the past or it may be something you have mistakenly left undone. Your guilt may be caused by how you were treated as a child and how your actions or lack of them affect someone else. The burden of guilt weighs heavily upon many people and many do not know what to do. The pressure seems to only increase. What is the Christian to do with this burden?

First of all, it is important that you honestly confess your feelings as you go to God in prayer. Sometimes a person feels such shame that they try to hide or bury their past from the Lord. Unless you are honest with God about your feelings, you are, in reality, shutting God out of a part of your life. It is like having a wound that is filled with dirt. If you deny it exists or try to hide it, it only gets

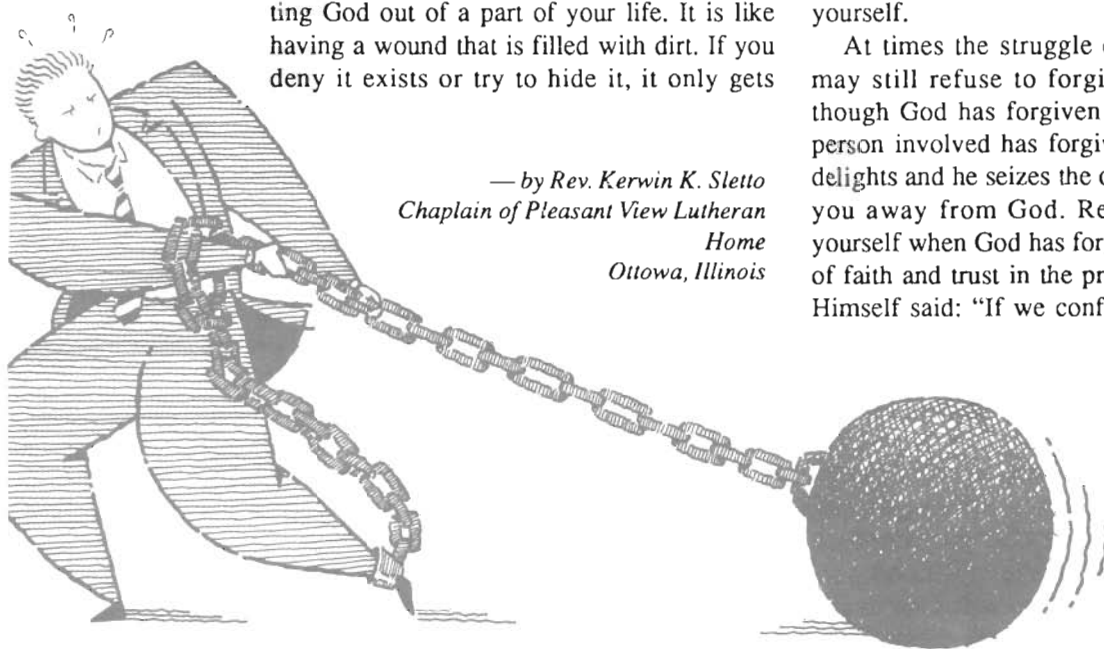
worse. These feelings can fester and eventually take over your entire life. It is the Lord's desire to cleanse you of your sin and guilt; but you need to allow Him to clean the wound. It may be painful as He lovingly cleanses and brings marvelous healing.

Next, God calls you to action. Matthew 5:23-24 states: "If therefore, you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering." When you worship God, He does not want you to be distracted in your worship of Him and in your day to day walk with the Savior.

God will guide as His will is sought. Pray that He will prepare your own heart and give the words you need. Then, pray that God will prepare the heart of the person you plan to speak with. Pray that He will help you to be forgiven and that you will be able to forgive yourself.

At times the struggle continues and you may still refuse to forgive yourself, even though God has forgiven you and the other person involved has forgiven you. The devil delights and he seizes the opportunity to draw you away from God. Refusing to forgive yourself when God has forgiven you, is a lack of faith and trust in the promises of God. He Himself said: "If we confess our sins, He is

— by Rev. Kerwin K. Sletto
Chaplain of Pleasant View Lutheran
Home
Ottawa, Illinois



Beulah, North Dakota, Added to Partners in Planting Program

The fellowship group in Beulah, North Dakota joins two other Home Mission works currently receiving aid through the Partners in Planting Program: Redeemer Free Lutheran Church, Cambridge, Minnesota, and Lamb of God Free Lutheran Church, Topeka, Kansas.

This program provides funds for a mission work until that particular

congregation can be placed in the Home Missions budget. At the present time the North Dakota congregation is being served on Sunday mornings by neighboring pastors and laymen.

The Home Missions Committee is currently working to provide an individual to serve on a regular basis to give continuity to the work.

Milwaukee Congregation Receives Grant

The AFLC Home Missions Department received a \$10,000 grant from the Siebert Lutheran Foundation Inc. The grant will be used for start-up costs of the new Home Mission congregation Servant of the Savior Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The congregation is being served by Pastor Dale Radke.

Lutheran Brotherhood Grant Given to Home Missions

For the past 17 years, the Home Missions Department of the AFLC has received financial assistance from Lutheran Brotherhood that has been used towards paying pastors' salaries.

In 1993 Home Missions received \$40,000 from Lutheran Brotherhood and the funds were evenly divided between the following four congregations:

Christ Lutheran Church, Wichita Falls, Texas

Shepherd's Church of the Valley, Murrieta, California

Shepherd of the Valley Free Lutheran Church, Palmdale, California

Faith Free Lutheran Church, Detroit Lakes, Minnesota

Mondovi, Wisconsin — Pictured is Seminarian Tim Johnson presenting a Bible to third grader David Hestekin at Morning Star Free Lutheran Church. The young Home Mission congregation rents a place of worship in Mondovi and is served on weekends by Seminarian Johnson.



faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," (1 John 1:9).

After prayer, God calls you to further action. Go to the person you need to talk to and be open about your feelings. Confess sin and seek reconciliation. Sometimes a third party needs to be involved as the issue is being resolved. Ask the Lord for His leading in every aspect.

What happens when one's guilt is over sin committed against a person who is deceased? Again the beginning of any healing process is to be honest with God and with yourself. Confess to Him all the things that lay so heavily upon your heart. As I have counseled with people who experience guilt and grief over an unresolved issue and the other party has died, I have encouraged them to write a letter to the

deceased expressing their heartfelt sorrow. Then, if possible, take that letter to the graveside and read it out loud; then leave the letter at the grave or destroy it. Claim the promises of God's Word and the sufficiency of the cross to cleanse from all sin. Christ alone can bring healing and peace to the troubled soul.

We live in a day when Satan is working overtime to immobilize Christians. We need to be unified in faith toward God. Take on the whole armor of God and trust His promises of cleansing and healing. We do not know the day nor the hour of Christ's return nor do we know when He may call us home by death. It is crucial that we daily release the sin and guilt we possess into the hands of Jesus that we might be cleansed and healed, ready to meet Him. Jesus says: "Come ... and you shall find rest for your souls."

100 Years of God's Faithfulness

Tears well up in his eyes when he talks with his pastor about the amazing forgiveness of his faithful God. Born in Stavanger, Norway on

October 24, 1893, Ted Mork has had a long time to thank and praise his Savior who has seen him through these last 100 years.

As a young boy in Norway, he had seen silent movies produced in the United States. He dreamed that one day he too, would be a cowboy. His older brother and sister had already emigrated to America and his father had lived for a time in the U.S. but had returned in 1887 to Stavanger. In 1912, Ted set out to experience the American western frontier. He took a boat to London where he tried to book passage on the Titanic. God had other plans and he was not to board the ill-fated ship. Instead he boarded a boat powered by sail and steam. Two weeks later he arrived in Quebec, tired of a diet of hardtack and hard-boiled eggs.

After two years with his brother in Colton, South Dakota, Ted decided it was time to really go West. He got a job herding sheep in the Rockies for \$75 a month. Two dogs and 2,000 sheep were his only companions. He had no horse. He lived on mutton and venison, dry beans and biscuits



which he made himself. He chuckled when he told about the first time he made biscuits. He had forgotten to put yeast in and "they were so tough even the dog wouldn't eat them."

World War I was raging and the draft caught up with young Mork. He was actually quite excited to join the army in hopes of being sent to Europe where perhaps he could visit his family in Norway. His battalion left New York by ship and was a day and a half out to sea when news came that the war had ended. The ship returned and his dream of ever seeing his parents alive again ended. After his discharge from the army in 1919, he headed west again and worked for ranchers near Eagle Butte, South Dakota.

There he found his wife of 55 years and two daughters were born to them. His wife, Anna, died in 1979. Ted continues to live on his ranch four miles from Eagle Butte. He drives to town daily for the mail and his noon meal. He is a charter member of Emmanuel Lutheran Church where he faithfully attends, wearing his dress Levi's, cowboy boots and

Baltic

The snow crunched underfoot as we got out of the car and walked toward a small house in the little village of Rozefskaya, Siberia. Pastor Don Richman and I had made the long trip the day before from Moscow and were visiting Pastor Nikoleus Schneider, the 74-year-old superintendent of some 300 German-Russian Lutheran congregations in Siberia. Even before we reached the gate, a smiling, rosy-cheeked grandmother (babushka) came out to welcome us. Inside the modest home, chairs had been set up everywhere in preparation for a worship service. As more people arrived, they greeted each other with fervent hugs and kisses.

The service began with the singing of beautiful, many-versed German hymns. The people sang together so simply and earnestly in worship of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. The themes of these wonderful hymns centered on the grace of God, the precious blood of Jesus, and the joyful assurance of Heaven. Many of the people were elderly ladies with the typical colored scarves on their heads but there were also several younger people as well as children. We have heard again and again from people that it was babushka that told them about Jesus and prayed for them. For example, enroute from Moscow to Siberia, the two stewardesses on the Russian Aeroflot plane had

hat. His eyes twinkle as he shakes his head and says: "I don't know why God has me hanging around this long." But those who are privileged to know him, know why. His long life testifies to the faithfulness of God watching over His own.

— Solveig Hjermstad

Bulletin No. 4

both recently become Christians. They said it was their babushkas who pointed them to Jesus.

Looking into the weathered faces of these dear elderly women as we worshiped together, we thought of the many long years of tears and suffering that they have come through. In many cases, their husbands and sons were likely killed or allowed to die in some gulag (prison camp). Over the 70 years of communist rule, they lost their church buildings and their pastors were taken away and never heard from again. In our message to them, we recalled the promise of our Lord, "I will build My church and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it" (Matthew 18:18).

Indeed, not only has the church in these former communist lands survived; it has grown and is growing today!

What a thrill it was to witness ten people baptized into Christ (three infants, two older children, four young mothers and one young father). As we shared with them later, the angels in Heaven rejoiced with us as they realized even more the eternal significance of even one sinner who repents (Luke 5:10). Yes, it has been for them many long years of sowing the good seed of God's Word with tears but they are realizing the joy of bringing in the precious harvest sheaves (Psalm 126:5-8).

As we have been seeing and hearing everywhere in eastern Europe, people remain very open and eager to hear about Jesus. This is a time when the fields are truly "white unto harvest." In the big city of Omsk, Siberia, we were invited by a public school teacher to speak to her students. We asked if we could speak about Jesus and she readily agreed. When we came to the school the next day the classroom was filled to capacity as two other teachers brought their pupils to hear us too.

1994 AMBASSADOR SCHEDULE

The following schedule includes the deadlines and themes for the 1994 issues of *The Lutheran Ambassador*.

The monthly WMF Bible studies will appear in the first issue of the month before they are used.

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

Date of issue	Editor's deadline	Special emphasis
January 11	December 8, 1993	New Years
January 25	December 22	Ministry in Different places
February 8	January 5	Prayer
February 22	January 19	Lent
March 8	February 2	AFLBS and AFLTS
March 22	February 16	Easter
April 5	March 2	World Missions
April 19	March 16	Evangelism
May 3	March 30	Pre-Conference
May 17	April 13	Pentecost
May 31	April 27	Free Congregations
June 14	May 11	Summer Activities
June 28	May 25	Family Life
July 26	June 22	Conf. Review
August 23	July 20	Sunday School
September 6	August 3	Back to School
September 20	August 17	Home Missions
October 4	August 31	Worship
October 18	September 14	Roots of the AFLC
November 1	September 28	Reformation
November 15	October 12	Thanksgiving
November 29	October 26	Advent
December 13	November 9	Christmas
December 27	November 23	New Years

For an hour or more we talked to them and they asked questions in English and German. We shared our personal testimonies of salvation in Christ who died for our sins as well as for theirs. As we said goodbye to the students, many of them came to hug us and to thank us for coming. Christian material was given to the teachers and to the principal of the school who also came to express her appreciation.

Again, this is a day of amazing freedom for the gospel all over eastern Europe. Let us keep praying together that those whom God is calling to serve Him here may be able to come soon. (Lord willing, we will share more of our trip to Siberia next month).

—by Dr. Francis Monseth
AFLTS Dean on a
teaching sabbatical
to Latvia.

Note: Rev. Don Richman, an AFLC pastor is the Director of East European Missions Network headquartered in Bloomington, Minnesota.

Mission Trips Available

Join veteran missionary-evangelist Rev. John Abel for 17 inspiring days from February 28 to March 18, 1994, and personally experience our Brazilian mission field. See eight of our Brazil AFLC churches, our schools and orphanage at Campo Mourão and beautiful Vitoria on the Atlantic Ocean. Enjoy lush farming and ranching countryside during Brazil's warm fall season.

For more information, call 1-800-635-2032, ask for Paul at Meno Travel Services or call Pastor Abel at 219-962-3458, as soon as possible.

To Mexico

January 14-28: Departure from Minnesota and the Midwest.

February 11-25: Departure from Montana.

March 11-25: Departure from Montana, Idaho and Western Region.

For additional information, contact Partners in Mission Outreach, 705 Lost Creek Drive, Kalispell, MT 59901; phone 406-755-4160.

ARC Winter and Spring Retreats Scheduled

Pastors' Conference, January 18-20
Sno-Daze, February 4-6
Men's Retreat, February 18-20
Junior Sno-Daze, March 18-20
Women's Retreat, April 29-May 1
Memorial Day Work Retreat,
May 28-30

Join With Us at a Retreat

Christian men have great responsibility today. We sometimes get discouraged and wonder if we are up to the task. Fellowship with other Christian men at the retreat renews that desire to carry on with God's work without doubts! — *Brian Rice, Balsam Lake, Wisconsin*

Sno-Daze, Youth Camps and especially Family Camp has been a time for our family and our "youth family" to really grow in the Lord, gain lasting friendships with other Christians, and even point some to AFLBS and other Christian-oriented future plans. God surely put it there for us. — *Julie Kyrola, Wyoming, Minnesota*

The Women's Retreats have been a special blessing with the fellowship of Christian women. I've enjoyed making new friends and being away from the pressures of everyday living. But most of all those times have directed me into God's Word to learn more of His will and direction for my life. I return home refreshed and revived. — *Martha Mill, Cloquet, Minnesota*

It was a great Memorial Day Work Retreat with wonderful AFLC people at our ARC. It was our first and it was an inspiration to us. We hope to repeat it next year and again

Director's Home Underway at the ARC



A firm foundation continues to be laid at the ARC. Due to the growing need to facilitate more retreats at the ARC, the director's quarters are being remodeled to accommodate more housing and meeting space. This will enable us to have an additional group use of the camp. It will also provide a unit where groups can do their own meal preparation. This change also prompted us to seriously begin building a home for the ARC director and family. We have desired this improvement for a long time, aware that the present housing is inadequate. A home in the same building as retreats is not conducive to family privacy. Pictured above is the foundation for the new home located on the ARC property. It is being funded by the sale of homes from the ARC Country Village. Already we have appreciated the donated labor and materials. The staff has poured the footings and construction is expected to be completed by April, 1994. If you can assist us in any way, contact Ken Hokkanen at 715-294-2877.

The ARC is looking for four young people who have a servant heart, a desire to serve the Lord and are looking for summer employment. We need a nurse and lifeguard, who need to be 21+ years and meet the qualifications.

We are also looking for kitchen help, housekeeping and maintenance. We will be hiring from Memorial Day through Labor Day (13 weeks). We will provide housing and meals here at the ARC with a bi-weekly allowance and full payment at the end of the summer.

If you or someone you know may be interested in a position, please call the ARC office for more details at 715-755-3131 or 715-294-2877. We must have all applications by March 15 and the team will be selected by April 15.

**AFLC Annual Conference
June 14-19, 1994
Valley City, North Dakota**

reap the blessings of working and worshipping alongside our church people from a wide area.

— *Helen Knapp, Spicer, Minnesota*

The Ambassador Hymnal Project

Congregations and individuals are ordering the new hymnal at the pre-January 31, 1994, price of \$12. The price goes up to \$14 after January 31. The hymnals are expected to be complete by June 3, 1994.

13. God kept His promise and gave Abraham a son, but years later, God gave him the ultimate test of sacrifice.
- What did God ask Abraham to do? Genesis 22:1-2

- Was God's purpose to have Abraham kill his son?
Genesis 22:12-13

14. a. Why does God bring tests into our lives?
- b. How do you see God in Abraham's example of sacrifice?

In His love and mercy, God reached down and preserved a people to be His representatives to the world. In the generations that followed, God continued to lead His people as He renewed His promise to Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Etc. We are inspired to read of the many men and women of faith (Hebrews 11) whose sacrificial obedience is an example to us. May we too be faithful servants of the Lord.

MAKING IT PERSONAL:

Have you been confronted with your sin? Did you ask for forgiveness and accept Jesus as your Savior? When you have decisions to make in your daily life, small or large, do you turn to Jesus for guidance? Do you trust Him to work out His special plan for your life? Yield yourself fully to Him. This is the sacrifice and worship He desires.

MEN CHOSEN BY GOD

Last month we learned that right from the beginning, the fall into sin required a sacrifice. Blood had to be shed to provide coverings for Adam and Eve. Now let's look at the example of several men after them and the sacrifices they made.

- God must have made it clear to Adam and Eve what He expected in the way of sacrifice and worship.

- How did Cain rebel against God's instructions? Genesis 4:3,5

- Discuss ways that our attitudes are like Cain.

- God confronted Cain with his sin and gave him two chances to confess (Genesis 4:6-7, 9-10). What can we learn about sin from Cain's rebellion and refusal to repent?

- Sin continued to abound until it reached what point? Genesis 6:5-7

- In spite of the world's evil condition, Noah found grace in the eyes of God. What three things are we told about Noah in Genesis 6:9?

a.

b.

c.

(Does that mean that he never sinned?)

5. Thinking of Noah, discuss how hard it would be to stand completely alone in your faith in the Lord.

6. God told Noah that He was going to destroy the earth and all that was in it. God gave Noah exact instructions.

a. What did Noah do? Genesis 6:22 _____

b. How does God instruct us? _____

c. Discuss some of God's commands to us. (Do we follow Noah's example?) _____

7. a. When Noah received deliverance and blessings from God, what was his response? Genesis 8:18-20 _____

b. What is our response today? _____

Life on earth began again with these eight believing people, but it was soon back to its evil condition. Next God chose one man to be His representative to all nations.

8. a. What command did God give to Abram? Genesis 12:1 _____

b. Is there some new challenge or service God is calling YOU to do?

9. God gave Abram great promises with His command.
a. List them (Genesis 12:2-3):

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____
- (4) _____
- (5) _____
- (6) _____
- (7) _____

b. Which of God's promises most encourage you?

10. a. Scripture records that Abram built altars to the Lord in the different places he went (Genesis 12:7-8; 13:18). What can we learn from this?

b. When God's promise of children didn't come according to Abram and Sarah's timing, they decided to work it out in their own way (Genesis 16:1-4). What problems did this cause? vs. 4-12 and to the present day _____

11. a. Do we run ahead of God and use our own plans instead of waiting for Him to work it out in His timing? _____

Give examples. _____

b. What problems do we have as a result? _____

12. When God again promised Abraham and Sarah a son in their old age, what was their reaction?

a. Abraham (Genesis 17:17) _____

b. Sarah (Genesis 18:12) _____

Winter Bible Conferences Announced

Bloomington, Minnesota — Emmaus Lutheran Church is hosting a Midwinter Bible Conference on January 14-15. The conference will begin with a banquet on Friday evening at 6:30 p.m. followed by the evening rally at 8 p.m. with Pastor Jack Aamot speaking. On Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon there will be a workshop on "How to Share My Faith." Saturday will also be a Youth Day from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Stanley, North Dakota — Our Saviour's Free Lutheran Church will host the Western North Dakota-Eastern Montana District Midwinter Bible Conference on February 4-6. The theme is "For Him — Not For Me," from II Corinthians 3:14-15, with a special missions emphasis. Speakers will be Rev. Elden Nelson, AFLC Home Missions Director and missionary candidates Rev. David and Sarah Nelson.

Ferndale, Washington — Triumph Lutheran Church will host the West Coast Midwinter Bible Conference on March 4-6. Registration begins before the evening service on Friday, March 4. The theme is "Let Us Assemble Together" from Hebrews 10:25. Bible study sessions throughout the weekend will focus on the reasons we assemble together as congregations. Activities for children are planned and baby-sitting will be provided.

Rice Lake, Wisconsin — The Western Wisconsin Midwinter Bible Conference will be at Good Shepherd Lutheran, 702 N. Main in Rice Lake, on February 13th. the theme is "How Can We Best Love." The speaker is Rev. Mel Meyer of Amery. For more information call Rev. Brian Davidson at (715) 234-5197.



Roseau, Minnesota — Pictured is the new Roseau Free Lutheran Church dedicated last August. The steeple and a cross will be added to complete the structure.



Morris, Illinois — Bethlehem Lutheran Church recently received eight new members. Pictured are the new members with their pastor, Rev. Scott Gray, far right.

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences — February 1 - November 30, 1993

FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	REC'D IN NOVEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$239,852.25	\$1,335.65	\$167,882.83	70
Seminary	136,235.00	9,196.39	69,680.80	51
Bible School	196,377.50	19,754.56	107,082.34	55
Home Missions	268,210.25	26,131.54	191,976.73	72
World Missions	284,166.66	31,652.56	261,594.70	92
Capital Investment	46,108.33	1,209.26	20,127.75	44
Parish Education	48,718.08	7,273.05	51,481.25	1.06
ARC	12,100.00	343.51	5,092.71	42
Chrsn. Acd. Ed. Bd.	3,666.67	105.99	1,034.88	28
TOTALS	\$1,235,434.74	\$113,002.51	\$875,953.99	71
1992 - 1993	\$1,631,326.00	\$103,349.45	\$884,704.41	54
Goal 91%				

*Revised budget based on fiscal year of 11 months. Total AFLC subsidy reduced by 1/12 to show a more accurate % of total received.

PEOPLE and PLACES

Laveen, Arizona — Dr. Robert Giles is conducting worship services and Bible studies at his home at 4735 West Olney Avenue. Sunday morning worship services begin at 10 a.m. Call 602-237-3916 for more information. Laveen is a community of nearly 1,000 homes southwest of Phoenix. Nearly a million "snow-birds" spend winter in the greater Phoenix area.

Pipestone, Minnesota, Arlington and Sioux Falls, South Dakota — These three congregations sponsored a Couples' Retreat on November 19-20 at Edgewood Bluff, Lake Benton, Minnesota. "Love is a Decision" by Gary Smalley provided the theme for the weekend.

In Memoriam

Esther Jore, McIntosh, Minnesota, 87, passed away on November 22, 1993 at a hospital in nearby Fosston.

She was born August 2, 1906 in rural Winger, Minnesota, to Peder M. and Hanna Zahl. In 1928 she was married to Knute Jore in 1951. Together they managed the Minne-Wa-Kan Bible Camp and did mission work with the Navajo Indians in Rock Point, Arizona. They worked with the Redby Lutheran Mission in Redby, Minnesota for ten years. He became a lay pastor and served congregations in Brockson, Montana; Spokane, Washington; and Thief River Falls, Minnesota. They retired to McIntosh where Knute died in 1988.

She is survived by two stepchildren, Ardelle Ostenaar, Citrus Heights, California and Kenneth Jore, McIntosh; seven grandchildren and 18 great-grand children.

Funeral services for Esther were held at Trinity Free Lutheran Church, McIntosh.



Ottawa, Illinois — Last fall Rev. Kerwin Sletto was installed as the chaplain at Pleasant View Lutheran Home in Ottawa. Rev. Gary Jorgenson officiated. Other participants included AFLC President Rev.

Robert Lee; Dr. Howard Franzen, AFLC Director of Chaplaincy; Mr. Karl Norem, PVLH Administrator; Rev. Olin Sletto, ELCA Secretary of missions for parts of Africa and Madagascar; and Rev. John Serkland, Director of Chaplaincy at the North Dakota State Hospital in Jamestown, North Dakota. Rev. Sletto is the first AFLC pastor to pursue nursing home chaplaincy. His new address is 311 Willard Avenue, Ottawa, IL 61350; phone (O) 815-434-1130 and (H) 815-434-2874.

Rev. John Reith, Minneapolis, Minnesota, at his own request was removed from the AFLC Clergy Roster during the November Coordinating Committee meeting.

Claire Hobart, Lorado, Texas, 79, passed away on December 4, 1993.

Born January 19, 1941 in St. Peter, Minnesota, he was a premature twin and weighed 2 pounds. His twin died three days later. Claire spent three months in an incubator and lost his sight during that time. His mother entertained Claire by playing the piano by the hour. At the age of 2, Claire could play "America" with one hand. He wrote his first composition at age 5 and began giving concerts by age 8. Claire and his wife, Norma, moved to Laredo in 1948, where they established a school for the blind. During the summer, they went on tour, giving concerts to raise support for their ministry. He published several song books and composed piano numbers, cantatas, and a symphony on the Psalms (yet to be published).

Survivors include his wife, Norma; a sister, Mrs. Sidney Chenault, Abilene, Texas and numerous relatives and friends.

Funeral services were held at First Lutheran Church, Taylors Falls, Minnesota.



Leonard Stulen, Spicer, Minnesota, was honored by the Green Lake Lutheran Church Adult Sunday School Class. Mr. Stulen is pictured with the gift he received in appreciation for 25 years of teaching the adult class.

Why are we here?

Many people and congregations simply exist. They know they are here but they do not have a clue why. God wants us to know why we are here and what is our purpose for being.

I Peter 2:9 says, "you are a chosen people ... that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light." God has left us on this earth for a purpose. We are here to declare His praises. Our reason for existence as children of God, as congregations and as a church body is to let people know the greatness of God, the depths of His love and the wonderful things He has done.

It is easy to get distracted from our main purpose. Many good things clamor for our attention. They seem so important and necessary. Things such as telling people how to live a moral life, pointing out errors, and being a good example certainly have their place. Let us remember, though, as has been said, "The greatest enemy of the best is the good." Those things which are good to do must not crowd out and take the place of that which is best to do: declaring the praises of God.

Let us, as we begin the new year, consider where we are placing the emphasis in our living and our witnessing and our teaching: on what people need to do or on what God has done? It is tempting to simply tell people what they have to do. We assume they know what God has done. That is a dangerous and mistaken assumption.

As we look at cultures throughout the world we see them being familiar with the idea that some things are right and others are wrong. They often have some concept of what they should and should not do. What God has done in Christ, however, is completely unfamiliar and incredible news.

We cheapen our calling when we become something less than proclaimers of the good news of Christ, crucified and risen again. We are to do the work of an evangelist, which means being a herald of good news. Is the good news of what God has done the dominant theme of the message you are sharing with the people God brings across your path? Are you giving mere instructions for living or telling news that transforms life?

We must emphasize what God has done, for that is the message of life. Let us vow to make this a year when we

do more than simply point out the errors of others; more than simply tell people what they should avoid and what they should do. Let us strive with all the energy God gives us to be truly evangelistic by telling the world about our amazing Lord and what great things He has done.

A New Start

Judy White Edelson, while writing a column in *Newsweek* magazine, gives a glimpse inside her heart. It is not a happy sight. She believes, "Your life history is your permanent record. It might be possible to redeem it, but you can't shake it." Her sad observation is, "I have so much waste in my past that it almost washes away my future, making it difficult for me to use my past to go forward. It's like reaching your hand into a big bag knowing there are gems in it but that there's also a lot of slimy stuff you would really rather not touch."

Many are beginning the new year weighed down by the burdens of the past. They are doing more reliving of years gone by, than preparing for the year to come. They don't go forward. They just keep looking back.

One of the most amazing and encouraging declarations in the Bible is found in Jeremiah 31:34 where the Lord says, "I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." Jesus, at the cross, paid the penalty in full for all of our sins. The burden of guilt is taken away. God forgives and forgets. He moves on, and so can we.

The new year can be a new start when the sins of the past years are brought to Jesus. He will forgive and remove them away "as far as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12). We can start the new year as new creations, transformed by the love of Christ. Our life history need not be a permanent record. It can be washed clean by the blood shed on the cross by Jesus Christ.

Many are stumbling into the new year under heavy loads of guilt. God calls on us to not deny our sin, but confess it; to not excuse it, but repent of it. He will take the load of guilt away so that we can march into the new year full of new life.

Rev. David Keippela, Stacy, Minnesota, was placed on the AFLC's Clergy Roster by action of the Coordinating Committee on November 29. Pastor Keippela is serving Sunnyside Lutheran Church and has been on the Fellowship Roster for a year.

Attention Snowbirds

Mesa, Arizona — The annual AFLC "Snowbird" fellowship dinner will be held on February 11th at the King's Table restaurant from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Rev. Orville Olson is the leader.

How great is your goodness which you have stored up for those who fear you, ...

Psalm 31:19

Baptists Commemorate William Carey through evangelism campaign

Bangalore, India (EP) — Commemorating the 200th anniversary of pioneer missionary William Carey's arrival in India, 210 Baptist volunteers traveled to the country for a week-long evangelistic campaign in November.

The volunteers joined missionaries from throughout Asia in a "Crossover India" partnership evangelism project involving 70 teams working with Indian pastors and lay leaders.

In the predominantly Hindu country of nearly 900 million people, the groups shared the gospel through interpreters in house-to-house visitation, revival meetings in churches and tents, presentations in schools and factories, and dedications of homes and church buildings. More than 45,000 people attended the church meetings and were visited in their homes.

"The responsiveness of these people overwhelmed me," missionary Monte Erwin of Hollywood, Florida told Baptist Press. "I could hardly believe their readiness. It was almost as if they had been waiting for someone to come and share with them how they could have a personal relationship with Christ."

India has more Baptist churches than any nation in the world outside the United States. "One of the village churches in the Khond Hills has had such an impact that probably half the village is Christian," said Kerry Groce of Axtell, Texas. "With the spirit they have, and if they'll continue to move forward, I think they'll find great success."

Although known as the father of the modern missionary movement, Carey wasn't the first missionary in modern times to venture forth from this homeland. He wasn't even the first Protestant missionary to go to India. Today, 200 years later, only three percent of the population identi-

fies itself Christian, in a nation of more than 890 million; 80% of the population is Hindu and 11% Muslim.

Following the evangelism campaign, more than 3,500 Indian Christians were challenged by leaders to evangelize their nation. Knud Wumpelmann, president of the Baptist World Alliance, described the challenge for sharing the gospel in India and around the world as "breathhtaking."

"But God will prepare the way in spite of problems and difficulties," Wumpelmann said. "You are never alone." He advised conferees to preach the gospel as Carey did, with respect for the devotion of religious people in India.

"Today, people in India are honestly seeking the truth," Wumpelmann said. "Like Carey did, they must be met with great respect for who they are. Then we can preach the gospel to them."

Supreme court permits Boy Scouts to keep "Duty to God" in oath

Washington, D.C. (EP) — The U.S. Supreme Court rejected an appeal Dec. 6 by a ten-year-old Chicago boy who wanted the Boy Scouts of America to drop "duty to God" from the Scout Oath. The Court unanimously left intact a lower

court ruling which said the Boy Scouts are not subject to federal non-discrimination laws.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit had ruled in a 2-1 vote last May that the Scouts are not a "place" of public accommodation, and added, "Even if we were to agree for the purpose of argument that the Boy Scouts is a public accommodation, Congress expressly excluded private clubs such as the Scouts."

The boy, who says he is an agnostic, was denied membership in the Scouts because of his refusal to participate in the Scout Oath. While the Girl Scouts voted this year to make the promise to "serve God" optional, the Boy Scouts have defended their Scout Oath, in which Scouts promise "to do my duty to God and my country."

By rejecting the Chicago case, the Supreme Court left intact a lower court victory for the Boy Scouts. In an unusual move for the victor in a court battle, the Scouts had urged the Court to hear its opponents' appeal, and to use the case to rule definitively on the group's right "to form an association for the purpose of expressing, transmitting and reinforcing certain values and beliefs, including religious ones, and to limit membership to those who share those values and beliefs."