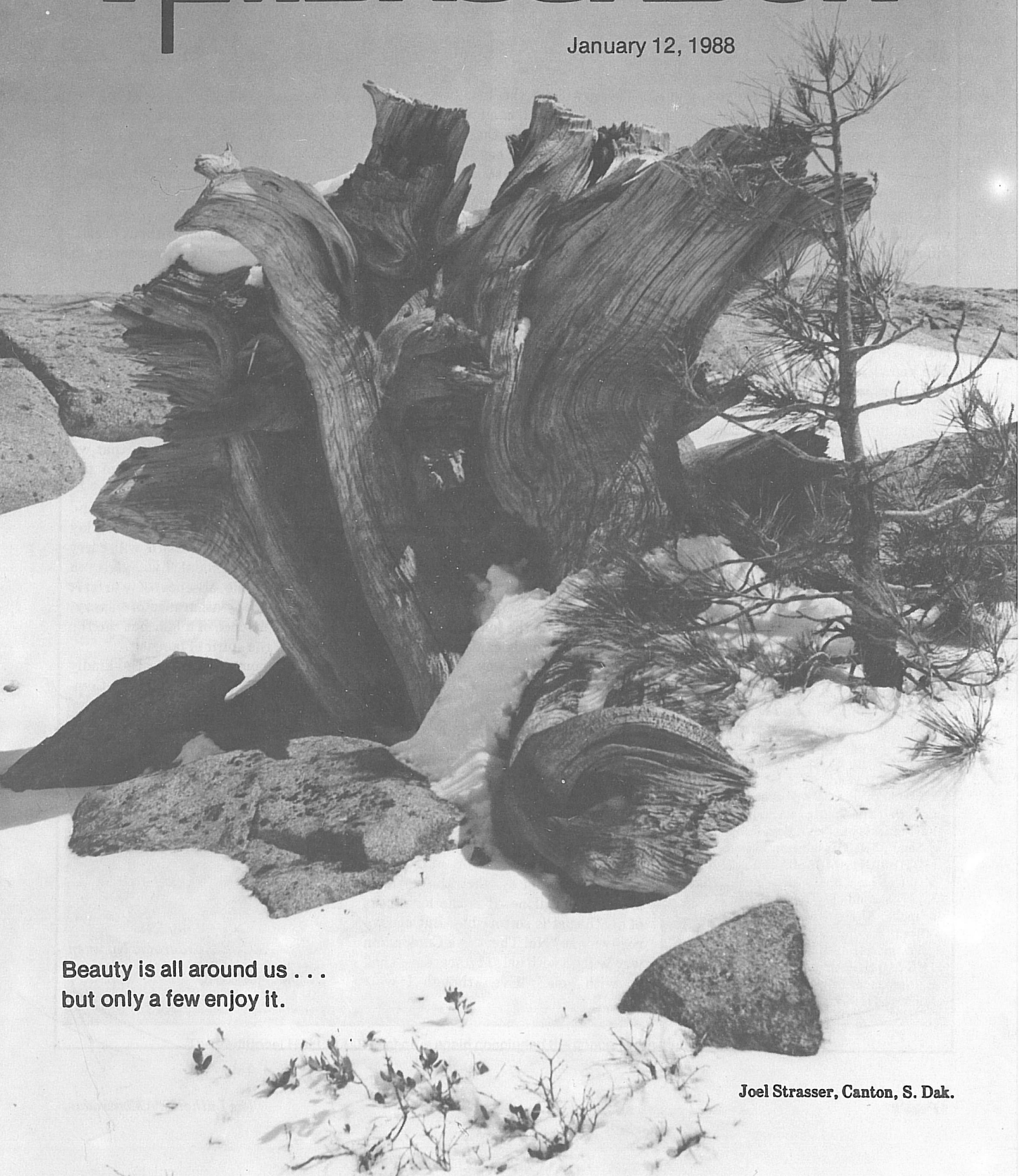


THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

January 12, 1988



Beauty is all around us . . .
but only a few enjoy it.

Joel Strasser, Canton, S. Dak.

at the MASTER'S FEET

His presence

"My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest" (Ex. 33:14).

Well, here we are facing the unknown road of the new year, 1988. Where is the road going to lead? We have no way of knowing; we are all alike in our common ignorance; wealth, education or position in life make no difference; all distinctions are wiped out; we are all upon an unknown road and for everyone of us the next step is into the misty fog like the misty fog that has surrounded us here in eastern North Dakota today as I write this. The knowledge of our future path really matters very little, but the perception of the present Companion matters everything! Out of His great love for us, God offers to us a wonderful Companion for life's loneliness which we will encounter on the unknown and changing road.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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All communications concerning contents of this magazine should be addressed to: Rev. Raynard Huglen, Editor, Newfolden, Minn. 56738.

Layout design: Mrs. Wayne Hjermstad, Editorial Board: Mr. Sheldon Mortrud, Rev. Francis Monseth, Rev. Robert Lee.

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There will be the loneliness of *unshared sorrow*. I can't think of anything more solitary than sorrow that can find no friendly ear. We find some relief when we have someone to talk to and share our sorrow with. But when we have no one to share it with, our grief becomes desolate. But is our desolation hopeless? "My presence shall go with you." Our sorrow and grief can be whispered into the ear of the Highest. Our Companionship is from above.

There will be the loneliness of *unshared triumph*. Sometimes I think that lonely triumph is as desolate as unshared grief. Right now I'm thinking especially of the moral triumphs of the soul. When I sin and falter, I feel I need a Companion to whom I can tell the story of my defeat, but when I have some secret triumph I also want a Companion to share the glory and glow of the conquest, or the glory and glow will fade. Even when we conquer secret sins the heart calls for a Companion in the joy! "My presence shall go with you."

There will be the loneliness of *temptation*. Our friends can go only so far with us along the way, and by God's grace they can minister to us. But in this serious business of temptation there is very little a friend can do. The great battle is waged behind a door which they cannot enter. But we need not be alone! "My presence shall go with you."

And there will be the loneliness of *death*. At the last moment we all have to stand idly by — doctor, nurse, husband, wife, child — when the voyager launches out alone. It is the loneliness of death that is so terrible. But are we really alone? No! There is a Companion who will go with us! "My presence shall go with you." "Even though I walk

through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me" (Ps. 23:4).

Now, if only we firmly believed and clearly realized this gracious Presence, what would our new year be like?

First, we would work without sorrow. We would step out without dread. We would not waste our energy in fruitless fear and strength-sapping care.

Second, we would not be afraid of our weakness. The real combatants are not our weakness versus the burdens and difficulties, but all these things versus our Almighty Friend!

Third, we would face this new year unbothered by our own ignorance. Our great Companion will see to it that we have light at the next turning of the road.

Fourth, we would lean upon Him and allow Him to carry our load. If we lay our burden down the Lord will carry both us and the burden! "I will give you rest" not by the absence of warfare, but by the happy assurance of victory, not by the absence of a hill, but the the absence of the spirit of fainting.

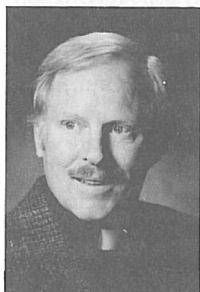
And so I commend you to the kindly care and fellowship of this great Companion. May you have a happy new year spent, every moment of it, in the light of His most gracious presence.



by Rev.
Jerome Nikunen

Living Sacrifices

"I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:1-2).



by Rev.
Richard Thompson
Morris, III.

Many years ago, in one of the first Bible study groups I had ever attended after becoming a Christian, we began discussing what it means to follow Christ. From the little Scripture that I knew at the time, it seemed to me that Christ was calling us to "die to self." I broached the idea to the group, and the consensus among them was that as Jesus asks us to follow Him, He doesn't expect us to revolutionize our lifestyle. He does not want us to give up self. There was a fear, it seemed to me, that if we "die to self," we would give up our identity.

As I grappled with this subject through the years, it became more and more apparent that Christ is calling us to "die to self." But instead of losing our identity, we find it in Him. For "whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it," says Jesus.

In the magnificent Romans text quoted above, the Apostle Paul appeals to us that we present our bodies (our selves) as "living and holy" sacrifices, "acceptable to God." Our God is not asking for the sacrifice of a slain animal. He is asking that we, as human beings, be *living sacrifices*, acceptable to God. This is, in fact, our "spiritual service of worship."

To be living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, what must we do? What must we be? Just this: we must allow the new creation that we are in Christ Jesus to take place in our lives. This is accomplished as we no longer are conformed to this world, as we are transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Think of what the world teaches us from the time of earliest childhood. We, as Christians, are sometimes so much saturated in these teachings that we fall victim to the world's ways without even knowing it. We are taught that success is worldly fame, human accomplishments, prestige and material wealth. The world teaches us that the ladder of success takes us upward, where we achieve power and influence and lord it over others. But our Lord Jesus Christ tells us that greatness comes in serving. We need only to recall our Savior putting a towel around His waist and bending down to wash the feet of the disciples. And He made it clear that this is an example of what we are to do.

"But instead of us losing our identity, we find it in Him."

Paul is urging us to have a renewal of our minds, to see that the ladder of success in the kingdom of God is more than "slightly different" from that of the world. It is revolutionary; it truly takes a renewal of the mind. It is an offering of ourselves as "a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God." It means death to self. As Paul says, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." And it is as Jesus says, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it." Dietrich Bonhoeffer's words are fitting here: "The cross is laid on every Christian. The first suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ."

Renewal of our minds begins there — with our encounter with Christ. It means that we do not deal with one another any longer as the world teaches. For in the world the "eye for an eye" concept is prevalent. Revenge, "getting even," retaliating against those who would damage our character or cause us physical or emotional harm is advocated. We Christians are not immune to this kind of behavior when we allow our old nature to get the upper hand. What does Christ say? "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you; in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven."

The importance of love and forgiveness in the life of a follower of Jesus

"Renewal of our minds begins there — with our encounter with Christ."

Praise The Lord!

"Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!"
It's a chorus we sing;
If we mean it, just think
What the new year can bring.
A heart that is willing
Will surely be blest.
God can work miracles,
We must do our best.

There's really a lot of
Good things we can do.
We can grow in God's word
And have fellowship, too.
In cleaning and serving,
In quilting and giving;
All play a big part
In our Christian living.
Let's all work together
To let our praise show
In the things that we do
For our Lord here below.

— Verna Kammen
Badger, Minn.

SACRIFICES . . .

Christ is basic to the name by which he is called — Christian. For in that perfect prayer that Jesus gives us when He shows us how to pray, we ask that God forgive our sins as we forgive the sins of others. And immediately following His teaching of this prayer, Jesus says, "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions." This takes the renewing of our minds. And, of course, the renewing of our minds begins in the revelation of the love of the Savior for us.

The renewal of our minds also comes as we recognize *this truth*: We are who we are and receive everything we have by the grace of God. We are given physical birth by the grace of God, and we are given new birth in Jesus Christ by the grace of God. Body, soul and mind are gifts of God. Any abilities we have, any qualities or talents we display are by His grace. Therefore, we are unable to boast of who we are or what we do, for everything is by His

grace. May it be, then, that everything we do and everything we say and everything we are glorify the One who created us and redeemed us. All praise and glory and honor be to God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

So, as Paul urges us, let us respond in offering ourselves as living and holy sacrifices, acceptable to God. Let us have our minds renewed so that we might no longer be conformed to this world, that we might do that which in God's sight is good and acceptable and perfect.

The Lord Jesus Christ has called us into one body — His Church. It is one body with many parts and Christ is our Head. As a spiritual service of worship, let us *be* His Body. Let us love one

another — in *reality*. Let us bear one another's burdens. Let us weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice. Let us make certain that every form of bitterness, hate, unforgiveness, envy, jealousy and discord be put away, for that is of our old nature.

Let us live as Christians so that there be no doubt who we are. Let us bless our persecutors and love our enemies. Let us reach out to those around us who are in need — physically, emotionally and spiritually. This is what it means to be living and holy sacrifices, acceptable to God. This is what it means to have a renewal of your mind. This is what it means to "die to self." It is then that we become "salt" and "light" to each other and to the world.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Reverend Richard Thompson, formerly of the American Lutheran Church, is now on the fellowship roster of the AFLC. He serves Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Morris, Ill., as associate pastor.

Richard Thompson is originally from Beloit, Wis. He has been employed by newspapers in Beloit, Milwaukee, Elkhorn and Platteville, Wis., as linotypist-compositor. He received his B.S. and M.S. degrees from Platteville State University, Platteville, Wis., majoring in English and minoring in Spanish and speech. He later attended Lutheran Theological Southern Semi-

nary in Columbia, S. Car., and Wartburg Theological Seminary in DuBuque, Ia., receiving an M. Div. degree in 1982.

Before entering seminary in 1979, Richard was a high school English-speech teacher and basketball coach from 1963-79 in Williams Bay, Wis. He served a parish in Hanska, Minn., from 1983-87.

Pastor Thompson and his wife June have three children, all married. They are Kevin, Woodridge, Ill., Eric, Williams Bay, Wis., and Jill Mork, Cumberland, Wis. They also have three grandchildren.

"Let us live as Christians
so that there can be no doubt
who we are."

a testimony from Brazil

I was born on December 30, 1959, in the town of Nova Esperanca (New Hope), Parana, Brazil.

I was born into a Christian home and my mother was always faithful in prayer and teaching the Holy Scriptures to her family. She guided the family in the way we should walk by giving counsel and her dedication has been rewarded now that most of her children are grown and away from home. Ninety percent of the family is faithful to God and the Biblical practices learned during childhood.

I embraced the Gospel in my adolescence, when I participated in a Bible Camp organized and run by the Free Lutheran churches in Campo Mourao, Parana. At this camp, in the Brazilian winter (July) of 1975, I opened my heart for Jesus to enter, sup with me and make His home, as Savior and Lord of my life (Revelation 3:20). I consider that day as the greatest day of my life and that decision as the greatest of my life.

Feeling the desire to learn more about Jesus Christ and His Word, I later went to the Bible School in Campo Mourao to study. I knew God had a plan for my life, but I left it in His hands to confirm it in my heart, as it was too early for me to be thinking about the ministry. But God was preparing the way and spoke to my heart.

When I was finished with the studies at Bible School I was called to serve a year in the Brazilian army. After that I worked and studied to fulfill requirements needed to enter the seminary in

Pastor Pedro Simao de Abreu



Campo Mourao where I intended to study theology.

When I finished the studies I needed, I decided to change God's plans. At the time, I was working, studying in Curitiba and frequenting the Free Lutheran Chapel when Pastor John Abel was starting the work there. At the end of 1983 I decided to take the exams necessary to enter law school and become a lawyer. However, God closed those doors as it was time for me to go to seminary and follow the plans He had for my life. After much prayer and conviction about this decision, I decided to let God lead me in this decision. I left my job as the person in charge of the personnel department of an office of accountants and lawyers where I had felt much influence toward becoming a

lawyer. I telephoned the director of the seminary, Pastor Connely J. Dyrud, at the beginning of 1984, and since I had fulfilled the prerequisites, I moved to Campo Mourao to begin seminary training. I went to the Free Lutheran Seminary to prepare myself for the ministry that God had for my life.

During my studies at the seminary I met Salete Aparecida de Oliveira, a member of one of the Free Lutheran churches of Campo Mourao, and later she became my wife, companion and helpmate in the ministry. Our wedding was during the year in which I was on pastoral internship at the Central Free Lutheran Church in Campo Mourao and Salete was studying at the Bible school (1986).

I was ordained at the beginning of 1987, during the Annual Conference of the Free Lutheran Churches of Brazil, January 16-18.

At this same conference I was designated pastor of the Free Lutheran Church of Foz do Iguacu, Parana, a border city with Paraguay and Argentina. My wife and I have been happy working in the ministry God has in this area, preaching the Word of God.

The Free Lutheran Church of Foz do Iguacu was founded in 1984 by Missionary Charles L. Knapp and when he returned to the U.S. the church had other fellow workers ministering to them. It is a new church with three years of existence, but we are certain that God has a great plan for this church. We are glad God has put us here. We will continue the work in this church with the certainty that the same God who started this work through Missionary Knapp shall complete it until the day of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Because of Unbelief

"And He could there do no mighty work . . . And He marveled because of their unbelief" (Mark 6:5,6).

Annie Johnson Flint

There was a town in Galilee,
when Jesus walked the earth,
Wherein His coming brought no joy,
His going left no mirth;
No leper hailed Him from afar;
no crippled child was brought;
No blind man groped a way to Him;
no sick His healing sought.

He could not free them from their sin,
nor give their pain relief,
He could not work His miracles
because of unbelief.

The hand that fashioned all the worlds
and spread the heavens above,
The mighty hand of power divine,
the tender hand of love,
Was impotent to help or save,
or cast the demons out,
The arm of strength grew weak
and small before men's scornful doubt
Today, as then, Christ's mighty works
the world will not receive;
Omnipotence is powerless
when men will not believe.



BOOK REVIEW

The Closing of the American Mind:

How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students, by Allan Bloom. Simon and Schuster, 392 pp., \$18.95.

This is a three-part book which sets forth the author's evaluation of the American university student (as well as Americans in general) at the present time. Allan Bloom is presently a professor at the University of Chicago. He has taught at Yale, Cornell, the University of Toronto, Tel Aviv University and the University of Paris. In this book he purposes to tell us where we are at philosophically, intellectually and morally. He also writes of the dismal conditions presently prevailing in the American universities. These conditions make the universities incapable of doing anything more than feeding the present selfish desire of the student to satisfy his appetite for things. The book is divided into three sections.

The first section is titled *Students*, and gives Bloom's view of the present-day student arriving at and spending years on the university campus. The student is said to have almost a complete lack of the sense of roots. He knows almost nothing about the Bible, his national heritage, a home with any spiritual atmosphere or depth, personal commitment to anything except self, and many other things once considered an important part of being prepared to enter into adulthood. In this section, Bloom also deals with such matters as books, music and relationships in connection with the university youth. Under the subject of relationships he discusses self-centeredness, equality, race, sex, separateness, divorce, love and *eros*. Bloom's claim is that he has seen a great change in the youth coming to the university in his lifetime. This part of the book is a rich mine of information and insight for the Christian teacher or preacher. It will help him know the kind of world he is to penetrate with God's truth.

The second section of the book is

titled *Nihilism American Style*. Here the author deals with the teachings of various worldly philosophers (especially those from Germany) and shows how they have influenced our nation's thought-life. He contends that (Friedrich) Nietzsche's teaching (that power is man's highest virtue) has reached our land and has been adapted to our emphasis on personal freedom to the point where every person becomes a power-kingdom unto himself. Bloom says we have Americanized Nietzsche. He says our land now exhibits its Disneyland version of Nietzsche's philosophical teaching.

The third part of this book is titled *The University*. Here Bloom laments the sad state of the present-day American university. He says there are almost no students coming to the university with the desire or ability to study what he calls "the great books." Among the great books he includes the Bible. Even worse, there are few professors who know and appreciate these books. So there are few who could teach, even if there were students desiring to learn. In this section Bloom has a chapter on the radical student movement of the Sixties. Bloom was witness to this while teaching at Cornell. He sees the movement as Nietzsche's philosophy in shoes, in an American setting. He contends that this student movement was mostly a movement of those with very little desire for true education. He reminds his readers of such things as the students demanding that real history be ignored and a new history be written to say what the radical wanted said. The result of this student movement, according to Bloom, was the caving in of the Social Science departments of our universities. They, sometimes even at gunpoint, gave students what they wanted. The philosophy departments were already sick, and the mood of the Sixties was certainly not to go back to the great books. Therefore, Bloom claims, the philosophy departments are all but dead, for the lack of a market. The only department of our universities which escaped great damage during the Sixties is natural science. After all, two plus two will always be four regardless what power-mad people may want it to be. Besides that, we are presently a generation hung up on the

cont. on p. 14

ASSOCIATION RETREAT CENTER

What is the Association Retreat Center? Where is the ARC? Who can go to the ARC? What happens at the ARC?

The ARC is a year-round, all-season retreat center for your church or Christian group. It is solely owned by the AFLC family. It is a wing of the AFLC with one common goal of reaching souls for Jesus Christ. It is located in the St. Croix Valley of western Wisconsin. It has modern accommodations and is available for all Christian retreats, conferences, seminars and Bible camps. Cross country skis and trails and a swimming lake and pool are just a few of the fine recreational facilities. There are dining and banquet facilities and 30 camping electrical hookups.

"Where is the ARC?"

Remember back to last month when we celebrated the greatest Gift of Christmas sent to us for everyone who will receive it? It is with a thankful heart that we accept this Gift. Do you remember also the gifts that you received? If you didn't find a shelf to put

Some AFLC events at the ARC in 1988

January 15 — AFLBS Retreat.

January 18-19 — Home Missions
Pastor's Conference.

January 19-21 — Pastor's Conference.

February 5-7 — Minneapolis District
Snow Daze for Youth.

February 12-14 — Winter Bible
Conference.

...Come with me, by yourselves, to a quiet place and rest awhile ... MARK 6:31

that ornament on but left it on the floor, it will be destroyed. Whatever gift you got, unless it is properly used, will be destroyed. It is God who has given the ARC as a "gift" and He is the one who will continue to build it as long as we look to Him for that direction. We must help take care of this "gift" by letting the Lord give it direction. At the same time we must be willing to be a vessel that would help take care of the "gift."

The ARC has been a blessing and encouragement to many. There is fellowship for the young child as well as the adult. Bible camps can be attended even after the kids are married. Families are blessed by its surroundings and parents blessed that their youth could attend youth camps. People have come to know Jesus for the first time and marriages have been re-evaluated and Christians convicted of sin.

The short-range goal this winter for the ARC is to have temporary heat in the tabernacle. The long-term goal is to have permanent heat next year.

March 4-6 — Minneapolis District Men's Retreat.

April 29-May 1 — Minneapolis District Ladies' Retreat.

May 27-30 — Memorial Weekend Work Retreat.

June 10-14 — Emmaus Lutheran of Bloomington, Minn., Youth Retreat.

July 3-9 — Family Camp.

July 10-15 — Minneapolis District Senior and Junior Youth Camp.

August 8-14 — Family Camp.

This next summer the plan is to paint the buildings. The trim has been painted and now the white outside paint needs to go on. The Royal Servants, a group of youth aged 13-19 who train in various ways to proclaim Christ in Europe, will be spending two weeks there this summer, living in tents, training and working three hours each day for the ARC. If anyone would like to donate white outside paint, please contact the ARC.

How could our Retreat Center be utilized more to spread the Gospel? One way is to help this "gift" operate financially. One way you can help is to refinish a room in one of the dorms called "Daniel." There are 24 rooms and two lounges. The cost to finish a room or lounge would be only \$900.00. This includes carpet, paint, insulation, heating, wiring, windows, doors and trim. Do you have a favorite room in "Daniel" or a lounge that you enjoy and that you'd like to help with?

Another way you can help financially

is to be an "ARC Supporter." What is that? Supporters are persons who prayerfully pledge \$100.00 for the coming year. This faith pledge can be given as a one-time gift of \$100.00 or it can be paid through a 12-month period. By making this faith pledge to the ARC Supporter's group you are joining others who see the ministry of the ARC as an important part of the work of our AFLC. If you have given once we encourage you to do so each year.

If you are going to give to the "ARC Supporters," please mark your check that way. If you are giving toward the refinishing of a room or lounge mark your check accordingly. All checks or questions should be sent to the AFLC, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55441.

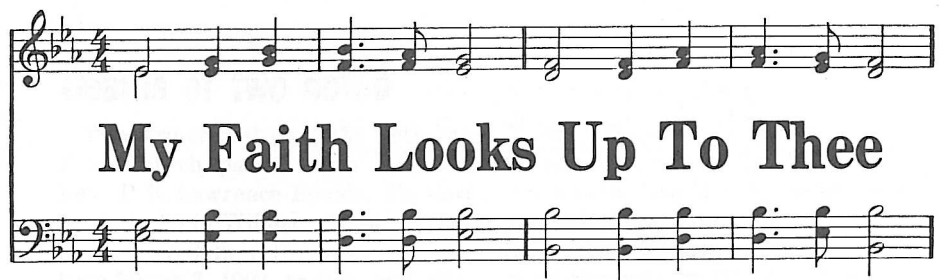
If you have any other ways or ideas that we can best utilize the work of the "ARC," direct these ideas to the Business Administrator, Ernie Miedema, at the same address.



art by Cary Dietsche

Our hymn study

Concordia, No. 269
Ray Palmer, 1830
OLIVET
Lowell Mason, 1832



This monumental hymn is especially significant in that both the author and composer were Americans and their combined efforts created what has come to be known as "America's greatest hymn."

"Truly I say to you, if you have faith, and do not doubt... even if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' it shall happen. And everything you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive" (Matt. 21:21-22).

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Savior divine!
Now hear me while I pray,
Take all my guilt away,
O let me from this day
Be wholly Thine.

May Thy rich grace impart
Strength to my fainting heart,
My zeal inspire;
As Thou hast died for me,
O may my love to Thee,
Pure, warm and changeless be,
A living fire.

While life's dark maze I tread,
And griefs around me spread,
Be Thou my Guide;
Bid darkness turn to day,
Wipe sorrows tears away,
Nor let me ever stray
From Thee aside.

When ends life's transient dream,
When death's cold, sullen stream
Shall o'er me roll;
Blest Savior, then in love,
Fear and distrust remove;
O bear me safe above,
A ransomed soul.

This wonderful prayer hymn merits a close look.

"Lamb of Calvary" is Paul's allegory

for the Hebrew Passover (I Cor. 5:7); just as the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the doorposts of the Israelites showed the angel of death which houses to pass over, Christ's blood marks the Christian and we are spared from death. Note the boldness of this prayer as expressed in stanza two: "strength," "zeal" and "fire" constitute a dynamic and active faith. (Sometimes faith is portrayed passively, as an escape from the burdens of life; TV evangelists make God a king of aspirin... "Take God three times a day and your pain will go away.") In stanza three the prayer continues on its noble plane seeking guidance and faithfulness rather than self-centered "blessings." Finally, "death's cold, sullen stream," Jordan, must inevitably roll, and this unknown is fearful and dreadful. But "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1) and this faith will remove fear and distrust as well as carry us safely across the foreboding river of death, ransomed by the sacrificial Lamb of God.

The hymn was written when the author was only 21 and was a spontaneous expression of a deep inner experience of the presence of Christ and what He meant to him and the world. The story is best told by the author himself:

"There was not the slightest thought of writing for another eye, least of all writing a hymn for Christian worship. With a deep consciousness of my own needs, I transferred as faithfully as I could what was passing within me. Six stanzas were composed and imperfectly written, first on a loose sheet, and then accurately copied into a small notebook which I customarily carried in my pocket. It is well remembered that when writing the last line, "A ransomed soul," the thought that the whole work of redemption and salvation was involved in those words, (and) moved me to a degree of emotion that brought abundant tears.

"A year or two after the hymn was written, and when no one, so far as can be recollected, had ever seen it, Dr. Lowell Mason met me in the street in Boston, and requested me to furnish some hymns for a book he and Dr. Hastings (see #284) were about to publish. The notebook containing the hymn was shown to him and given to him, which, without much notice, he put in his pocket. On sitting down at home and looking over it, he became so much interested in it that he wrote for it the tune OLIVET. Two or three days afterward we met again in the street, when, scarcely waiting to salute me, he earnestly exclaimed: 'Mr. Palmer, you may live many years and do many good things, but I think you will be best known to posterity as the author of "My Faith Looks Up to Thee."'"

Palmer did do many good things. He was ordained a Congregationalist minister and distinguished himself as a devout Christian, pastor and leader. He authored several devotional books and evangelical hymns, and was greatly esteemed in his denomination and beyond.

This was Dr. Palmer's first hymn and his best hymn. It has been translated into scores of languages including Arabic, Chinese, Tamil, Tahitian, Marathi, several African dialects, plus virtually every major language.

Lowell Mason, composer of OLIVET, is the Father of public school music in America. He was a descendant of some of America's earliest pioneers who settled in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1630. As a boy he learned to play every musical instrument available in his community and at 16 was directing a church choir and giving lessons. He moved to Savannah, Georgia, when he was 23 to become a bank clerk. He secretly continued his zealous pursuit of music as a student, teacher and composer, secretly because he was afraid that being known as a musician

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editorials

THE NEW YEAR

On January 1 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America came into being. By far the largest Lutheran church body the U.S. has ever seen has now become functional. 1988, the target date for the new church, used to seem so far away when the timetable for merger was first proposed, but now it is here.

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, one of a large handful of independent Lutheran bodies, has undergone a new experience relative to the above merger. The AFLC has grown by a score of congregations or more as whole congregations and parts of congregations have joined the Association rather than enter the ELCA. The AFLC has grown by some thousands of members in less than a year. It is now more widespread than ever with congregations in such places as Texas and California and the largest concentration of new churches is in northern Illinois.

It will take time to get acquainted with one another. Many of us do not know them and they know few of us. But getting to know one another will come in time. Of first importance is that AFLC churches closest by reach out the hand of fellowship and draw the new congregations into fellowship. We know that Grace Lutheran in DeKalb, Ill., long the only AFLC congregation in that state, has done well in this regard and the same can be said in other situations. Where new congregations are separated from sister AFLC churches by hundreds of miles, there it isn't easy.

In our next issue, an attempt is being made to acquaint new Association people with the church fellowship and her work. President Richard Snipstead and department and auxiliary heads will be presenting brief portraits of our work together. That *Ambassador* will also be of use in explaining the AFLC to those outside of it. Our 20th anniversary book, *The AFLC: Beginnings and Blessings*, is no longer in print. It is already out of date, too. But this special issue of the *Ambassador* will be of some help, we trust.

We are entering a new era in the Association. These are important times. We must undergird our forward progress with much prayer for God's guidance. The future is as bright as the promises of God, as someone has said.

KEEP THE GOAL IN MIND

It is that time of year when it is good to remind one another of the end of the fiscal year of our church and how close we are to the goal. It is too bad that the December report on AFLC benevolences is not available as this is written, although, if possible, it will be placed in this issue for readers to see.

But looking at the November report which was in our previous issue, we notice two things immediately, both positive. One is that the percentage of goal reached at that point was four percentage points greater than a year ago.

But it ought to be with a goal almost \$70,000 less. The other piece of good news is that about \$5,000 more had come in by the end of November than the year before. That is tempered by the fact that there are now many more people in the AFLC than ever before. The impact of a larger membership may not be felt until the 1988-89 fiscal year, however.

Earlier this year we predicted that the benevolence goal for this year would be met in full. We stand by that prediction. The Association will reach her first million-dollar budget goal. To do that almost \$375,000 was needed in two months, something that certainly is "doable." We always hope to avoid the last minute rush, but changing that habit doesn't come easily.

We have written about money. But it is money needed to do the Lord's work in the world. Open doors stand before our church. There is much to be done. Eternal souls are at stake. People must be told of salvation full and free which can be theirs. This is the day of opportunity. Let us end the fiscal year (January 31) with a resounding vote of confidence in the future and our share in it, by God's grace.

BY THEIR FRUITS

Martin Luther wrote: "For we can never perceive it written on a man's forehead whether or not he is holy and just. But this we can see: where the Word brings forth fruit, so that men have to suffer for it, etc., there we know, these must be living saints."

We are reminded of what Jesus said about some making broad their phylacteries and enlarging the borders of their garments (Matt. 23:5) in order to impress others of their religiosity. How the Lord God hates such pretense and we must avoid it in our own lives like the plague.

On the other side, there is a life like the one Robert A. Cook tells about in his devotional book, *Today with the King*. Mr. Cook tells of his father, a man who never owned property, never had much money and owned a car for only a few years in his 83-year-life, but who had the kingdom of God as his chief concern. All had to be directed toward that, toward gathering people in. What a legacy to leave to a son or daughter.

All Christians are committed to extending the kingdom. It has been laid upon them as a charge. We have known some Christians, however, who in a special way gave evidence that God's work was the most important thing in their lives. They did other work to make a living and support their families, but working for the Lord was what lay heaviest upon their hearts. Yes, such would be willing to suffer for the Word of God, too, as Luther has stated it.

If we follow Jesus, let our discipleship be sincere, of the heart and not a show. Then others will know that we truly follow Jesus and put Him first in our lives.

Official notices

New congregations received into the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations recently are:

Gausdal Lutheran Church
New London, Minn.

Alida Lutheran Church,
Shevlin, Minn.

Faith Lutheran Church,
Glenville, Minn.

First Lutheran Church,
Camarillo, Calif.

Sharon Lutheran Church,
Erskine, Minn.

Bethel Lutheran Church,
Frontier, S. Dak.

Grace Lutheran Church,
Bruce, S. Dak.

Pastors received on the Clergy Fellowship Roster are:

Rev. A. Pinno, Frontier, Sask.

Rev. Gerald Gettis, Vernon, B. C.

Rev. K. C. Grundahl, Colorado
Springs, Colo.

STATUS CHANGED

The Co-ordinating Committee of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, which listed Pastor Gerald F. Mundfrom, Osceola, Wis., as retired or emeritus in its report to the 1987 Annual Conference, has changed Pastor Mundfrom's status to active clergy in a recent action. This has been done in view of the ministry of writing which he conducts.

CORRECTION

One word was unintentionally left out of the second stanza of John Milton's poem "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" which appeared in our Christmas issue, Dec. 15, page 24. The word "midst" was omitted in the fourth line. Here is the stanza as it should read:

That glorious form,
that light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze
of majesty,
Wherewith He went at Heaven's
high council-table
To sit the midst of
Trinal Unity,
He laid aside;
and here with us to be,
Forsook the courts
of everlasting day,
And chose with us a
darksome house of mortal clay.

Deaths of two noted

Two former pastors in the Lutheran Free Church passed away last fall. Rev. P. K. Lawrence Bueide, 85, died on Sept. 30 in Willmar, Minn., where he had lived in retirement. He was born March 3, 1902, to Rev. and Mrs. Lars Bueide at Britton, S. Dak. A graduate of Augsburg College and Seminary, he served parishes at Carpio, N. Dak., Fergus Falls, Minn., Luverne, Minn., Eagle Lake, Willmar, Minn., Frost, Minn., and Kerkhoven, Minn. He was married to Ruth Haaland in 1939.

Dr. Kristofer Hagen died in October. He was the son of Rev. and Mrs. Wm. Hagen. Kristofer Hagen was a graduate of Augsburg College in 1929. He served as a captain in the Medical Corps of the U. S. Army in the Second World War. He was a medical missionary in India. Later he established family practice in Edina, Minn., but spent some time in temporary service in third world countries. His book, *Third World Encounters*, came largely out of those experiences. His wife's name was Bertha.

(Ed. note: One of Pastor Bueide's parishioners at Carpio was a young man named John Strand, who later became the first president of the AFLC. We have sometimes used selections from Pastor Bueide's booklet

FORMER WMF TREASURER, HUSBAND DIE

Mrs. James C. (Alphild) Eletson, treasurer of the Women's Missionary Federation of the AFLC from 1969-73, passed away in Duluth, Minn., on Dec. 2 at St. Luke's Hospital. She was 75. Her husband passed away on Nov. 13 at age 87. Mrs. Eletson was the daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Paul Bjornstad.

The Eletsons had belonged to Mt. Olive English Lutheran Church (Mo. Synod) in recent years after St. Stephan's Lutheran Church, an AFLC affiliate, had to discontinue. Mr. and Mrs. Eletson are buried in Park Hill Cemetery, Duluth.

They are survived by two daughters, Kay and Anne. Mrs. Eletson is also survived by three sisters, Elsa Bjornstad, Elizabeth Lukkonen and Martha Batalden.

"Family Devotions for Lent" in the *Ambassador*. One of Dr. Hagen's sisters was the late Mrs. Sylvester (Margarite) Rue, a pastor's wife. Blessed be the memory of these two men.)

APPLICATIONS BEING RECEIVED

Medicine Lake Lutheran Academy is receiving applications from degreed elementary teachers for the 1988-89 school year.

Direct inquiries to: Mrs. Eugene Enderlein, Medicine Lake Lutheran Academy, 6300 Walker St. (Central Center), St. Louis Park, Minn. 55416.

IN MEMORIAM

Key: The name of the town was the address of the deceased. Following that is listed the name of the deceased, age, date of death and the church in which he held membership.

WASHINGTON

Everett

Jake O. Bantz, 79, Dec. 1, Calvary.

Hubert Stone, 77, Dec. 6, Calvary.

MINNESOTA

Strandquist

Daryl I. Haugen, 65, Dec. 18, Hegland.

HYMN . . .

would hurt his standing as a banker. He also secretly collaborated on a hymnal which became very popular and lucrative, earning him \$30,000. He quit the bank and returned to Massachusetts where he quickly became highly regarded as a musician and eventually succeeded in establishing music education into the curriculum of the public schools of Boston and training for the teachers.

He also established several successful business enterprises, among them the excellent Mason & Hamlin Piano Industry. He was the first American to receive a Doctorate in Music (honorary) from an American college (New York Univ., 1835). He has five tunes in *Concordia*; besides OLIVET they are BETHANY: "Nearer My God to Thee;" EVARTS: "O Love Divine and Golden;" MISSIONARY HYMN: "From Greenland's Icy Mountains;" and WESLEY: "Hail to the Brightness. . ."

— Don Rodvold

Problems and Hardships

10. Read II Corinthians 11:23-28 and compare it to your list of "problems." Do you have a right to complain? Do we ever have a "right" to a wrong attitude?

A. What is Paul's reaction in Philippians 4:11? _____

B. His contentment was strong because of his aim in life: _____

Philippians 3:8-9 _____

11. Sometimes trials are the best thing for us because they make it easier to set our affections on things above (Colossians 3:2). What should we learn from our troubles? II Corinthians 4:16-18

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

"How contented we are
will be in direct proportion to the vitality
of our relationship to Jesus."

(—Radio Bible Class booklet)

Personal Application:

(Not for discussion.)

- How can you store up treasures in heaven?
- What are some steps you can take in learning to be content?
- Ponder I Timothy 6:6. List some of the "gains" or blessings of putting this verse into practice.
- Think about the area where you are most tempted to complain. Make a list of its benefits (Psalm 103:2) that God can use for good in your life.
- Write Philippians 2:14-15 on a card above your sink or on your table or car dash as a daily reminder this week. Memorize it as a family. (Make it into a family game or project!)

THE HIGHER PERSPECTIVE

WMF BIBLE STUDY #2

FEBRUARY, 1988

FROM COMPLAINING TO CONTENTMENT

Are you hard to please? Is your conversation different from the usual worldly fussing and complaining? Ladies, do you realize that one of the most common warnings to women in the book of Proverbs concerns a quarrelsome, nagging wife? Proverbs 19:13 compares her to a "constant dripping!" Even Christians can easily fall into this sin.

1. Whether grumbling concerns people (our husband, for instance) or circumstances, what is the truth about grumbling? Exodus 16:8

2. A. How does God feel about His people who grumble?

Numbers 11:1 _____

B. How were they punished?

(1) Numbers 14:28-30 _____

(2) vs. 33 _____

C. What is one further problem caused by a critical, unbelieving spirit? Numbers 14:36 _____

3. What can happen in our own hearts when we complain?

A. Job 10:1 _____

B. Psalm 77:7-10 _____

C. Romans 1:21 _____

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

4. What must we do with our complaints?

A. I John 1:9 _____

B. Psalm 142:2 _____

Generally, our dissatisfaction can be classified in three main areas. Let's look at each one, the temptations as well as God's wisdom, so we can learn to be content.

Possessions and Money

5. What is the danger here?

A. Ecclesiastes 5:10 _____

B. Mark 4:19 _____

C. I Timothy 6:9-10 _____

6. Then what must we remember to prevent us from falling into the trap of living for possessions?

A. Proverbs 15:16 _____

B. I Timothy 6:7-8 _____

C. I Timothy 6:17-19 _____

Here are some check points to help identify an unhealthy desire for things:

- Do I buy on impulse or after thought and prayer?
- Do I become overly upset when something is lost or destroyed?
- Do I continually need to buy something in order to be happy?
- Do my material possessions hinder my testimony for Christ?
- Does what I want make it easier for me to serve the Lord?

(—Radio Bible Class booklet)

Position in Life

(This could mean your job, or lack of one; the man you married; your social status — home, neighborhood, etc. — and even your looks and talents!)

7. Read Psalm 73 thoughtfully.

A. What was Asaph doing? vs. 3 _____

B. List two or three of the things mentioned in vs. 4-12 that at one time or another have bothered you about other people and made you discontented.

C. What happens to us when we live envying others?

(1) vs. 2 _____

(2) vs. 13-14 _____

(3) vs. 16-21 _____

D. What will change our thinking? vs. 17 _____

E. What is the truth about people who live only for this world?

vs. 18-19 _____

F. What truths must I focus on? vs. 23-26, 29 _____

8. What advice does John the Baptist give us in Luke 3:10-14 about lot in life?

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

9. What three things are a gift from God, as stated in Ecclesiastes 5:19?

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

Remember that *we* have a responsibility too:

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

from here and there

McIntosh, Minn.



Pastor and Mrs. (Judy) Tuura and daughter Naomi.

Pastor Tom Tuura was installed in the McIntosh, Minn., parish (Trinity and Mt. Carmel) in a service at Trinity on Sun., Oct. 11, by Rev. Richard Snipstead, president of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. He also preached the sermon. Special music was sung by a men's group and dinner was served by the ladies of the two congregations. We thank God for this special day.

—Corr.

Eagle Butte, S.Dak.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Eagle Butte, S. Dak., honored Tilla Johnson, a beloved member of the congregation, on her 90th birthday. It was a very special Sunday service, featuring songs by the Sunday School children, pictured here with Mrs. Johnson.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church was dedicated in 1958 and was constructed on land donated by Tilla and her late husband, Elmer. Emmanuel and its sister congregation, Bethel (located 44 miles west in Faith), are growing congregations pastored by Todd Klemme.

Tilla and Elmer were married in 1924 in Timber Lake, S. Dak., and ranched northeast of Eagle Butte until 1977 when they moved to the Dupree Manor. Tilla currently resides at the Manor in Eagle Butte where she is still active in church work and still enjoys crocheting.

Shown with Mrs. Johnson are (from left to right), front row: Peggy Berndt, Jessica Kost, Chad Paavola, Barbara Schuler, Katie Kost and Kendra Kost; and, second row; Nicholas Paavola, Chuck Severs, Jennifer Lane and

news of the churches

Valley City, N. Dak. — Grace and Zion Lutheran Churches welcomed the Francis Monseth family and Craig Johnson, a seminarian, the weekend of Nov. 6-8 for a Christian Home seminar. The theme for the weekend was "Hope for the Family." We were not only blessed by Dr. Monseth (dean of Free Lutheran Seminary) and Craig showing us through the Word, but by the beautiful music (vocal, stringed instruments) shared with us on the part of all eight members of the Monseth family. Local studies on Wednesday nights centering on the family focused our attention on this weekend with our guests. What a blessing it has been for Grace and Zion.

—Corr.

Ishpeming, Mich. — "Notes worthwhile hearing and taking" stood out on Sun., evening, Nov. 15, when Pastor and Mrs. John Mundfrom, Eben Jct., Mich., shared the service at Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Scripture for Pastor Mundfrom's message was Isaiah 30:15. He shared the meaning and message of that verse as it applied then and does today. Hymns of the love of Jesus were shared in solo and duet by the Mundfroms to support the message.

—Corr.

LEM MID-WINTER CONFERENCE

Under the theme "The Gospel — The Power of God," the annual Lutheran Evangelistic Movement Mid-Winter Conference will be held January 22-24 at Central Lutheran Church in downtown Minneapolis, Minn., at 333 E. Grant St.

Rev. Homer Larson, Cedar Falls, Ia., will be the featured speaker at the three-day event. A graduate of Dana College, Blair, Neb., and Trinity Seminary, Blair, he has also served at Atlantic, Ia.

A fellowship dinner will be held on Friday at 5:30. The business meeting will follow at 6:30. The evening service is at 7:30. Saturday will be filled with various services and workshops. A service will follow at 7:30 p.m., and the closing conference rally is at 2 o'clock Sunday afternoon.

PLEASE NOTE THIS CHANGE

On page 15 of the Dec. 1 *Ambassador*, in the caption concerning the benefit pancake supper served by the men of Bethany Lutheran Church, Binford, N. Dak., it was incorrectly stated that the matching funds were given by Lutheran Brotherhood. In reality they were given by Aid Association for Lutherans.

We are sorry for this mistake and are glad to make this correction.

The Editor



Cindy Berndt.) The president of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Jack Lane, commented that "Mrs. Johnson has

been an inspiration to us all because of her devotion to God and her compassion for others."

—Jack Lane

Choose life . . . and live

(Deut. 30:19)

I am grateful to be associated with a church which observes the value of life as a simple matter of fact . . . not some majority opinion. We are all becoming more aware of the grim details of the American Holocaust . . . 20 million babies (*all* with heartbeats and brainwaves) legally murdered . . . 20 more million mothers, fathers, grandparents, doctors, nurses, pastors and friends spiritually wounded (many unforgiven) by direct or indirect consent. How many of us can be without guilt (Prov. 24:11)? How long can we keep silent (Esther 4:13, 14)? Lutherans for Life encourages *personal* involvement in the following areas: *Education* — become informed . . . read *Abortion Questions and Answers* by Dr. and Mrs. John Wilke (\$2.95, Hayes Publishing, Cincinnati) . . . sponsor a "Life Sunday" at your church . . . join a local pro-life organization (start a chapter of Lutherans for Life!).

Legislative Action — pray for your leaders, write your legislators, vote your conscience. *Social Action* — make sure you have a doctor and a hospital

which practices your values . . . find out which realtor owns the local abortion clinic . . . find out which pharmacy or medical supply serves the local abortion clinic . . . find out which restaurants are owned by local abortionists . . . picket the local clinic regularly . . . carefully select the community service groups you support. *Alternatives* — support your local Christian women's pregnancy counseling center . . . sponsor a Christmas "shower for the Christ Child" to benefit a local maternity home . . . become a foster or adoptive parent.

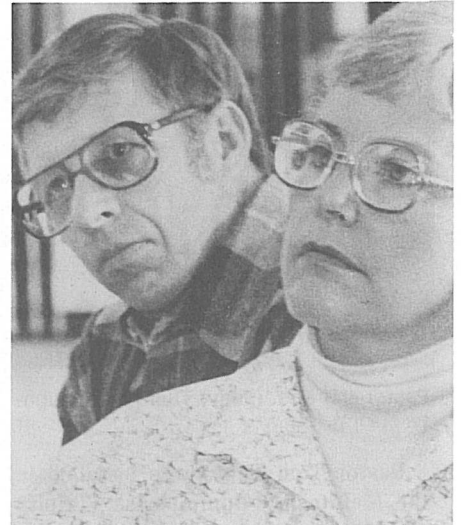
We see the world continue to mock Christ and His redemptive plan. Never before has it been so important to stand for Jesus . . . declare His gift of faith that leads to eternal life when applied to Jesus . . . and the Holy Spirit's power to heal the broken hearts of this life.

Craig Berger

133 Miller Rd.

Edelstein, Ill. 61526

(Mr. Berger serves on the Board of Directors of the Illinois Federation of Lutherans for Life.)



Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy Schierkolk, Prairie Farm, Wis., began a busy Parents' Day on Dec. 12, by attending classes on the AFLBS campus. The day ended with a banquet featuring student music and testimonies.

BOOK . . .

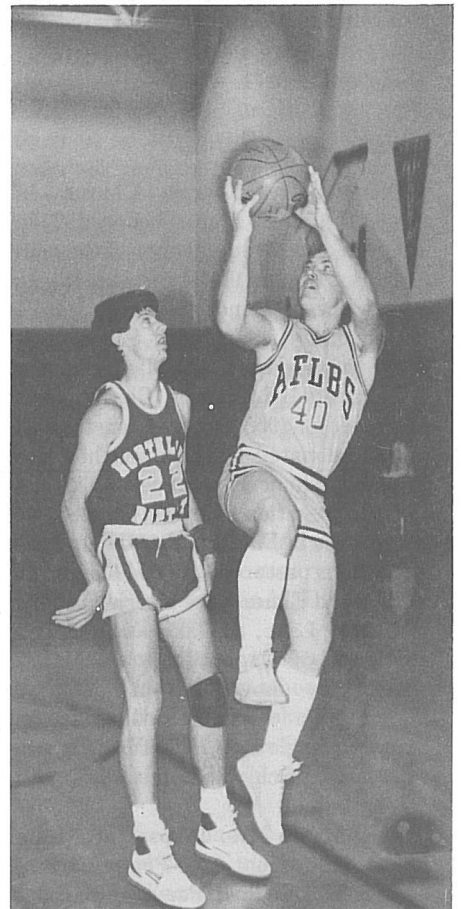
good life, and the kind of good life we're looking for can come only from skills of our natural scientists and the gadgets they can make to provide comfort and entertainment for us.

Although certain parts of this book may be hard plowing, the truth may be that this is the kind of plowing we need, if revival is ever to come. Bloom does a good job of giving us a clear view of where we are in the things that really matter and he also tells us how we arrived at where we are. His writings are not the rantings of a malcontent, but rather the thoughts of a concerned member of American society.

There is a question which this book forces the serious Christian to face. The question is: "If the American mind has been closed to every option than

the one we have now bought into, how can that mind be re-opened to other options, especially the biblical option?" Isn't it only by the quickening preaching of God's Law and Gospel? This book impressed me as underlining the need in our land for preachers who know where the people are in their ideas of what life is all about and how they got there. Such knowledge will make the preacher urgent in preaching the truth of what really is right. He will become a preacher of righteousness. His preaching will be revelant. I strongly recommend this book to all Christian pastors and teachers and to as many others as want to have maximum usefulness in working in the harvest field of the Lord in America.

—Pastor Emerson Anderson
Cleveland, O.

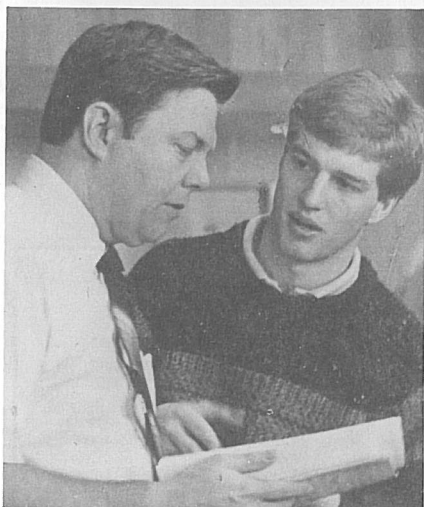


Joel Jensen, Badger, Minn., goes up for two points in the Parents' Day game against Northland Baptist College.

AFLTS chorus sang two songs at the Christmas Concert.

campus news

Earl Korhonen, Esko, Minn., rehearsed with the girls' double trio.



Rev. Donald Greven, AFLBS Dean and choir director answered a question from Mark Johnson, Stacy, Minn., during rehearsal.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT

At 4 p.m. on December 13, the sanctuary on the campus was filled to again hear the Christmas story in word and song. AFLBS had hosted Parents' Day on the previous day.



Senior seminarian, Tom Olson, directed the Choral Club.

photos by
S. Hjermstad



The traditional HALLELUJAH chorus again concluded the concert with alumni joining the choirs.

Winter Conferences

Two Winter Bible Conferences will be held in the Upper Midwest again this year. They will be in Fargo, N. Dak., St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 1603 North 5th St., Feb. 5-7, and at Osceola, Wis., Association Retreat Center, Feb. 12-14.

Conference theme will be "Our God — Our Help" (Psalm 121).

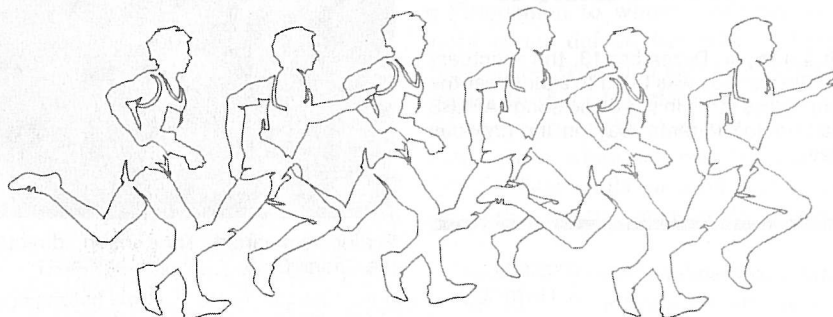
At Osceola, the evening speaker will be Rev. Walter Johnson, Shakopee, Minn., and the Bible teacher will be Rev. Ralph Tjelta of the Association Schools' faculty.

At Fargo, Rev. Philip Haugen, Association Schools' faculty, will be the Bible teacher and Rev. Terry Olson, Valley City, N. Dak., will be the evening speaker. Both are former pastors at St. Paul's.

Details on housing at Fargo will be given next time. There is adequate space available at the ARC for those attending conference there.

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

Second-class



PREPARE FOR LIFE

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, . . . Heb. 12:1-2.

CONSIDER AFLBS

Write: Office of the Dean
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

