



# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

January 21, 1992



## Mercy or Murder?



# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

January 21, 1992 • Vol. 30, No. 2

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

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Subscriptions: \$12.00 per year.

Write to:

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

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USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413

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

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

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## Light on the Way

### Continue In Christ

One of the things that stands out to us when we meet new Christians is their enthusiasm. It is refreshing to see someone excited about new life in Christ. The trouble with excitement is that it is addicting; we never want it to go away. So often we see as the initial excitement wears off, new converts look into different aspects of Christianity for new excitement. First missions become interesting, then end times. Next, Christian "celebrities" are sought out, both preachers and musicians. When they are no longer entertained or excited by these things, they wonder what has gone wrong with their faith. Things of the "world" begin to look enticing again and they begin feeling guilty that they are showing less interest in their faith.

How subtle the schemes of Satan are! While we frantically look to find the thing that will bring back the old zeal, he laughs because he knows we aren't even beginning to look in the right place. We look for new rules, new messages or new causes. What is needed is new direction. He has tricked us into seeing our faith as something that exists basically to bring us enjoyment when the true joy of Christianity is a by product and not the aim. When happiness is our goal, we end up miserable. When we give up our own fulfillment, we are ready to be fulfilled.

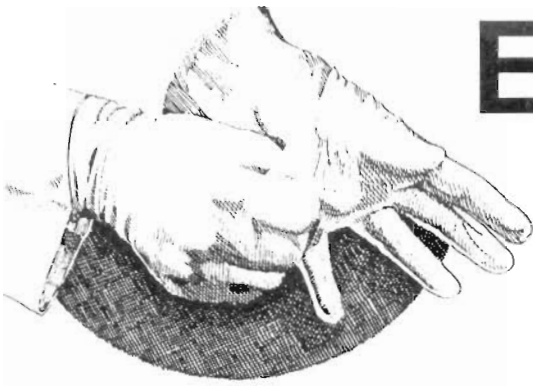
Jesus said, "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." (Matthew 10:39). That's what happens at conversion. The self-centeredness of our lives is revealed and we are ashamed. We want to get rid

of it. God then offers us new life in Christ and our eyes get set on Him. Hope is revived and we are filled with joy. But so often we forget that joy comes because we die to any hope of joy in ourselves and look to the hope offered by God.

Martin Luther understood this very well. His writings are very simple. There are not ten steps to peace in finances and five steps to a fulfilling marriage and eight steps to successful patenting. With him there is one message for all of life. His is the true message of Scripture. Off with the old and on with the new, or repent and be saved. All of the Christian life is an application of this truth in each area of our living. We must not look for new sensations to make our Christianity new. "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness" (Colossians 2:18), is the charge of God's Word.

So, Luther's Small Catechism is not something we graduate from at the end of confirmation. Because it contains accurate explanations of what God's Word teaches, it is meant to help us keep our faith new and vital. It contains Law to slay the old man and Gospel to feed the new man. It is meant to help us "... fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith ..." (Hebrews 12:2a). What a treasure this little book may be in and for our lives! May the truths we learn from it in our heads be applied by the Holy Spirit to our hearts.

—Rev. Jon Wellumson



# EUTHANASIA

## Mercy or Murder?

**I**t was a happy celebration in our congregation as yet another entered the "80 and Over Club." A humorous reading was shared, which began, "We have good news for you! The first 80 years are the hardest," and concludes with "Life begins at 80. **Lucky you!**" There was much laughter and joy at that birthday party.

There is no laughter or joy in Washington State among 80-year-olds and others who love the Lord regarding the recent Initiative 119, which concerned euthanasia. It was narrowly defeated, giving us reason to celebrate, but the enemy has shown his face, and it is no laughing matter. The inevitable has come. Our nation has lived with legalized abortion since 1973. We should not be surprised that there is now a strong movement in our nation legalizing the killing of other human beings — namely the elderly and terminally ill. Francis Schaeffer and C. Everett Koop warned us of this in 1979. They wrote in their book, "Whatever Happened to the Human Race:"

**The next candidates for arbitrary reclassification as non-persons are the elderly. This will become increasingly so as the proportion of the old and weak in relation to the young and strong becomes abnormally large, due to the growing anti-family sentiment, the abortion rate, and medicine's contribution to the lengthening of the normal life span.**

The threatening fulfillment of this prophecy is no surprise to many of us. Euthanasia is coming of age. The Demon of Death will try and try again until he has his way.

The truth of the matter is that it is no longer "lucky" to be elderly. What Scripture sees as a time of honor and wisdom is no longer seen as such by our youth-centered culture. The Apostle Paul reminds us that later years are meant to be a time of increased spiritual blessing in spite of physical limitations and suffering:

**Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal (II Corinthians 4:16-18).**

Paul's insight is not enough for many, who want life without pain or suffering. As evidenced in this recent Washington State battle, many Christians and not just a few pastors are succumbing to this way of thinking. The issue seems to turn on the question of whether euthanasia is an angel of mercy and compassion, or a demon of death and murder.

What does God's Word say on what for many is such a difficult and controversial subject? The word "euthanasia," which is of Greek origin, implies that it is good "eu" meaning well or good; "thanatos" meaning death). The concept is promoted as "good death," or "death with dignity." Such an idea is nowhere to be found in Scripture. On the contrary, God's Word doesn't support euthanasia any more than it supports abortion.

**God's Word shows that life is sacred.** We are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). According to Psalm 8:5, we are made a little lower than the angels and are crowned with glory and honor. God breathed into each of us the breath of life (Genesis 2:7). This means that God places an unestimable value on human life.

**God forbids the taking of human life.** The sacredness of life is guarded by the commandment of God: "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13). Martin Luther adds, in his explanation of the fifth commandment, that "We should fear and love God so that we do our neighbor no bodily harm nor cause him any suffering, but help and befriend him in every need." It is true

"Paul's insight is not enough for many, who want life without pain or suffering."



—Rev. David Hinrichs  
Everett, Washington

that we don't often use the word "murder" for euthanasia, it is in fact ending human life and therefore within the focus of God's commandment.

In addition, God's covenant with Noah, in Genesis 9:1-6, is clear:

**And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.**

Scripture makes it clear that it is only God who can decide who should live or die. "See now that I myself am he! There is no God besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal and no one can deliver out of my hand" (Deuteronomy 32:39). Again we read, "The Lord brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and he raises up" (1 Samuel 2:6).

**Euthanasia is not merciful.** Our hearts go out to those who suffer, especially those in pain with terminal illness. Again and again in Scripture the Lord God reminds us of his compassionate and merciful nature.

It is not easy for us to stand by and watch someone suffer. We pray that God would relieve the pain and suffering. Is there nothing we can do? Sometimes the Lord brings healing, other times we are strengthened by His hand in order to endure the suffering. We often jump to the conclusion that the presence of suffering indicates the absence of God's mercy. Our culture is so caught up with the notion that we should expect to have pain-free lives that we believe suffering serves no useful purpose. This humanistic lie is what fuels the battle for legalized euthanasia. What more can we expect from a secular society that has largely abandoned the Word of God and therefore has no way to determine what is truly merciful and what is not?

This prevailing attitude causes us to ask ourselves difficult questions. When suffering comes to my house, can I — or should I — "take it?" Is it proper to actively seek relief from suffering; even the ultimate relief of death itself? There are no easy answers. The older we become, the more likely we will experience increased physical pain. II Corinthians 4:16 reminds us of this inevitability. Our bodies are wearing out as we age, which is a normal part of the life process.

There is no doubt that the pain of terminal illness can, in some cases, be almost unbearable. Yet God has a purpose and plan even in the suffering we experience.

Job's experience can shed light on this whole issue. The great suffering which he experienced would probably have made him a good candidate for euthanasia. His wife was moved to cry out, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" (Job 1:9). I'm sure that many in our day feel the same. Job's response was, "Shall we accept good from God and not trouble?" Though we don't often understand it, suffering is one of the ways God's precious grace is ministered to us. It brings us to our knees in prayer. It teaches us about God, about sin, about salvation. It tests and trains us. It brings us face to face with the cross. What appears to be a merciful act of assisting someone in death may in fact be preventing the grace of God. Scripture teaches patience and perseverance in suffering rather than avoidance. Consider James 5:10-11:

**Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.**

How powerful these words are to us as we consider euthanasia. Job was blessed through the suffering he experienced. "The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first" (Job 42:12). Had Job taken matters into his own hands, he would have prevented God's greater purpose in his life. His faithfulness to the end allowed the Holy Spirit to use his testimony to this day.

**We are called to be stewards of life.** We are responsible for the life God has given us. His plan is "to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ" (Ephesians 1:10). We are not lords over our own lives, but Jesus is Lord and we are called to submit to His will and purpose.

As stewards of life, we are also called to act in compassion and love toward others, including the aged, the handicapped, the unwanted, and the dying. We are called to be advocates of life in the following ways:

1. We should make it our duty to maximize the comfort, dignity and quality of life of the dying.

# He Gave Us Peace



**W**hile the battle against abortion continues to rage as countless numbers of unborn babies are being murdered. Now another act of absolute defiance of God's commandment, "Thou shalt not kill" has raised its ugly head in the form of euthanasia. Webster defines it as "an act of **causing** death."

As with the abortion issue, terminology is used to cloud the real meaning. We hear of "death with dignity, medically assisted termination of life, I have the right to make my own decisions," and so the list goes. As I read God's Word and study His commandments, it is perfectly clear to me that abortion and euthanasia are acts of absolute disobedience to God's will. He will deal with that. He will not be mocked!

But how do we address the issue of life-support systems? This is also referred to as "life dependent upon medical technology." Our family faced such a situation when a loved one became incapacitated. We desperately and sincerely sought God's will. We clung to God's promise that He would never leave us or forsake us. But there were times when we felt so alone. We agonized over the situation. We sought the counsel of professing Christians. We received mixed messages from professionals, friends, family and the Christian community regarding the extent and use of life-support systems.

Our faith was being tested. We were alone with God and our loved one. Our wonderful and faithful Lord gave us, in His perfect timing, the answer for our situation. We were filled with peace. I believe God used that time of our loved one's dependence on the life-support system for His honor and His glory. Once again in our experiences in life and with death, we saw the loving hand of our Saviour waiting to gently lead us through the deep waters.

— Bev Clausen  
Circle Pines, Minnesota

2. According to Francis Schaeffer and C. Everett Koop, when the physician has done all he can and "believes that the technical gadgetry he is using is merely prolonging the experience of dying, rather than extending life, he can withdraw the extraordinary means and let nature take its course, while keeping the patient as comfortable as possible." They remind us that "this is what physicians have done for years, in the realm of trust between patient and physician or between the patient's family and physician. That is truly 'death with dignity,' and no mere manufactured euphemism for euthanasia."

3. We must be willing to get involved politically to prevent euthanasia from becoming legalized. Will you get involved and fight for the truth? Write to your congressmen and senators and begin today!

4. We must pray fervently. Pray for revival. We, as the Christian community, have not taken this as seriously as we should. The enemy is at our door. In Washington we barely defeated Initiative 119, and the issue continues to gain support. We must unite now! We must pray now, for we stand to lose the most precious gift God has given: the gift of life.

But if any  
of you lacks wisdom,  
let him ask of God,  
who gives to all  
men generously and  
without reproach,  
and it will be given  
to him.

James 1:5





# Death Wins One and Loses One In Washington

BEWARE—  
YOUR STATE  
MAY BE  
NEXT!

There were two issues on the ballot last November in the State of Washington that dealt with death (by other than natural causes) for the elderly and the unborn.

First, voters were presented with Initiative 119, or "Death with Dignity" as its sponsors termed it. This measure would have permitted physicians to take the life of individuals who met certain criteria and who requested "aid in dying." Aid in dying is a procedure which allows active euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide. This measure was defeated at the polls 54% to 46%.

Second, Initiative 120 provided for abortion on demand for **any reason**, prior to the "viability of the fetus." At this writing, this measure appears to have passed by a razor thin margin of 50.1% to 49.9%. An automatic recount of all votes is now under way. Although this article is about Initiative 119, Initiative 120 is mentioned briefly because of the timing of both of these bizarre issues.

As you can see, the margin of defeat for 119 was pretty substantial. However, do not consider this to be a harbinger of what may happen in the rest of the country, for the peddlers of death are already hard at work in California and New Hampshire. In California, pro-euthanasia forces are already collecting signatures for a "physician-assisted suicide" measure to be placed before the voters in 1992. In New Hampshire, two pro-death state legislators have already filed a bill that would allow "terminally ill" patients to kill themselves. Further, the results of a poll by the *Boston Globe* and the Harvard School of Public Health is being given wide distribution by the national media. This survey purports to show that 64% of the respondents to the poll would favor doctors killing those patients who asked them to. Without going into great detail, be assured that the pollsters fashioned their questions in such a manner to ensure the response that they wanted.

Here in Washington State, there were several

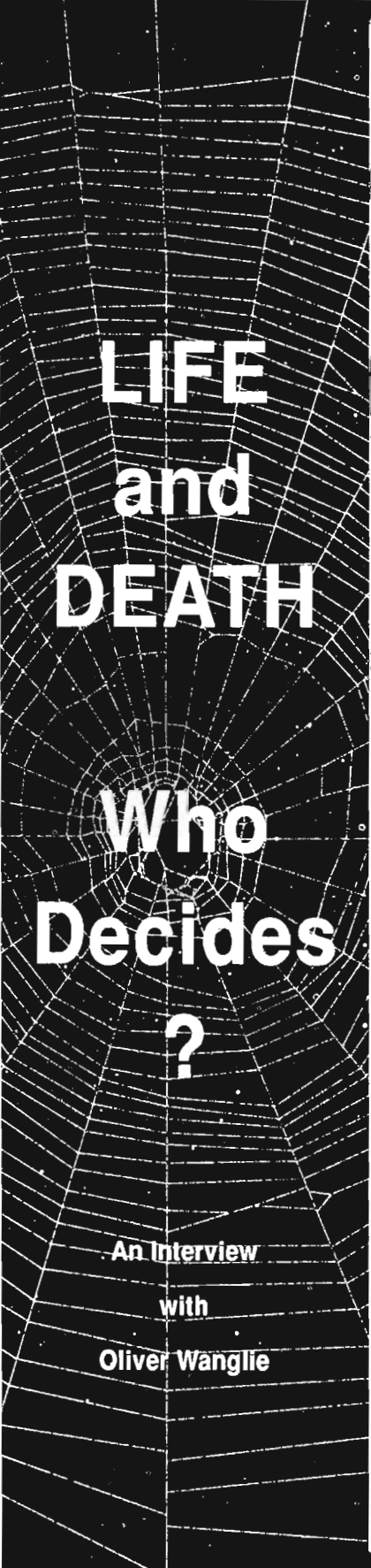
occurrences and actions that heavily influenced the final vote. First, the wife of the Hemlock Society (an international pro-euthanasia group) founder Derek Humphrey committed suicide in our neighboring state of Oregon. Second, "Dr. Death," Jack Kevorkian, assisted two **non-terminal** women to take their own lives. Next, a pro-life group in Redmond, Washington, did a magnificent job of publicly countering all the claims made by the "death with dignity" crowd. This was not an easy task when working with a generally hostile media. The pro-euthanasia group's primary claim that there were "safeguards" built into the measure to insure that no abuse by the patient or physician could occur, was refuted over and over again. That claim was totally false. And finally, there was a great awakening of churches of many denominations. In particular, the Catholic Church assumed the role of the primary voice of the Christian community. In our own church, pastor and the board of deacons presented a "memorandum of record" to the full council which recommended an informed vote against both 119 and 120 and included permission to make materials available to the congregation that fully explained the risks if these measures were approved by the voters.

It should be noted that the liberal churches played a huge role in the pro-euthanasia side. They were ever present on the local (and national) talk show circuit. The leader of a local Unitarian congregation was much sought after by talk show hosts, and not only was he an effective speaker, but he rarely, if ever, identified himself with his agnostic denomination. He always introduced himself as "the pastor of a local congregation."

As stated above, the "wannabes" of death are already at work in a couple of states. Be assured, more states will be joining this shroud of death led by the prince of darkness. Don't let it happen in your community or state. As Jesus says in Luke 21:36: "Keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place and stand before the Son of Man."

—John E. Morris

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Kirkland, Washington



# LIFE and DEATH

## Who Decides ?

An Interview

with

Oliver Wanglie

One of the better selling books of recent months has been "Final Exit." Its author, Derek Humphrey is quoted as saying: "The time is not far off when physician assisted suicide will be lawful in enlightened countries ... Part of good medicine is to help you out of this life as well as help you in ... When cure is no longer possible and the patient seeks relief through euthanasia, the help of physicians is most appropriate ... People want to take control of their dying."

This is not the prediction of a lone crazy man. But this philosophy is accepted and practiced in many today, including those in the medical profession. Ask Oliver Wanglie, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Born near Webster, South Dakota, Oliver Wanglie graduated from Augsburg College, Minneapolis, and received his law degree from the University of Minnesota. He worked throughout his career in Minneapolis and was admitted to practice law in federal courts and the U.S. Supreme Court.

In December, 1989, his wife Hilda fell and fractured her hip. Little did Mr. Wanglie know that this common mishap would lead to a battle in court, defending his conviction that: "Only He who gave life has the right to take it." He believes that we dare not call any life worthless because God values us as bearers of His image. The Bible teaches that pain and inevitable death are used to make us complete, not as destroyers of the value of human life.

That winter, while the hip was healing, Mrs. Wanglie developed respiratory problems. According to Wanglie: "Doctors took her off the respirator.

Brain injury resulted from the lack of oxygen. She slipped into unconsciousness on May 23, 1990. They were trying to snuff out her life, but I said, 'No!'" Then the battle began.

"Most people go along with what the doctor recommends. But I took a stand. you see, this 'quality of life' idea — tell me what that is. Hitler believed he had wisdom about what was quality and what was not ...," Wanglie declared with fiery intensity.

Mrs. Wanglie continued to live with respiratory tubes while Hennepin County District court heard the arguments. The case caught the attention of the world. Seven BBC reporters from London flew to Minneapolis. Two Norwegian journalists arrived from Oslo. Jane Pauley sat down with Mr. Wanglie for an interview. Dan Rather followed the case on the evening news. Letters began pouring in. Unlike the *American Bar Journal* article in its October, 1991, issue, these letters indicated overwhelming support of the Wanglies and their stand.

On July 2, 1991, the judge handed down the decision. Mr. Wanglie and their son and daughter had won their case. The hospital did not appeal.

On July 4, two days later, at age 87, Hilda Wanglie slipped into eternity, "Yes, the Lord preserved her life to allow this case to be won," acknowledged her husband.

The battle continues. The Hemlock Society is growing. The Wanglie case will be repeated. Nevertheless, God's Word remains true. The disabled, retarded and infirm do have a special place in God's world, in spite of any medical or personal opinion that perceives a lack of fitness for life. All human life is sacred.

— Solveig Hjermstad

# Lutheran Presidents Stand Together For Life

In a historic first, the presidents of three major Confessional Lutheran church bodies have issued a joint pastoral letter on the sanctity of human life. The unprecedented joint action is in response to recent media coverage which left the impression that North American Lutherans oppose changes in current laws permitting abortion on demand, and are even unsure whether abortion is sin. "We have joined together as Presidents of our respective Lutheran church bodies," the pastoral letter states, "to correct this misconception and to exhort our people to renew their efforts on behalf of unborn children and all those caught up in the tragedy of abortion."

The joint pastoral letter is being issued by the presidents of The American Association of Lutheran Churches (The AALC), The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC), and The Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America (CLB). It is being sent to congregations in the form of a bulletin insert suggested for use on Sanctity of Life Sunday, January 19. The presidents note that their positions on abortion are substantially identical to those of all other major Confessional Lutheran bodies, including ELS, LC-MS and WELS. Presidents of those bodies commended the letter and agreed that it generally reflects the positions of their synods.

The three presidents are Rev. Dr. Duane Lindberg, Presiding Pastor of The AALC; Rev. Richard Snipstead, President of the AFLC; and Rev. Robert Overgaard, President of the CLB.

ELCA pro-life leaders Dr. Paul Hasbargen of St. Paul and Joel Hylden of Park River, North Dakota, believe

the letter also reflects the views of many, if not most, ELCA members. "Most people in the pews see it this way," claims Hylden, "even though these views were not reflected by the delegates chosen for ELCA's recent Church-wide Assembly. We need to reform the delegate selection process. We are continuing to work to bring our synod back to God's Word."

"As significant as this joint action is in the context of U.S. Lutheran history," notes The AALC's Dr. Lindberg, "It will mean little unless individual members and congregations respond at the local level."

"We understand that in many cases, women contemplating abortion face difficult and sometimes tragic circumstances," the joint letter states. "On the basis of God's Word, however, we declare that the murder of the most innocent and helpless party involved is not the solution."

"Also on the basis of God's Word," continues the letter, "we acknowledge our responsibility as the Church of Jesus Christ, His Body on Earth, to reach out to these women — as well as to the fathers and all others involved

— with compassion, love, assistance and especially with the Gospel of forgiveness and healing in Christ.

"For this reason, we exhort our congregations and members to renew and increase their efforts both in speaking out as citizens to the civil government and also in putting their faith into action to help and to heal. We must recognize that this is a task which the civil government is not equipped to accomplish, regardless of how much money it expends, because the underlying problems can be healed only through God's love and power — through the gospel of the only Savior. These resources are available only in the Body of Christ. This is therefore our responsibility."

Presidents of several Confessional Lutheran bodies will meet in Minneapolis in January for further discussions of their positions on the sanctity of human life, and to explore strategies for joint or separate actions in this area.

For further information, contact Dr. Christopher Barnekov, The AALC, (319) 234-4405; Dr. Francis Monseth, AFLC, (612) 545-5631; Rev. David Rinden, CLB, (218) 736-7357.

WHEREAS, the 1977 Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations resolved to oppose therapeutic abortion as a means of birth control and to encourage each congregation to individual to protest in writing to their respective officials; and

WHEREAS, the 1987 Annual Conference resolved to continue to oppose the sin of abortion; and

WHEREAS, the 1980 Annual Conference reaffirmed the "conservative stand taken by the AFLC based on the Word of God and His Laws concerning the moral issues of our day;" and

WHEREAS, the destruction of millions of lives by means of abortion which began with the 1973 Supreme Court decision still continues; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations affirms that



# A Pastoral Letter on the Sanctity of Human Life

Dear Fellow Lutherans:

Recent media coverage has seriously misrepresented the views of most North American Lutherans regarding abortion. This coverage has left the impression that we oppose changes in current laws which permit abortion on demand, and even that we are unsure whether abortion is sin. We have joined together as presidents of our respective Lutheran church bodies to correct this misconception and to exhort our people to renew their effort on behalf of unborn children and all those caught up in the tragedy of abortion.

Each of our Lutheran bodies has adopted strong, clear, unequivocal pro-life statements. Other Confessional Lutheran bodies such as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) share this

position. We believe this is the understanding of the vast majority of all North American Lutherans.

Our view of abortion derives from our understanding of the Holy Scriptures as God's Word, entirely reliable and without error. The bible makes it clear that God regards human life as beginning "before I formed you in the womb" (Jeremiah 1:5, see also passages such as Psalm 139:13-16 and Luke 1:42-44, among others). We, therefore, believe that God's Commandment, "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13, NIV, NAS), applies to abortion. Our position is compelled by our obedience to the Word of God.

Martin Luther once said, "If I declare with loudest voice and clear exposition every portion of God's truth except that one little bit which the world and the devil are at the moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ no matter how boldly I may be pro-

fessing Christ. For the soldier to be steady on all the battlefield besides, is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that single point." We cannot flinch in this important point of the battle. Every day 4,300 babies are murdered through abortion. That's about three a minute, or over 1.5 million a year. In fact, one third of all pregnancies tragically end in abortion.

We understand that in many cases women contemplating abortion face difficult and sometimes tragic circumstances. On the basis of God's Word, however, we declare that the murder of the most innocent and helpless party involved is not the solution.

Also on the basis of God's Word, we acknowledge our responsibility as the Church of Jesus Christ, His Body on Earth, to reach out to these women — as well as to the fathers and all others involved — with compassion, love, assistance and especially with the Gospel of forgiveness and healing in Christ.

For this reason, we exhort our congregations and members to renew and increase their efforts both in speaking out as citizens to the civil government and also in putting their faith into action to help and to heal.

We must recognize that this is a task which the civil government is not equipped to accomplish, regardless of how much money it expends, because the underlying problems can be healed only through God's love and power — through the gospel of the only Savior. These resources are available only in the Body of Christ. This is, therefore, our responsibility.

Let us speak out for life both with our voices and with our deeds, and let us praise God for His gift of life.

Rev. Duane Lindberg  
Presiding Pastor  
The American Association  
of Lutheran Churches  
Rev. Richard Snipstead,  
President of the AFLC  
Rev. Robert Overgaard,  
President of the CLB

a. the unborn children are persons in the sight of God from the time of conception (Job 10:9-10; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:41-44);

b. the unborn children stand under the protection of God's command against murder (Genesis 9:6; Exodus 20:13; Numbers 35:33; Acts 7:19; I John 3:15); and be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage a clear witness on behalf of the sanctity of unborn life, including the support of responsible pro-life groups in our communities, such as "Lutherans for Life;" and be it further

RESOLVED, that we encourage prayerful support for the development of alternatives to abortion programs, providing compassionate help for those in need; and be it further

RESOLVED, that we boldly proclaim Law and Gospel, which alone can change the sinful hearts of men and women and turn them from sin to salvation.

— Adopted by the 1987 AFLC  
Annual Conference

# THE SMOKE ALARM IS RINGING

It happened in Germany and Poland:  
Concentration Camps and Incinerators  
For Jews and others labeled "Undesireables."

There were those who knew it was happening,  
It was known by those who made the plans,  
By those who gave the orders,  
And by those who carried them out with despatch:  
"Der Führer."

Generals, captains,  
Lawyers, doctors,  
Priests, pastors,  
Chemists, technicians,  
Carpenters, brick-layers,  
Guards, brutes.

And then there were those "on the outside."  
They were not the "insiders" to the plot nor the procedure,  
Yet they knew as well.  
Were not people from their own neighborhoods, cities,  
Arrested, removed?  
Where did they go?  
Did they not see the people  
Herded from train to camp?  
Did they not see the barbed fences,  
The chimneys?  
Did they not smell the smoke?

The smoke,  
Not of coke nor wood,  
But of flesh.  
And they did nothing!  
And so The Holocaust.  
But it was legal!  
The Government was in charge!

Can it happen in America?  
Can there be a holocaust here?  
It is happening!  
The Supreme Court acted on January 22, 1973.  
Robed judges with fogged, twisted minds made it legal.  
and politicians, propagandists,  
Doctors, nurses,  
Lawyers, secretaries,  
Columnists, news commentators,  
Pastors, priests, nuns,

Women and men,  
And even Jews  
(Victims of the Other Holocaust),  
Have joined together  
Performing, promoting,  
Defending, **Allowing**,  
The New Holocaust!

Not 6,000,000  
But 23,000,000!

4,000 a day,  
Every day.  
I didn't know,  
You say.  
But now  
You do.

The response  
Is up to you!  
You must join your voice  
And with others cry:  
"No more!  
Let the little ones live!"

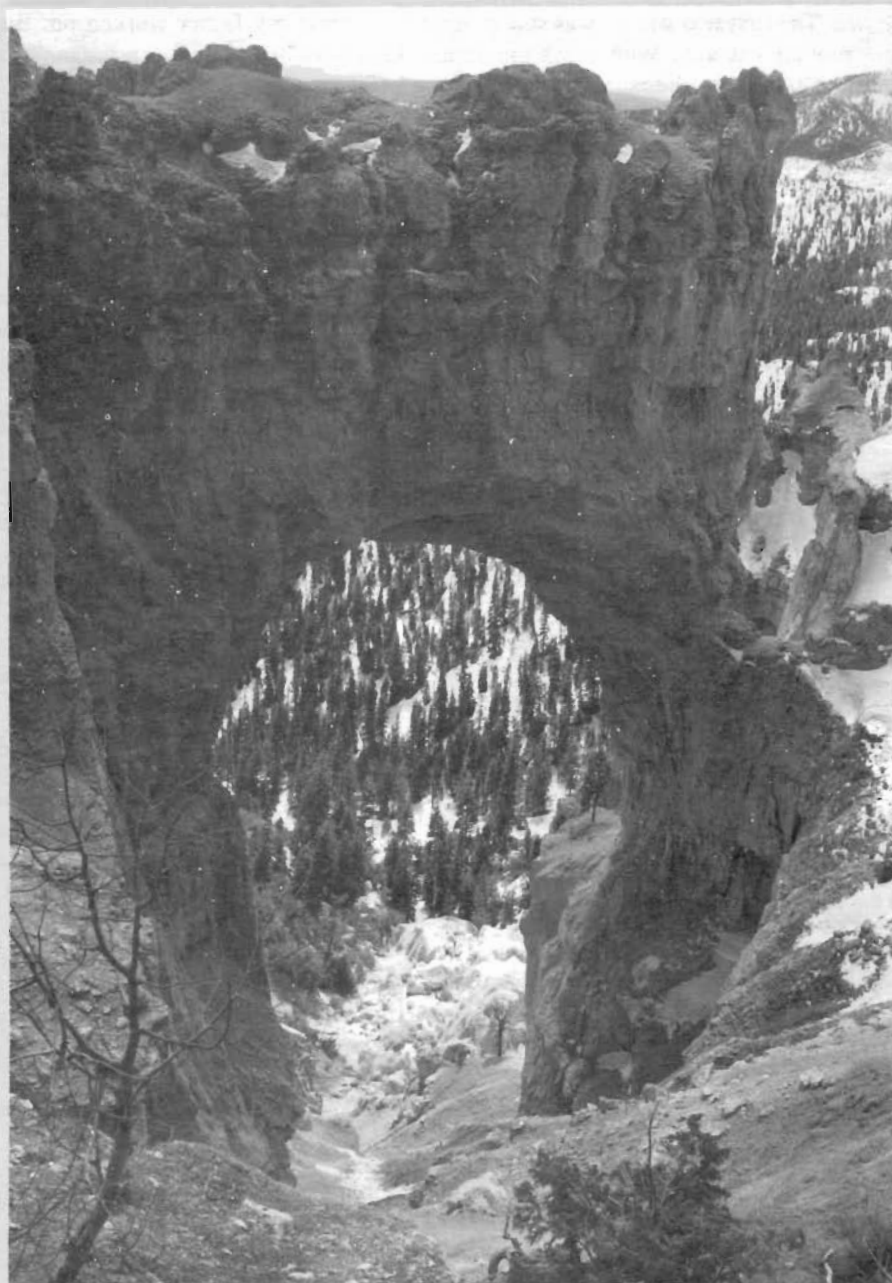
If not,  
We know what will happen to the 4,000.  
They will die as innocent victims, little lambs.  
But what will happen to us?  
Can we smell the smoke  
And do nothing  
And still remain human?  
Christian?

Is Christ not stronger than the devil?  
Is He not powerful to forgive, to help, to heal,  
To give us tenderness,  
hearts of flesh  
To love, to care?

He can save us from our inhumanity!  
He can make us truly Christian!

The smoke alarm is ringing in America!  
Will we act before the battery of our conscience dies?  
Or will we be consumed in the flames of our own perversity?

—Odell O. Kittelson  
Newark, Illinois



Bryce Canyon National Park

Photo by Roger C. Huebner, D. D. S

**I**n Thee,  
O Lord,  
I have taken refuge;  
Let me never  
be ashamed;  
In Thy righteousness  
deliver me.  
Incline Thine ear  
to me,  
rescue me quickly;  
Be Thou to me a  
rock of strength,  
A stronghold to  
save me.  
For Thou art my  
rock and my  
fortress;  
For Thy name's sake  
Thou wilt lead me  
and guide me.

Psalm 31:1-3

## Introducing the Pastor and the Ministry in



Pastor Pedro Simao de Abreu and his wife, Salete.

My call to the ministry came in three phases:

The first was when I was still in my mother's womb. With much emotion she tells that, because of a serious problem, there was the possibility of my being stillborn. She prayed to God, and dedicated my life to Him. On December 30, 1959, when I was born, my mother followed Hannah's example with Samuel, and gave my life to God. Since that day God has continually been working in my life.

The second phase is as follows: I grew up in poor family, living out on the farms my father worked on. But God was opening doors for me and before my fifteenth birthday, I had the opportunity of going to live in town to continue my education. It was also when I was 15 that I accepted Christ into my heart and life. I studied at the Bible School in Campo Mourão.

The third phase was the actual studying. I had the pleasure of studying and graduating with two friends and brothers in Christ, Carlos Eduardo Figueira and Nilson Gomes de Melo.

The life and Christian work of the teachers at Bible School and Seminary had a great impact on my life and call to the ministry. The missionaries and national pastors of the Free Lutheran Church were people that God used to confirm in me this marvelous calling: I Timothy 3:1.

I was ordained in 1986 at the Annual Conference in Campo Mourão.

During my seminary years I met my wife —Salete Aparecida. We were married on July 5, 1986. My wife has been a wonderful help and a blessing to me, in our ministry. We were blessed with a child in September, 1991.

Since 1987, I have been pastoring the church in Foz do Iguacu. Besides the main church we also have a preaching point.

Our prayer requests are:

- \* Pray for the people our church has reached.

- \* Pray for the members — that they may have more faith, firmness, be more active, have more cooperation and enthusiasm for God's work.

- \* Pray for our preaching point, that it may grow in number and spirituality: and that we may encounter many open doors to the Gospel.

- \* Pray for the pastor and his family, that we may have health, firmness, love, humility, wisdom, understanding and be an example to others.



The parsonage is on the second floor and the congregation uses the first floor for classrooms.



Members of the congregation at Foz de Iguacu.

## Foz do Iguacu

Our goals for the future are:

- \* I 1991, have a membership of 80 members.

- \* In the next few years transform the preaching point into a second organized Free Lutheran Church in Foz do Iguacu.

- \* Hold the Annual Conference here in Foz do Iguacu.

- \* Have victory over the financial crisis that the church is going through, so that the church may be able to financially support its own pastor, pay for its own church expenses, and contribute to the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations of Brazil in its support of other churches.

Our address is:

Rua das Dalias, 921 e 933

Jardim das Flores

Caixa Postal 843

85890 Foz do Iguacu, Parana, Brazil.

## Right or Wrong

*Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near (Philippians 4:5).*

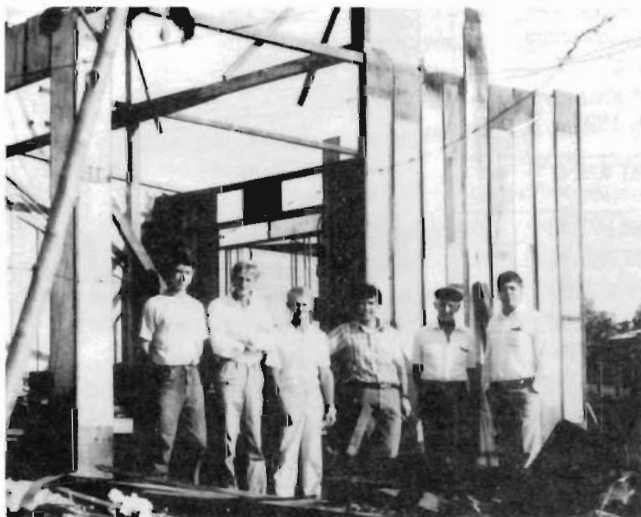
About 900 years ago, the first of five crusades was begun. The goal was to win back the holy land for the Christian faith. At the time, the holy lands were under the control of the followers of the Islamic faith. By all accounts, the crusades were a big failure. While the goal was to convert Moslems to the Christian faith, what actually happened was a massacre on both sides. Moslems killed Christians, and Christians killed Moslems, all in the name of Christ, or Allah. As Blaise Pascal once wrote, "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction."

In this portion of Scripture we read that we are not to have a militant spirit but rather a "forbearing spirit." What does the word forbearing mean? The word signifies a humble, patient steadfastness, which is able to submit to injustice, disgrace, and maltreatment without hatred and malice, trusting in God in spite of it all. It means that when we, as Christians, are mistreated, we don't cry out that

our rights are being violated, but rather cry unto God and ask for His merciful intervention.

How often do we as Christians take the militant road, when Christ would have us patiently endure and learn from the experience. When Peter and the Apostles were flogged in Acts 5, they didn't scream that their rights were violated, they rejoiced that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name. When Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown into jail, they sang hymns, prayed and witnessed to the Philippian jailer, in Acts 16. The examples in the Bible go on and on. It seems to me that we have lost the idea of the forbearing spirit. Instead of demanding our "rights," maybe we need to submit to injustice and trust God in spite of it all. This doesn't mean being a doormat, it means finding a way to make a positive experience out of a negative experience. It means letting God work all things together for good, instead of taking things into our own hands.

— Intern James Molstre  
Thief River Falls, Minnesota



Building the Chapel at the Foz do Iguacu preaching point.



Members at the preaching point.



## PEOPLE and PLACES

### Mesa, Arizona

#### AFLC Fellowship Dinner

February 10, 1992, 11:30 a.m.

King's Table Buffet

1526 East Main

Come for a time of fellowship and sharing.

### Midwinter Bible Conference

#### Bethel Free Lutheran Church

Minot, North Dakota

February 7-9, 1992

### Great Is Thy Faithfulness!

#### Speakers:

Dr. Francis Monseth,

AFLC Seminary Dean

Rev. Jon Wellumson,

Williston, North Dakota

Mrs. Candice Johnson

Stanley, North Dakota

For further information, call the host pastor, Rev. Jerry Moan (701) 852-6492

### Thief River Falls, Minnesota —

Our Saviour's Church began the new year by adding a second worship service to their Sunday morning schedule. The first service, at 8:30 a.m., will be conducted according to the order of worship that is currently followed, while the 11 a.m. service will be a less formal one and may differ from Sunday to Sunday.

**Milford, Illinois** — An unusual weather disturbance called a "microburst" struck the rural community of Schwer on December 12, causing considerable damage to the St. John's Church, cemetery, and parsonage. Most of the siding was ripped off the building, which seems to have sustained a major structural dislocation, and one of the antique stained glass windows was destroyed. Dozens of tombstones were toppled by the sudden blast of wind. The parsonage, where Pastor and Mrs. James Asp were living at the time, was severely shaken, but thankfully there were no injuries.

**Cumberland, Wisconsin** — Rev. Steve Lombardo spoke at a weekend Bible Conference at Section Ten Free Lutheran Church on November 16-17, 1991.

### Midwinter Bible Conference St. Paul's Free Lutheran Church

1603 N. 5th St.

Fargo, North Dakota

February 7-9, 1992

#### Theme:

"Declare God's Wondrous Works  
— Generation to Generation"

Speakers: Pastor Merle Fagerberg

Dr. Craig Jennings

Rev. Richard Snipstead

Sponsored by four districts in northern and western Minnesota and eastern North Dakota.

For more information:

(701) 237-5555.

### Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

#### AFLC Benevolences — February 1 - December 31, 1991

FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	REC'D IN DECEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund . . . . .	\$ 276,830.00	\$19,898.95	\$180,197.43	65
Schools - (AFLTS) . .	151,900.00	13,393.69	84,067.71	55
(AFLBS) . .	193,950.00	15,972.38	119,832.82	62
Home Missions. . . . .	433,616.00	28,041.07	257,819.96	59
World Missions. . . . .	373,715.00	31,891.45	253,315.49	68
Capital Investment . .	25,000.00	1,510.97	19,309.25	77
Parish Education . . .	62,670.00	7,666.73	33,788.02	54
ARC . . . . .	20,000.00	344.16	6,547.34	33
<b>TOTALS . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,537,681.00</b>	<b>\$118,719.40</b>	<b>\$954,878.02</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>1990 - 1991 . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,441,565.00</b>	<b>\$116,344.99</b>	<b>\$880,711.43</b>	<b>51</b>

\*Goal 92%

### Women's Missionary Federation

#### In memoriam gifts

Alfred Hegland, McIntosh, Minnesota  
Margaret Olson, Tioga, North Dakota  
Gordon Larson, Webster, South Dakota  
Cecelia Berkas, Wallace, South Dakota  
Pauline Grahn, Roseau, Minnesota  
Henry Ruud, Lakota, North Dakota  
Ella Englund, Bemidji, Minnesota  
Ida Overocker, Manson, Washington  
Merle Hagseth, Bruce, South Dakota  
Mavis Lofthus, McVie, North Dakota  
Adeline Johnson, McIntosh, Minnesota  
Clara Grundyson, McIntosh, Minnesota  
Olga Lange, Badger, Minnesota  
Blanche Berg, Pukwana, South Dakota  
Marie Erickson, Greenbush, Minnesota  
Nelle Johnson, Sebeka, Minnesota  
Frank Sharping, Pukwana, South Dakota

*Blessed are  
those who die  
in the Lord*



## PRO-LIFE OR ANTI-ABORTION?

The third Sunday in January is observed in many churches as "Sanctity of Human Life Sunday," and is promoted as an opportunity to be informed of the issues as well as to invite a renewed commitment to the cause. The reason that this particular date was selected is that it happens to be the Sunday that falls the closest to the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's infamous Roe vs. Wade decision 19 years ago.

The name of the observance seems to have been chosen with special care. It was not called, "Opposition to Abortion Sunday," but was given a broader and more positive title. This is not a mere psychological ploy, but an important statement of purpose ... perhaps even a prophetic one, as might be proven by some of the current political struggles.

The focus of this issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* is on one aspect of our broader commitment to human life, euthanasia (mercy killing), especially in light of the recent referendum in the State of Washington. You will read articles by a pastor and layman from that state, reminding us that their struggle may soon be ours.

This time the potential victims are not the unborn, but the aged and infirm, the accident cases and the invalids, the ones afflicted with terminal illnesses and the handicapped. The worst-case scenarios suddenly seem closer than we ever envisioned, as we read of countries where the elderly refuse hospital care fearing that they will be "put to sleep," and as courts in our own land are petitioned by families or institutions for permission to "pull the plug" on certain patients by slowly starving them to death.

A pro-life Christian is also anti-abortion, make no mistake about it. But the pro-life Christian is more than anti-abortion. Our commitment is to be concerned about life at all stages, from the "will-be's" to the "has-been's."

What can I do? Where can I do it? When can I start?

## REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY

It was a type of mailing that is sent by the score to our churches. Perhaps some of our readers also received a copy. The cover sought the capture attention with dramatic artwork and sensational headlines: **Why Protestants? Why Catholics? Should Christians Unite?** No church was identified as the source of the pamphlet, but an advertisement for Ellen G. White's book indicated that the Seventh Day Adventists were behind it, a denomination that has a long history of disguising itself in its publications.

Those who thumbed through the pages of the booklet were in for a shock. A section entitled "Protestantism Speaks" points to one Lutheran source, The Lutheran Free Church, with a quote from "A New Day" by George Sverdrup that seems to indicate support for the Saturday Sab-

bath! Perhaps someone can place this particular article by Sverdrup and present it in context. Until that time, however, a few points might be suggested to clarify the controversy.

The younger Sverdrup, son of the Free Church founder, is quoted as stating that there are no Scriptural commands transferring the Sabbath to Sunday. This does not, however, as the pamphlet hints, indicate that he supported a return to the observance of Sabbath on Saturday. His statement is consistently Biblical and confessionally Lutheran, based on the conviction that the Old Testament ceremonial Sabbath is no longer binding on the Christian (Mark 2:27-28, Colossians 2:16-17; Augsburg Confession, Article 28). Sunday is the Lord's Day, not the Sabbath, and this fact forces the modern Sabbatarians to focus their debate on a different set of arguments.

The conflict is obviously more complicated than one can solve in a single editorial, and it may be that a complete essay on the subject is in order. Let us agree for the present, however, to apply the preacher's adage, that "a text without a context is a pretext," to situations such as these, and learn the lesson anew that isolated quotations can lead us astray ... sometimes intentionally.

## A REQUEST TO OUR READERS

Our request to you is for your assistance in restoring a feature to *The Lutheran Ambassador* that has been absent for some time: an announcement of special meetings in our churches. You may have noticed that the evangelism conferences, etc., are usually listed as church news under "People and Places" after they have happened.

There are several advantages to announcing them in advance. The first is that God's people might unite in prayer for these services and for the speaker. The second is the probability that some who live in the area might read about it and decide to attend. The third is the encouragement that the fellowship receives when we read about what our sister churches are planning.

There is another aspect to this request, also. Continue to inform us about your special meetings after they are completed as well as before, only include more than names and dates. How did the Lord use these services in the life of your congregation? How do you make the best use of your speaker during the days that he is there? Do you see signs of awakening in some areas? Did you do something different this year that might be considered by other congregations? What would you do differently next year?

Please consider our request, and help us make *The Lutheran Ambassador* a more effective servant of our congregations.

## Time to Seek the Lord

*Break up your unplowed ground,  
for it is time to seek the Lord (Hosea  
10:12).*

There is an appointed time for everything, says the holy writer (Ecclesiastics 3:1), "a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot ..." God has allotted to all the precious commodity called time. The departure of another year is a solemn reminder that our days of grace are indeed numbered. In retrospect we wonder where our days and years have fled. For many, possibly for someone reading this, **time is running out**. It is, therefore, with a tone of urgency the prophet Hosea makes this appeal ... "Break up your unplowed ground for it is time to seek the Lord!" Yes, there is a time to take stock of our relationship with God. There is a time to seriously evaluate our spiritual condition, to confront the issue of sin and our need for repentance. It is concerning this urgency the prophet Isaiah says ... "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, Call ye upon Him while He is near" (Isaiah 55:6).

There comes a time in everyone's life when God, by His Spirit, moves upon the heart. Somehow He finds a way to gain our attention, perhaps through some circumstance or personal crisis. But ultimately He comes through His Word, as our Catechism points out ... "using the **Law** to awaken our hearts, and the **Gospel** to invite us to Christ." He who has known this Call from God in his life cannot soon forget it. The Almighty God has come seeking to save and to make you His own. Regrettably, many at this point choose to ignore Him.

You may ask, how then shall I seek him? Just what does the Lord require of me? Only this ... "Break up your unplowed ground." This expression is an analogy referring to the unrepentant human heart. It depicts a heart filled with pride, self-will and defiance toward God. Only a broken and contrite heart is a place where He can



Photo by Roger C. Huebner, D. D. S.

enter and abide. Therefore, repentance is the first step in seeking the Lord. What is repentance? It is a sincere acknowledgement of sin, all sin, especially the sin of stubborn resistance toward God. One may be a respectable and religious person, yet harbor an inner rebellion toward God. Such a heart must be broken if there is to be a further work of grace in that life. God, by His Spirit, can accomplish this the very moment you say "yes" to Him.

What is the Lord's promise to one

who seeks Him? Hear His Word ... "Ye shall seek Me and find Me, when ye search for Me with your whole heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). Be done with excuses. Put aside whatever has caused your delay. "Break up your unplowed ground, it is time to seek the Lord!"

"Let not conscience make you linger,  
Nor of fitness fondly dream.  
All the fitness God requireth  
Is to feel your need of Him."

— Pastor Jay G. Erickson