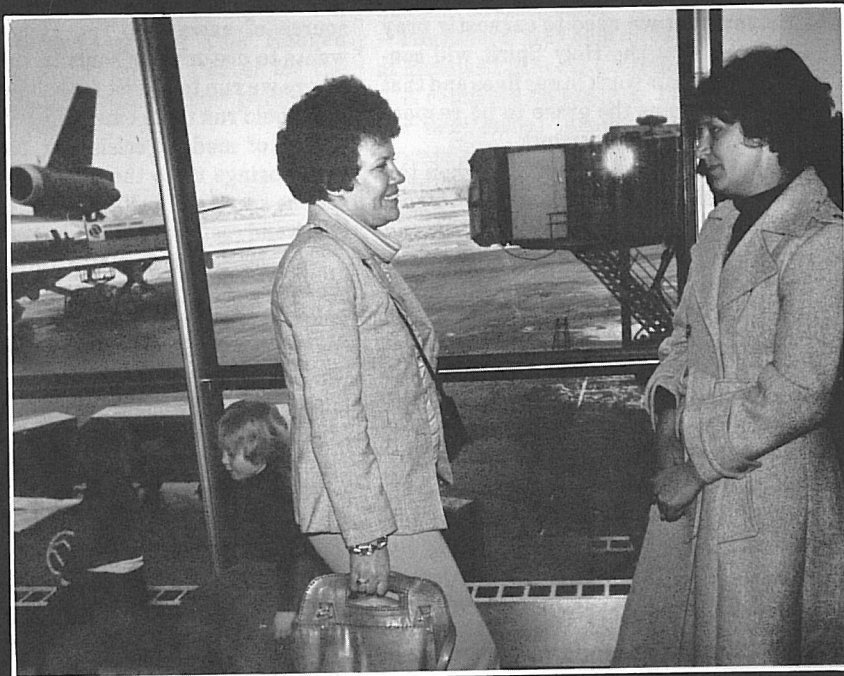
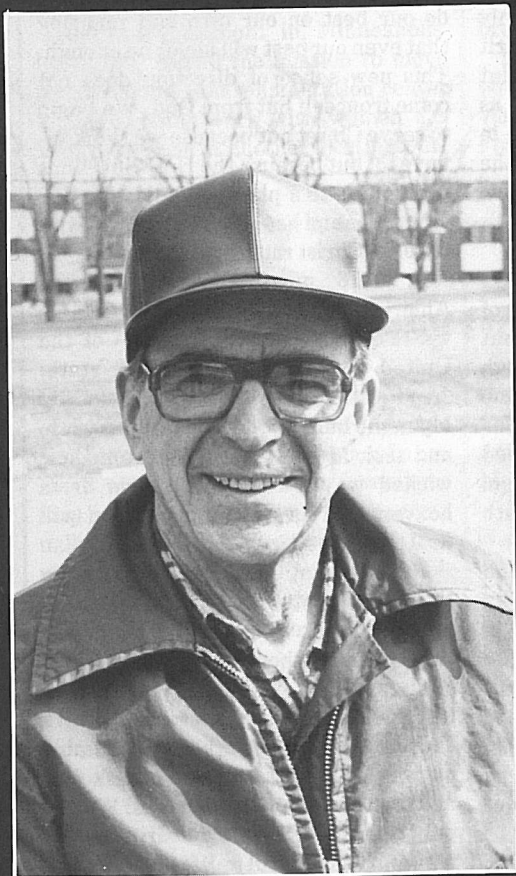


THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

January 27, 1987



SCRAPBOOK ISSUE



at the MASTER'S FEET

Conviction needed

1987 will continue to be a year when we in the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations will emphasize the theme of "Prayer and Revival." One request that we need to earnestly pray about is that the Holy Spirit will continue to do His work in our lives and that He will give us the grace to be responsive to His convicting work.

In John 16:8, we read that when the Holy Spirit would come, He would "convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgement." We as God's people, then, need to have not only convictions, but we need to be convicted as well.

The Holy Spirit comes first to convict us of our sin and point out our great need for the Savior. This is the "tough love" of God that He brings to us, not to harm us but to convict us of our need. The Holy Spirit invites us, convicts us to die to self and live for God through Christ.

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The second area of conviction, then, concerns who Christ is and what He has done. The Holy Spirit wants to convict us that Christ is our only hope, our only source of salvation. The Holy Spirit wants to disturb our souls to the point where we run to Christ for salvation, as one would run to an emergency room in a time of medical crisis. By faith the Spirit brings us to the place where we see the sacrificial sufficiency of Christ's death and resurrection.

The third area in which Christ says the Spirit will bring conviction is that of judgment. We can be convicted that God has defeated Satan through Christ's atoning work, that we are no longer under judgment because our sins are forgiven, and that a great need exists in our world to share that Gospel so that others may avoid God's wrath and find abundant life in Christ.

God is the God of perfect justice and righteousness. He must deal with sin by either forgiving it or destroying us in our sin. By the power of the Holy Spirit and by His gracious love He has given us His conviction, not to put us down but to bring us to Himself. The paradox of Scripture is that God destroys us through conviction in order to resurrect us through salvation.

The final area that the Holy Spirit works in is the area of guidance. Jesus' promise to the church was that He would not leave us to struggle on our own, but that the Holy Spirit would guide us into all the truth. This would be possible, Christ said, because the Spirit would come in the authority of God the Father and glorify the Son. The Spirit opens up the Word for us.

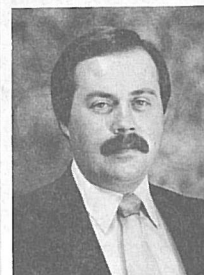
The Christian life is directed by the Holy Spirit as we are yielded to Him by God's grace. It is interesting to note that God loves us so much that He even gives the gift necessary to respond to His Spirit, that gift being faith.

As we are yielded to God's Spirit, we begin to follow after the Spirit. This is vastly different than simply trying to do our best on our own and realizing that even our best will never be enough. This new sense of direction does not come from self but from God. We begin to serve Christ not because we think we have to, but because the Holy Spirit has brought us to a place of conviction and assurance and has given us a new desire to serve Christ rather than self.

In 1976 many Christians across America claimed II Chronicles 7:14 as we celebrated the Bicentennial of the United States. Those verses state, "And (if) My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Perhaps our error was in thinking that this Scripture applied to everyone in the nation, when in fact it applied only to those whom God referred to as His people. By extension, this message to Israel is now the message to God's church: that it is *we* who must humble *ourselves* and pray and seek God's face and turn from *our* wicked ways. We can only do this as the Holy Spirit has His way and we respond to His conviction.

May our prayer for revival in 1987 be prayer that begins in our own hearts, extends into our churches and spreads over our world.



by Pastor
Robert Lewis

Memories from 1893

Many around Battle Lake (Minn.) are sure to remember the winter of 1893-94 when God visited that district with a great awakening.

The undersigned was just a "new-comer" then. It was my second year at Augsburg Seminary (Minneapolis). Quite early in the fall Professor (Georg) Sverdrup came to me and asked me to go to Battle Lake and help Pastor (Olaf) Ellingson in his work, because an awakening had begun there.

Because I had never been to Battle Lake and wasn't acquainted with Pastor Ellingson either, and because I had just come back to school and wished to begin my studies, I did as Moses of old; I said, "You had better send someone else."

But Sverdrup was as determined as God was before Moses and said that I had to go, and that was that. I asked then how long do you think I need to be there and he replied, "Oh, I think for three weeks."

I left the same night and arrived in Battle Lake at 5:30 in the morning. Ellingson met me at the station and took me to his home, that large summer home up on the hill by the lake. On the way there he asked, "Do you have any acquaintance with awakenings? Something like that has come to my congregation here and I don't know how I shall deal with it." I answered, "Yes, I know well what awakenings are and revival work from Norway, because I was awakened in a big revival there." "That is good," he said, "and so you must preach and guide the awakening and I will do the driving" and so it came to be.

I have thought about it many times, because it was a beautiful, and, I think, seldom seen happening that a pastor who had been in the work for some years realizes his drawbacks and steps

aside in favor of a student and a new-comer.

I asked him then, "Yes, but surely you are saved yourself?" To that he said yes and told about how that had come to be, but an awakening, that he had never seen.

It is one thing to be saved, quite another thing to be able to work in a revival, because it isn't every man's "bag," either for a pastor or a layman.

I think that right at this point there lie surely many mistakes and buried sins, even among God's children, and many plants of the Lord are, you can be certain, plucked up.

So together we began and set upon our work of six weeks at once, two and three meetings each day and sometimes it got to be midnight before we were finished. Ellingson was the "driver," as he called himself, but we were agreed that the driver had equally as great right to preach God's Word as the pastor and therefore it was common that we both spoke, except when we came to the congregation of another pastor. The awakening spread in all directions, first in the Conference churches, then westward among some Norwegian Methodists, where there had once been a congregation, then southward to the Synod congregaton and in the Swedish Lutheran church. Next eastward to Nidaros and Vining and over toward Henning.

The meetings were held in churches and schoolhouses, but mostly in the homes of farmers. God doesn't seem to pay any attention to these boundaries between congregations and fellowships which people raise up and are often so afraid to overstep, and if some do that it is often looked upon as a crime which a person must suffer for both in time and eternity.



Georg Sverdrup

But I am glad that God is such a "law-breaker" who doesn't make a distinction between people when He comes to save. People were very willing to come out to the meetings, especially in the evenings when the houses often were too small, even if we had neither special singing, program nor lunch.

But sing we did, young and old, both from the hymnbook and songbook, and it often happened that as soon as we began to sing that tears began to flow and there were requests for prayer.

And people didn't only come out for meetings, but also wanted to have meetings in their own homes. When there got to be heart-room for Jesus there also came to be home-room for God's Word and God's people.

Certain of these homes became what we call "fireside places" for the meetings and those who preached God's Word. We can therefore mention such homes as those of Mons Hoff, Ole Hoff, Albert Hagen, Walters and Johnsons, and in Eagle Lake at Halvor Thompsons and Martin Ericksons, among others. In the schoolhouse by Hernesses and especially in the one by Halvor Thompsons most of the meetings were held.

Many strange occurrences, in part



"... I did as Moses of old;
I said, "You had better
send someone else'."

1893...

humorous, can be recalled from that time and several such could be told, but in order not to make too great a demand on space in this paper I shall note two of them (Ed.—we shall use only one.)

Here in town we received word that down in Eagle Lake two women had come to hold meetings and since that was in Grue congregation Pastor Ellingson regarded it as his duty to find out what kind of people these women were and if they brought false teaching. In that situation I was to go down there and investigate and I was authorized by Ellingson to stop them and warn the people about them if there was heresy in their preaching.

So I got my old friend Ole Larson with me because he was always willing to drive. He had a large, fast horse and we sat in the sleigh and drove down to stop if necessary these dangerous women who had come into the congregation without the pastor's approval or knowledge. When we got to the neighborhood we heard that that same evening at 8 o'clock they were going to have a meeting in the schoolhouse by Thompsons.

We came to Klockervolds and because it was cold we soon had to get the horse inside; but then a difficulty arose in that the horse was big and the stable door was small and the large horse hadn't learned to bow and the stable door couldn't be made larger in a hurry. But since it was cold outside and the stable was warm the creature understood that it was best to bow itself and so it came to pass that it came in. We were given something to eat and then would continue on our mission.

If we were to follow the roads it would be twice as far as if we went through the woods and we went straight into the darkness since we knew the direction to go. But, my, how we struggled to make progress; yet we had such an important errand before us that we couldn't give

up and at last we came to the schoolhouse. It was 8 o'clock, but everything was quiet, no light and no people. Ole Larson was to go down to a farm place where he saw there was light and find out what the situation was. I sat down on the schoolhouse steps, warm and tired, and a little crestfallen because it looked like all our efforts had been in vain.

Larson came back and reported, "Tonight they're having a meeting in Ashby, but tomorrow night it will be here."

Now we had enough time to take the road back to Klockervolds and the kind old folks did everything for us that they could. We ate something and after devotions the two of us were to go upstairs to sleep. When we had lain down we could see the stars through the roof and we agreed that we should go down with our bedding and our fur coats and lie on the floor by the stove. And there we slept well.

But we couldn't go home with our mission unfulfilled and so we stayed over the next day so that in the evening we could go to the schoolhouse again where we certainly would be able to complete our errand. We were sure that we had started out in good time but when we came there before 8 o'clock the place was filled to overflowing and it was all we could manage just to get inside the door, and since we were spies we pressed in with the crowd and hid ourselves.

These two girls sang and played, the one a harp, the other a guitar. Soon they were singing Norwegian, then again Swedish. Next they preached, first the one, then the other; one of them was Norwegian and the other Swedish.

I have always made it a habit to listen carefully when God's Word is being preached and not least now, because I felt the responsibility I had received from Pastor Ellingson, that if there was something wrong in what they said I should, if possible, stop them in order to prevent them from destroying God's work in the congregation. And if there



Sister Milla Pederson, who was a missionary in Madagascar for 35 years.



Saron Lutheran Church, Roslyn, S. Dak., before the steeple was removed.

was nothing out of the way, then I should let them continue.

So when they had both talked a while and I who was probably the most perceptive hearer and felt about myself that I had some qualifications to distinguish between Lutheran and un-Lutheran teaching, and in my best judgment wasn't able to find anything wrong in what they said, I was even more surprised to hear that one of them invited me to come forward and speak. I really wondered about this since I hadn't seen anyone speak to them after we had come in and we had never seen each other before.

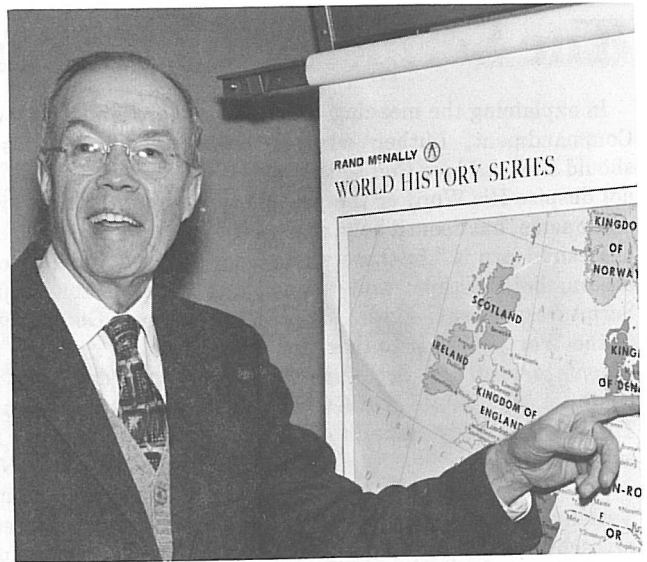
It was with strange feelings that I went forward and spoke. I was wise enough not to talk about our mission and how we happened to be there. But as I had noticed after I had come into the crowd, there was the strong, unseen power of the Spirit striving with the hearts of people, and so I had to say something like this: "God is among us here, and here are sinners who want to be saved, and the witness I have heard



"... and since we were spies we pressed in with the crowd and hid ourselves."



Ida Grundseth and Annie Jacobson of Our Saviour's Lutheran, Brooten, Minn.

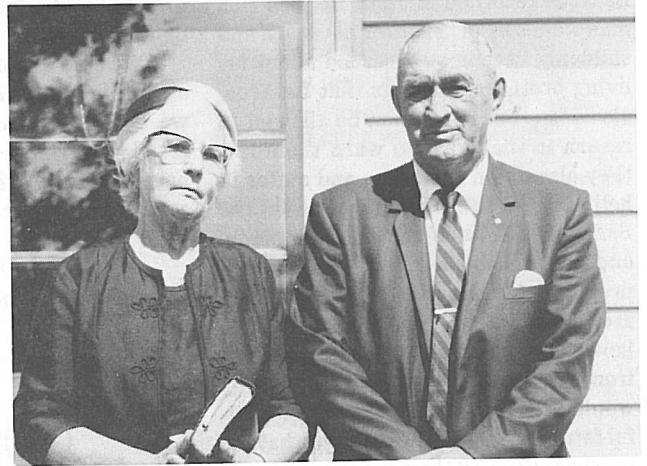


Mr. Anker Harbo, former AFLBS registrar and history instructor.



*For what is age but youth's
full bloom,
A riper, more transcendent youth?
A weight of gold is never old.*

—Anonymous



Lay Pastor
and Mrs. Otto
Saukerson

from these ladies tonight is all according to God's Word, and I will only ask them to continue so that people here may know the time of their visitation," etc.

The next day Larson and I returned to Ellingson and gave our report that all was good and well and that there was awakening down there also. Then Ellingson said, "Yes, then we must get them up here to town also to hold meetings," and so it was done that they held several meetings in the church here. It doesn't go well to fight against God and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

—O. M. Bakke

Translated from Norwegian

(Ed. note: Pastor Bakke was actually almost 3½ years older than Pastor Ellingson even though his theological education began after Ellingson's ordination. Bakke was a pastor who alternated between parish ministry and being an evangelist. Bakke was 32, Ellingson 29 when the above incidents took place. Due to space limitations, the whole article was not reproduced.)

Glorious Sunrise

As the glory of the sunrise
That dispels the darkest night,
May the dawning of this New Year
Burst anew with heaven's light.

May our sorrows be forgotten,
Courage crowned with heaven's grace,
By the One who holds the future
In this solemn Christian race.

Days are coming, years are going,
Soon the wheels of time shall cease.
Let us crown our days with glory
Governed by the Prince of Peace.

May this New Year shine with beauty,
Leaving failures in the past
May it sound the proclamation,
"Christ is reigning, e'er to last!"

—Author Unknown
The Free Lutheran Lamplighter
Roseau, Minn.

The Scriptures: all we need

In explaining the meaning of the 3rd Commandment, Luther wrote, "We should fear and love God so that we do not despise His Word or the preaching of the same, but deem it holy, and gladly hear and learn it." In these words and others, both without and within the Scriptures we see the great importance of the Word of God. Luther, for one, sought to keep the Scriptures in the center of any discussion of God or man. The Word alone is guide in our knowledge of God.

The Bible says that it is enough. Nothing but the Word of God is needed to teach us of God. It is adequate.

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus recorded in John 16, the rich man wakes up in hell after his death and suddenly becomes concerned about his living brothers. He begs that Lazarus, also dead, but in heaven, be allowed to return to the living to warn them lest they also die in their sins and suffer in hell. He is told that they have the Scriptures (Moses and the prophets) and should hear them. The man objects, probably knowing that his brothers aren't into reading the Bible. He is sure, however, that if someone would rise from the dead to warn his brothers they would believe and be spared the dreadful fate that was his. He is told that his brothers have all they are going to get; if they do not heed the Scriptures, then

there is no hope for them.

There is a lesson here for us. The Scriptures are all we're going to get. If we will not use them and learn from them what it is to believe in God then we have no hope. No other source exists which is able to impart to us a knowledge of God which will lead us to trust Him.

In a day of skepticism and critical thought such as ours, we are tempted to think that the Bible is irrelevant, outdated or narrow. But if we surrender to such ideas and thus despise God's Word and the preaching of it, then we have abandoned our only hope. Then faith, if it existed, will die and we merely await a fate like that of the rich man in John 16.

If we care about our souls and desire eternal life, let us at least be careful that we do not neglect the Word of God. Avail yourself of every opportunity you have to study it whether at home or in a group at the church. It has treasures for you.

—Pastor Bruce Dalager,
Newsletter, Trinity Lutheran Church,
Grand Forks, N. Dak.



Tabor Lutheran Church, rural Webster, S. Dak., before it was enlarged.

"If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored; If you remove unrighteousness far from your tent, and place your gold in the dust, . . . Then the Almighty will be your gold . . . for there you will delight in the Almighty, and lift up your face to God."



AFLBS Senior Class, 1981-82.





The former Zion Lutheran Church, rural Greenbush, Minn.

The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want

Psalm 23:1

I shall not want for food. "I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger."

I shall not want for drink. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink."

I shall not want for rest. "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

I shall not want for guidance. "I am the way . . . no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."

I shall not want for companionship. "I have called you friends." "Lo, I am with you always."

I shall not want for joy. "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

I shall not want for honor. "If any man serve Me, him will My Father honor."

I shall not want for comfort. "Let not your heart be troubled." "He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever."

I shall not want for any good thing. "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

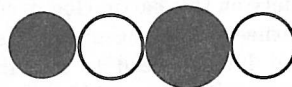
I shall not want for life. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

I shall not want for life eternal. "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life - I shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever."

—Selected

*You will pray to Him,
and He will hear you;
And you will pay
your vows.
You will also decree a
thing, and it will be
established for you;
And light will shine
on your ways."*

—Job 22:23-28



Hearken unto His Word

You are not to try to be clever in connection with His Word, to master it or to argue about it, but simply to hear it. Then the Holy Spirit will come and dispose your heart so that you will believe and say from the bottom of your heart concerning the preaching of the divine Word: 'That is God's Word and is the pure truth' and you will risk your life upon it.

—Martin Luther
(*Day By Day We Magnify Thee*)



At an AFLTS and AFLBS graduation.

*I want to
grow, Lord!*

—Mrs. Richard (Clara) Gunderson,
Lake Stevens, Wash.

I want to become all that You have in mind for me to be

"February, 1984 . . . 50 years old! Fifty years of knowing Your faithfulness, Your forgiveness, Your leading, Your care; 50 years of being Yours! But, Lord, can You say the same for me?"

"February, 1985 . . . 51 years and I wonder, Lord, are you proud of me as Your child? Have I failed to grow as Your child because of my own willfulness, complacency, unsubmitiveness? You have not failed me in any way. Oh, that I could be sure of the same in my own life!"

"February, 1986 . . . today I testify to Your keeping power for these 52 years of my life. 'Surely goodness and mercy have followed me, all the days, all the days of my life.' How my heart is filled with praise! But I am sad that at this age I am not more like You. And I commit myself to that one purpose in my remaining years - to be more like You, Jesus."

Several years ago I started using the blank pages of my Bible to write down my thoughts while having my personal devotions. While I was recuperating from surgery one summer a friend gave me Catherine Marshall's book, *Meeting God at Every Turn*. While I do not compare my own simple home-style jottings with her skilled published work, I did think to myself that I could have written such a book, because I, too, have had such a testimony. I have, indeed, met my Lord in each circumstance of my life.

As I recently filled all the pages of my Bible, I thought to re-read what I had written before beginning new pages in a new Bible. I was struck with my feelings of not measuring up. Certainly introspection is good from time to time, but you can see from the above jottings that in the last three years - with another birthday soon upon me - that my own growth in the Lord has been a concern.

During my 53 years, quite a change has come about regarding how we look upon our own selves. I remember having it emphasized in church sermons, in Sunday School and Vacation Bible School classes, and in Bible camps as a child and youth that I am, indeed, nothing in God's sight, nothing but a sinful human being. I was also taught God's great love for me and salvation through Jesus, His Son, which I wholeheartedly embraced. However, in the emphasis on my own worthlessness I wasn't able to see myself as having great worth in my Lord's eyes. How I craved it! Yes, I knew I was *made* in God's image; I would again be perfect. But, what about the years in between? I find myself responding eagerly to the more recent emphasis on the worth - true worth - of each individual person and that in Jesus Christ I am truly important here on this earth; God does really need me in bringing about His kingdom and I don't need to live in sorrow for not measuring up! Nor fear that God would be sorry that He made me.

**"By using the
very name Christian
one shouldn't even
consider the possibility
of it (life) being mediocre!"**

But, what is it that hinders me from being that child of God who brings delight to Him at every turn? I do not want to live a mediocre Christian life. My, *that's* a paradox, isn't it? By using the very name Christian one shouldn't even consider the possibility of it being mediocre! Yet in all honesty I have borne that name without assuming all the responsibility that goes with it.

Recently I heard a radio pastor say, "Let's not talk about being victorious or defeated Christians - let's talk about *obedient* or *disobedient* Christians!"

Understanding, then, that disobedience is really my basic problem, no, Clara, *Sin*, call it by its true name - *Sin*, I'd like to share with you in this coming year what I feel to be hindrances in my life which I permit and which keep me from measuring up.

I use the phrase "measuring up" carefully, knowing how important it is to use the right measuring stick and how disastrous it is to use the wrong one. How quickly I allow the minds and eyes of others - whether Christians or not - to look me over and show me how I fall short! How quickly I compare myself in my own eyes with my sisters in the Lord!

**"Using God's Word as a
measuring stick doesn't
allow me to play the game
of comparison."**

This comparison game has two sides to it. First, it can knock me low because the spiritual gifts and abilities of others seem to shine brighter than my own. On the other hand, as a pastor's wife, missionary and one who has "walked with the Lord for many years" (53 now, remember?) I am no novice in the Bible. Spiritual pride becomes my measuring stick, not God's Word!

Years ago, in Bolivia, I understood the danger of using the wrong measuring device. When we first arrived there in 1967 there were just a few established churches. But the mission had been working hard there for 30 years! Why such seemingly little results? Comparing "our" work with that of other missions, we seemed so small. But the Spirit was working—the groundwork had been laid and within a couple years the church was booming in growth! There was no comparison to make; it was God's timing and we were obedient.

Using God's Word as a measuring stick doesn't allow me to play the game of comparison. It tells me plainly in black and white (Romans 8:29) that the

cont. on p. 10

editorials

BIBLE CONFERENCES

In the next weeks the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations will be sponsoring four Bible Conferences, the most ever in the winter season. There will be three in the Upper Midwest: Miro, N. Dak., Feb. 13-15; Shevlin, Minn., Feb. 20-22; and Eagan, Minn., Feb. 27-Mar. 1; and one on the West Coast, Everett, Wash., Feb. 20-22. By all counts, more people should be at Bible Conferences than ever before. And that's as it should be.

The Bible Conferences are a supplement to the work of the local congregation. Bible studies are offered in the congregations and the Word is preached. The Conferences offer another voice and a concentrated series of four or five Bible studies. For instance, last year we heard five studies on John 17 in two days at Portland-Mayville, N. Dak., and three sermons in three days on the same Scripture, a marvelous experience.

And the Bible Conferences offer fellowship with Christians from other than one's own parish. That is a real blessing. None can be more precious than the believers one gathers with from week to week. They are the ones with whom in a special way "we share our mutual woes" and "our mutual burdens bear." But it is also good to widen the fellowship by meeting believers of other congregations and taking them into our hearts and being received by them into theirs. One comes away from Bible Conferences enriched and strengthened.

So we hope it will be possible for many of you to attend one of the four conferences this year. In a year devoted to prayer and revival, a Bible Conference experience could have a significant benefit.

GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS

The good news is that Canterbury Downs, Minnesota's two-year-old venture into horse race betting lost nearly eight million dollars in the 1986 season. In the first year the track had made a profit of \$11,000.

Daily wagering has been disappointing, according to Canterbury officials. For instance, in the first year daily average betting exceeded one million dollars a day; that fell short of the goal of \$1.2 million per day or about \$120 a day per customer.

The bad news is that the State Legislature is being asked to give the racetrack a tax break of five million dollars. What that would do, apparently, is enable Canterbury to enlarge its pools for winning horses (and owners). It would slash what little tax funds the state is getting from the operation.

Minnesotans who have opposed parimutuel betting all along, and those who now find it offensive, should ask their senators and representatives to forego bailing out Canterbury Downs. As one columnist in the Minneapolis *Star and Tribune* asked, "Why does the public have to underwrite it", that is, the race track betting operation.

Say "No" to any tax breaks for Canterbury Downs.

YES, THERE IS A SANTA CLAUS

It seems to us that Santa Claus had a very good Christmas in the one just past. While we're not sure what final totals for Christmas sales will be, the person of Santa seemed stronger than ever in 1986.

What harm can there be in the idea of a fat old man with whiskers, dressed in a red suit with white trim, who gives gifts to children? At first it doesn't look like much is wrong in that, but then we see how he gets to usurping the place of the central figure of Christmas, Jesus Christ. It gets to be Jesus and Santa, Jesus and Santa. The songs get all jumbled up, too. "Silent Night" — "Jingle Bells" — "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" — "Rudolph, the Red-nosed Reindeer" — "O Come, All Ye Faithful" — "White Christmas" — ad nauseam.

A Protestant minister in western North Dakota has played Santa in his community for seven years and enjoys it. But he does confess that he is bothered if a child confuses him (Santa) with Jesus. We would think so.

Anyone can be touched in seeing a small child look up in adoration into Santa's face and hear him whisper the desires of his heart for Christmas. But what a confusion is being raised in the little heart.

American Christmases have two focal points: Jesus Christ and Santa Claus. This past Christmas it looked like Santa Claus gave Jesus a really tough fight for top billing. Let's hope it was just an illusion.

BOG RELIGION

Maybe you read the story of a Minnesota deer hunter who spent the night lost in a bog. Fortunately, he lived to tell about his harrowing experience. Not all hunting stories end as happily.

The hunter, a 31-year-old man, thought seriously in those long, cold hours. He said that he made some deals with God, some of them already forgotten when the ordeal was over. But he confessed that he was going to have to be awfully good for a long time.

We are reminded of the "foxhole" religion of World War II and no doubt every war has had its counterpart. "God, if You'll bring me through, I'll serve You all my days."

Without doubt, some men really met the Lord in battlefield experiences. Their lives were changed from that time forward. But just as surely, every foxhole "bargain" fell by the wayside. Not to say that a man involved in such may not have later experienced a changed life. The point is, we can't bargain with God as to salvation. All we can do is throw ourselves upon His mercy. The surrender must be unconditional. "God, be merciful to me, a sinner." August Toplady has put it as well as anybody: "Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling," and "Thou must save, and Thou alone."

It isn't a matter of being very good for a long time. Of course, when we meet Christ, He'll help us to be good. But it is a matter of turning life over to the Lord of life and letting Him become everything.

We're glad the Minnesota deer hunter got out of the bog safely. We don't want to judge him by a newspaper account. But we trust that he came to see what coming to the Lord really means and that he knows a person can't bargain with God.

The self-crucified

"It hurts you to kick against the goads." (RSV)

"It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." (KJV) Acts 26:14

The figure here is one with which the Oriental is well acquainted, but one which is lost on a motorized generation.

The donkey driver, seated atop his heavily loaded cart, used a sharp-pointed staff with which to poke his slow-moving beast. A high-spirited animal might suddenly let fly with his heels, and in resisting the driver, seriously wound itself on the goad. It was a common saying in the East that it never paid to kick against the goads.

The key to this text is in that personal pronoun. "It hurts *you* to kick against the goads." God can manage somehow to get along without man's help, but man cannot get along without God's help. He who resists the overtures of the Holy Spirit is always the loser.

The most uncomfortable man in any congregation is that one who knows the preacher is talking about him, and who also knows that the preacher is right.

The longest night any man ever lives through is that one in which he spends the hours trying to come to terms with his own conscience.

The most helpless man in any situation is that one who knows he is wrong. The one who is guilty always puts up the weakest case when he gets into court. No lawyer is at his best when he knows his client is the one who is to blame.

No man ever helps himself when he strikes out against those who are right, because he knows he is wrong. Any man's best defense is his inner confidence in his own integrity; his greatest weakness is his knowledge of his own vulnerability.

No one ever hurts anyone else as badly as he hurts himself when he defies conscience, refuses responsibility, evades issues, denies the truth, contrives alibis, curses his luck, poisons his own mind, or stifles his own conscience.

It is up to us to decide the problem of goads.

—Roy L. Smith, *New Light from Old Lamps*, Abingdon Press.

The home altar

Why we should pray

"When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret" (Matt. 6:6).

"Why should we pray? Is not everything known to God already?" are questions often heard. It would of course be sufficient to answer, "Because Jesus

has said that we should pray." But we may consider the reason for prayer still further.

God asks us to pray so that there may be a tie between Him and us. If all our desires were granted the moment God saw them in our hearts, our thoughts and desires would surely circle about earthly things. No sooner would one wish be granted than our eye would fasten upon something else that we would want. But now God has asked that we come to Him with our desires and turn them into prayers.

The more errands we have to God, the better. For what we all most need is living fellowship with God. Christians often engage in prayer just because they feel the need of being with God.

Lord, we Thy presence seek;

Ours may this blessing be:

Oh! give the pure and lowly heart,

A temple meet for Thee. Amen.

Edited by Daniel Nystrom
Augustana Book Concern

GROW . . .

only one He wants me to conform to is His Son! That brings me back to February of 1986 and my commitment to spend my remaining years becoming more like Jesus. Forgive me, Jesus, that I have allowed the *hindrance of comparison* to stunt my growth in you!

February, 1987 . . . it has been a special year walking in obedience to Your Word, Your call. Thank You for taking out the mediocrity from my walk with You and for keeping me as the apple of Your eye!



Sunday School teacher's prayer

Several souls
Will come to me today
To hear of Thee.
What I am
What I say,
Will lead them to Thee,
Or drive them away.
Stand by, Lord, I pray.

—Selected

Communicating the Gospel

We must really encourage our church to prepare and equip themselves with the weapons for battle. Have we as

Jesus Wants Me

Tune: Jesus Loves Me

Jesus wants my heart, I know,
For the Bible tells me so;
He can sing and talk through me;
Others, too, His love will see.

Jesus wants my feet, I know,
So that I for Him may go
To tell other girls and boys
How He can make us rejoice.

Jesus wants my hands, that's true;
There are kind things I can do.
He can work and play through me,
So I'll shine for Him, you see.

Jesus wants my eyes to see
All that He has made for me;
Then I'll thank Him for them all,
Even if I am so small.



Jesus wants my ears to hear
What He says through Mother dear;
I'll come when she calls and then
She won't have to call again.

Chorus:

Live in me, Jesus,
Live in me, Jesus,
Live in me, Jesus,
That I may live for You.

—Author unknown

Fathers, let's be careful

A careful man I ought to be;
A little fellow follows me;
I do not dare to go astray
For fear he'll go the selfsame way.

I cannot once escape his eyes
Whate'er he sees me do, he tries;
Like me, he says, he's going to be,
The little chap who follows me.

He thinks that I am good and fine,
Believes in every word of mine
The base in me he must not see,
The little chap who follows me.

I must remember as I go,
Through summer's fun and winter's
snow,
I'm building for the years to be
The little chap who follows me.

—Anonymous

pastors stopped reaching out to the non-Christians? We have become comfortable with just doing our daily routines like being a pastor and just hope for the best while we sit back in our living room. Maybe that spark we once had for reaching for the Kingdom has faded or gone out.

There are probably a dozen things going on in your church but let me ask you a question. How many of these activities cause the members to really become active in bringing others to the marvelous knowledge of Jesus Christ, incorporating the surrounding vicinity,

and gearing something to incorporate them also. From the pulpit we pastors can influence our congregations to actively witness through neighborhood evangelism, friendship evangelism, having programs, teaching and seminars geared for those who haven't made a meaningful commitment to the Lord. Work as a team unit to bring it about. Not to see how many people we can bring to our church but to bring them into a meaningful, life-changing relationship with the Living God.

If you don't have any vision, pray that God would spark or ignite your faith to

have the zeal. If the homosexuals and child-molesters can march around parading their falsehoods, we can make a stand for our faith and through the Lord's power and conviction God will bring homosexuals, child-molesters, alcoholics, as well as blue collar and white collar workers into a precious relationship with Christ. Pray and seek the Lord on it. This is a pressing need we all must address so we can equip church members and further the kingdom of God.

May the good Lord bless you.

—Submitted anonymously

THE WOMEN'S PAGE



The Southwest Central Minnesota District Women's Retreat was held on Oct. 17-18. Mrs. Rodney Johnson and Mrs. Ted Berkas were the speakers. Mrs. Lois Oscarson gave a quilting demonstration. The picture is of several ladies who created a unique style show as part of the retreat program.



Scandia Lutheran WMF sang at the worship service on their Fall Harvest Festival Sunday. The WMF brought in produce and canned goods which were delivered to AFLBS.



Tioga, N.Dak.

Zion Lutheran WMF honored three ladies who received Honorary Membership Pins and certificates this fall. From Left to Right; Mrs. Deanna Peterson, Nora Baslie and Mrs. Leona Hersel.

Women's Missionary Federation

In memoriam gifts

Mrs. Elaine Ose, Thief River Falls, Minn.
Rev. Julius Hermunsle, Fergus Falls, Minn.
Ray Eastby, Roseau, Minn.
Bessie Edge, Roseau, Minn.
Orville Eraas, Tioga, N.Dak.
Ruth Erickson, Dalton, Minn.
Sven Svenningsen, Vally City, N.Dak.
ODElla Gross, Eureka, Calif.
Irene Billings, Lakota, N.Dak.

*Blessed are
those who die
in the Lord*



Eastern N. Dak. Spring Retreat scheduled

The Women's Retreat at Red Willow Bible Camp will be held March 20-21, 1987.

Registration will be between 3 and 4:30 p.m. on the 20th.

The theme is "Beloved, let us love one another," taken from I John 4:7. There will be Bible studies, lots of singing, skits and a wonderful time of fellowship. Registration is \$20.00.



Colfax, Wis.

Anna Madison and Hazel Everson received Honorary Membership Pins at Faith Lutheran of Running Valley.

our hymn study

Concordia, No. 91
Nicolai F. S. Grundtvig, 1817
Tr. George Taylor Rygh, 1909
Tune: EIN FESTE BURG
Martin Luther, 1529



God's Word Is Our Great Heritage

The primary characteristic of Grundtvig's hymns is their emphasis on the Word of God as the one and only rule

and guide for the believer. That truth is well demonstrated in:

God's Word is our great heritage,
And shall be ours forever;
To spread its light from age to age
Shall be our chief endeavor;
Through life it guides our way,
In death it is our stay;
Lord grant, while worlds endure,
We keep its teachings pure,
Throughout all generations.

This hymn was actually the fifth stanza of Grundtvig's Danish version of "A Mighty Fortress." The first four stanzas were a translation of Luther's hymn; the fifth was Grundtvig's own addition. Eventually the single stanza came to be used as a separate hymn in Norway and Denmark, primarily as a closing hymn or a special hymn for church festivals.

For Grundtvig, see #81.

For Rygh, see #62.

For Luther, see #239.

—Don Rodvold

Saved from drowning

At the age of nine, I had an accident that could have meant death by drowning if it had not been for God's protecting care. We had a watering hole at a small pond where we watered our cattle. On this particular day, my younger brothers and I were home alone to do the chores and water the cattle. The water had to be bailed out with a pail attached to a pole in order to reach the water and then poured into a watering trough. It was late in the winter and the ice had built up around the hole from us spilling water while bailing. There was some distance down to the water and when I had bailed up a pail and poured it into the trough and turned to get some more, I slipped and fell into the hole. How I managed to cling to the slippery side of the hole so as not to go under was a miracle. My brother just stood there looking at me and made no move to help me, which was a good thing, for if he had tried to pull me out we would surely both have gone down. He was only seven years old and we were so close

that at work or play we always came to one another's rescue if either one had difficulties.

It must have been the same divine power that later directed that stranger to come and rescue me that held my brother back, for he was not old enough to know the danger involved in trying to help me. There was a sawmill next to our farm and some farmers hauling logs to the mill were driving across our land; however, that road was some distance from the watering hole where we were, and I doubt that any one from this road or the mill could see us, and I did not holler. Nevertheless, somebody from the road or mill came driving across the field where there was no road and pulled me out, I could not have hung on much longer, and I was in no condition to holler. To this day I do not know who pulled me up or why he happened to come. He just came like someone had sent him to rescue me and then drove off. There was a fence around the hole to keep the cattle away and the trough was

Stout Simon

My debt is deep to Africa,
For in the bloody way
Stout Simon stooped to lift the cross
That on Christ's shoulders lay.

Stout Simon was an African;
He bore the cross that day,
But on the backs of Simon's kin
Still cross on cross they lay.
And suffering sons of Africa
a'down the bitter years
Have borne the cross of slavery
Of servitude and tears.

Stout Simon bore my Saviour's cross
Along that weary road,
God, let me help to bear the weight
Of Simon's brother's load.

— Author Unknown

outside of the fence. It was so cold that my clothes froze stiff by the time I got to the house, although it was just a short distance. The fact that I did not drown was a miracle!

"He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honour Him" (Ps. 91:15).

Miracles,
George R. Nelson, Sr.

THE JOB

But, God, it won't come right! It won't come right!
I've worked it over till my brain is numb.
The first flash came so bright,
Then more ideas after it—flash! I thought it some
New constellation men would wonder at.
Perhaps it's just a firework—flash! fizz! spat!
Then darker darkness and scorched pasteboard
And sour smoke.

But, God, the thought was great,
The scheme, the dream—why, till the first charm broke,
The thing just built itself while I, elate,
Laughed and admired it. Then it stuck,
Half done—the lesser half, worse luck!
You see, it's dead as yet—a frame, a body—and the heart,
The soul, the fiery, vital part
To give it life is what I cannot get. I've tried—
You know it!—tried to snatch live fire,
And pawed cold ashes! Every spark has died.
It won't come right. I'd drop the thing entire—
Only—I can't! I love my job.
You, who ride the thunder—
Do You know what it is to dream and drudge and throb?
I wonder.

Did it come at you with a rush, your dream, your plan?
If so, I know how you began.
Yes, with rapt face and sparkling eyes,
Swinging the hot globe out between the skies,
Marking the new seas with their white beach lines,
Sketching in sun and moon, the lightning and the rains,
Sowing the hills with pines,
Wreathing a rim of purple round the plains!
I know you laughed then, as you caught and wrought
The first swift, rapturous outlines of your thought.
And then—
Men!

I see it now.
Oh, God, forgive my pettish row!
I see your job. While ages crawl
Your lips take laboring lines, your eyes a sadder light,
For man, the fire and flower and center of it all—
Man won't come right!

After your patient centuries,
Fresh starts, recastings, tired Gethsemanes
And tense Golgothas, he, your central theme,
Is just a jangling echo of your dream.
Grand as the rest may be, he ruins it.

Why don't you quit?
Crumple it all and dream again! But no;
Flaw after flaw, you work it out, revise, refine -
Bondage, brutality and war and woe,
The sot, the fool, the tyrant and the mob—
Dear God, how You must love Your job!
Help me, as I love mine.

—Badger Clark

REASON FOR LIFE

I don't know how to say it, but somehow
it seems to me;
That maybe we are stationed where
God wants us to be.
That the little place I'm filling
is the reason for my birth,
And just to do the work I do,
He sent me down to earth.
If God had wanted otherwise
I reckon He'd have made
me just a little different,
of a worse or better grade.
And since God knows and understands
all things on land and sea;
I fancy that He placed me here,
just where He wanted me.
Sometimes I get to thinking
as my labors I review;
That I should like a higher place,
with greater things to do.
But I come to the conclusion
when my envying is stilled,
That the post to which God sent me
is the post He wanted filled.
So I plod along and struggle in the hope,
when day is through,
That I'm really necessary to the things
God wants to do.
And there isn't any service I can give
which I should scorn;
For it may be just the reason
God allowed that I be born!

—Author Unknown

BESURETOREADTHIS

IFYOUFINDTHISHARDTOREAD
YOUWOULDHAVEAHARDTIMEWITH
ANCIENTDOCUMENTSWHERETHEY
LEFTNOSPACEINORDERTOSAVE
VERYEXPENSIVEPARCHMENTIN
WRITINGDIDYOUEVERCONSIDER
THATSOMETIMESYOURLIFELOOKS
LIKETHISWHENYOULEAVENO
SPACEFORGODINYOURLIFEIT
FREQUENTLYBECOMESVERY
JUMBLEDRUNTOGETHERAND
DIFFICULTTOSORTOUTIFYOU
HAVETAKENTHETIMETODECIPHER
THISLITTLENOTECONSIDER
SPENDINGANEQUALAMOUNTON
SOMETHINGVERYUSEFULYOUR
RELATIONSHIPWITHGODTHAT
COULDTURNOUTTOCHANGEYOUR
LIFEORATTHEVERYLEASTGIVE
ITSOMEBREATHINGROOM

New Hope Center Beacon

Thor Haugen dies, once headed New Hope Center

Thor Haugen, past director of New Hope Center, 212 11th Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minn., passed away on Dec. 19. He was 71.

He suffered a heart attack on Nov. 25 and was hospitalized there until his death.

Before New Hope Center was begun, he was superintendent or director of the predecessor Gateway Gospel Mission, assuming that position in 1954. New Hope Center was started in about 1960 when redevelopment in Minneapolis' lower loop forced the mission to move and is a home and rehabilitation center for men. Some work with women has been carried on at another location. Mr.

Haugen retired a couple years ago.

(Ed. note: Well done, good and faithful servant, to use the words of the Lord. Thor Haugen dedicated his life to "picking up the pieces" in human lives and helping to fashion something beautiful out of them. We present below something that Thor wrote, not before published, although he certainly expressed the same thoughts many times. Remember, as you read, the firsthand experiences the writer had with people brought to the depths by drink.

It is interesting that Thor Haugen wrote an article on the Center for the very first *Ambassador* ever published, Feb. 12, 1963.)

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Stay away from drink

Many believe they can use liquor occasionally, but that is how people become alcoholics. For Christians to use small amounts of alcoholic beverages may not harm them physically or spiritually, but is a very poor example to a weaker brother in the faith, or to children in the home. Many have said, "I never saw my parents drunk, but they drank, and I tried it at a young age and discovered it seemed good for me; now I'm an alcoholic." Paul said that he refrained from things so as not to hurt anyone. We should not knowingly give a chance for someone to stumble or be offended. He said, "All things are lawful, but not all are expedient." We are being watched and our example is scrutinized more than we will ever know. James wrote that we should keep ourselves "unspotted from the world." A good guide for Christians is "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus"

(Col. 3:17). We ask the Lord to bless our food—we eat in the name of the Lord Jesus, but how many ask the Lord to bless even one drink?

It is better to deny ourselves a right, if we think drinking is a right, than to have someone tell us later, "You used it; I thought I could, but I couldn't handle it." Don't try to defend drinking; it may lead someone into a bad state of affairs. The Japanese have a saying: "Man takes a drink, drink takes a drink, drink takes the man." It is so true.

—Thor Haugen

Lay Pastor Gustav Nordvall passed away

Lay Pastor Gustav Nordvall, 72, passed away suddenly at his home at Minnesota Hill, rural Roseau, Minn., on the evening of Jan. 5. The day before he and his wife had brought their daughter Bonnie back to Concordia College, Moorhead, Minn., where she is a freshman.

He was pastor of Badger Creek Lutheran Church, Badger, and Oiland Lutheran Church, Greenbush, which he had served since 1973.

His funeral was held on Sat., Jan. 10, at Messiah Lutheran Church, Roseau.

A complete obituary will be given in our next issue. In the meantime, our sincere sympathy is extended to Mrs. Nordvall and Bonnie and the congregations he served.

MISSIONARY OLIVER BERGH DIED

Rev. Oliver G. Bergh, 63, missionary to Japan from 1951-80, first under the Lutheran Free Church, passed away on Oct. 17, 1986. He had retired in 1985 from service in the U. S.

Oliver Bergh was born at Cereal, Alta., Can., on July 25, 1923. He took his college and seminary work at Augsburg in Minneapolis, Minn., leaving for the mission field immediately following his ordination. He was married to Judith Adesm in 1950.

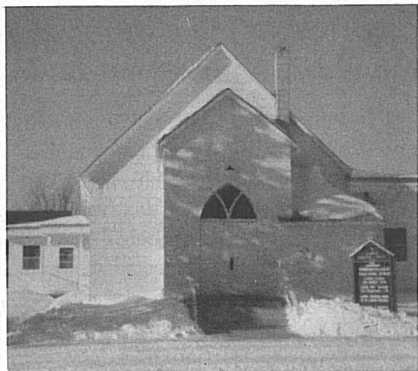
Blessed be his memory.

(Ed. note: Oliver Bergh and I were in seminary together for one year. He was a man of sincere and earnest faith.)

AFLTS Summer Institute '82

Note John Johnson (row 1, 2nd from left) and Pastor Gustav Nordvall (row 2, far right) both of whom have recently passed away.





Landstad Lutheran

Shevlin, Minn.

February 20-22

The Shevlin Lutheran Parish, Shevlin, Minn., welcomes each of you to our AFLC Bible Conference, Friday through Sunday, Feb. 20-22, at Landstad Lutheran Church in Shevlin.

We are seeking to provide housing in homes for all who desire it. We encourage you to let us know by Feb. 6 if you would like to stay in a home while attending the conference. However, we will continue to provide homes as long as room is available, up to the time of the conference. For housing information in homes, please contact Mrs. Linda Wallin, Rt. 1, Box 510, Shevlin, Minn. 56676. Her telephone number is 218-785-2464.

—Pastor Dennis O'Neil

Here is information about motel accommodations:

Days Inn (formerly the Thrifty Scot Motel). Telephone: 218-751-0390; Business Hwy. 2 West, Bemidji, Minn. 56601. Mailing address: 2420 Paul Bunyan Dr. N. W. One person - \$24.00, 2 persons - \$29.00, one bed, 4 persons - \$38.00, children - \$1.00 per child. Prices are plus tax.

Super 8 Motel, 1815 Paul Bunyan Dr. N. W. Telephone: 218-751-8481. One person - \$25.88, 2 persons - \$31.88, 4 persons - \$38.88, Children 12 and under free.

(Note: In Bemidji, Hwy. 197, Business Hwy. 2 and Paul Bunyan Dr. N. W. are all the same.)

Dutch Mill Motel, Hwy. 2 West in Bagley, 56621. Telephone: 218-694-2050 One person - \$21.20, 2 persons - \$23.85, one bed, 4 persons - \$31.80, Children 12 and under free.

For the names of other motels in the area, please contact Mrs. Wallin.

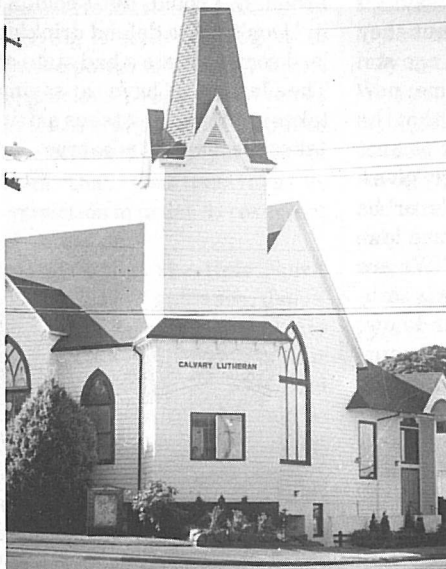
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AFLC sponsors four Bible Conferences



Minot, N.Dak., Bethel Lutheran, February 13-15



Everett, Wash. Calvary Lutheran February 20-22

Eagan, Minn. Living Word Lutheran February 27-Mar. 1

Ladies: Don't miss the special Saturday noon WMF luncheon at the church on the 28th!