



# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

January 29, 1985

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

# at the MASTER'S FEET

## Repentance

Psalm 51 is "A Contrite Sinner's Prayer for Pardon."

In verses 1-5, King David prays for forgiveness. His heart cry is a plea for mercy, according to God's lovingkindness—the basis for his and our salvation and hope. He acknowledged that he had sinned basically against God by sinning against Bathsheba, Uriah and society. He acknowledged that he was a sinner from conception in his mother's womb. (Here we have an intimation that life begins at conception and that we are born with original sin.)

David did not blame God, nor fellowmen, nor circumstances, for his sins, for he says to God, "I have sinned, and done that which is evil in Thy sight; that Thou mayest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest." The contrite, praying sinner knows that he deserves condemnation.

The truly repentant sinner prays for renewal of joyful fellowship and peace with God (verses 6-12). Purity in mind and heart and life, as well as forgiveness, are the earnest desire of the truly penitent.

David felt his utter defilement and need for cleansing. "Purify me with hyssop and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (verse 7). Please read the story of the cleansing of the leper in Leviticus 14, and also Colossians 1:20, I John 1:9, and I Peter 1:18-19. The Old Testament Scriptures regarding blood sacrifice for sin clearly point to Jesus' supreme sacrifice through the blood of the Lamb, the only means of reconciliation between the holy God and sinful man.

The penitent sinner saved by grace also desires a right and steadfast spirit with which to serve the Lord (verse 10).

Having experienced forgiveness and reconciliation with the merciful God, the Psalmist dedicates himself to Him for service (verses 13-17). He says, "Then will I teach transgressors Thy way; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee."

Yes, it is with a grateful and burning heart the forgiven penitent reaches out to the unconverted and is glad that he can serve his loving and merciful Lord. Having experienced the grace of God anew he wants his life to tell for Jesus. Then his witness

will be "thus saith the Lord" when he shares the Scriptures in home, church, community, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. Now he knows assuredly that the Holy Spirit working through the Word will convert sinners and feed the saints. With the servant's attitude and a contrite heart he will gladly do all his work as unto the Lord, praying with the Psalmist (verses 18-19): "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build Thou the walls of Jerusalem."

Yes, God, please continue to build Thy Church and rebuild what has been broken down by our disobedience and selfish willfulness. By Your merciful lovingkindness, grant all of your people a spirit of repentance and humility, faith, and obedience to Thy Word and will. "Then wilt Thou delight in the sacrifices of righteousness . . ." And now let us turn to the New Testament and read Romans 12:1-2 from J.B. Phillips' translation: ("We Have Seen God's Mercy And Wisdom: How Shall We Respond?") "With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give Him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to Him and acceptable by Him. Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the Plan of God for you is good, meets all His demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity."



by Pastor  
Amos O. Dyrud

### THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413

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


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Send \$10.00 subscription to the LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55441. Second-class postage paid at Minneapolis, Minn.

Postmaster: Send address changes to THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55441.

Volume 23 Number 3



## HIDDEN PROMISE IN PSALM 23

**when  
is a  
rut not  
a rut?**

**Marva J. Sedore**

There is more than one way to be in a rut.

As I rode my bike through the woods I kept trying to stay out of the deep rut made, I suppose, by a motorcycle. Frustration mounted as I continued to lose my balance, to get my tires stuck, and to waste a lot of energy trying to make progress. But when I finally gave up fighting that awful rut and chose instead to ride along in it, I was amazed at the ease and pleasure that resulted. As long as I was careful to stay in the midst of what had now become a "track" to me, I didn't get mired in mud or snagged by dead branches. I was more free to enjoy the scenery and to pedal with more power. Whether the path was a "rut" or a "track" depended upon my choice and the perspective which resulted.

So it is with the way of the Lord. I was excited to learn recently that the Hebrew word which we translate "paths" in Psalm 23:3 ("He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake") actually means

"tracks." The word comes from a Hebrew verb root that means "to roll," something that is round. From this verb is derived the noun which signifies "a cart" and, consequently, the one used in Psalm 23:3 for an "entrenchment" or "wagon-track."

The term is used figuratively in the Scriptures to mean "the snares of the wicked" (Ps. 140:6). Since in Psalm 23:3 the word occurs together with the noun for "that which is right," we know that the tracks meant in this verse are a positive course of action.

Psalm 23 begins, of course, with the assurance that the Lord is a faithful Shepherd, who feeds and provides rest and refreshment for His flock. But He doesn't carry the sheep in the path that they should travel. He *leads* them. They could choose not to follow if they wanted. The parable of Jesus about the one who goes astray (Matt. 18:12-14) indicates that even some who are members of the flock might wander away. We each must choose what we want to do about our Shepherd's leading.

Two other phrases in the psalm add insight to our understanding of

the meaning of the Lord leading us in the tracks of righteousness. The one I want to study with you first was also a surprising discovery for me because of the misunderstanding created by a romanticized interpretation of this psalm. In verse 4, the phrase, "thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me," is usually thought of in soft and gentle terms. We like to hear the word *comfort* as if it were meant to make us comfortable. Recently I read in the Navigator's *Daily Walk* Bible reading program this arresting sentence: "God does not comfort us to make us comfortable, but to make us comforters."

When we read this phrase in Psalm 23, we must remember that the rod was used by the shepherd for beating or smiting—for chastisement. It was a club, not a feather! The implication is that sometimes the sheep need to be dealt with sternly to keep them in the tracks of righteousness.

We might wonder how that could be comforting. The Hebrew construction of the phrase almost seems to be directed toward our doubts. It adds an extra pronoun *they* in order to say, "thy rod and thy staff—they are comforting me." David seems to be assuring us, "Yes, indeed! What actually appears to be painful to you is in reality the source of comfort."

That makes a lot of sense to me! Recently my life was being torn up by great turmoil and personal crisis. Some days the pain seemed too great as I moved into new work outside of the parish I had been serving and as I battled several dimensions of deterioration in my health. Yet above all the anguish came this promise: the rod is a source of comfort! Sufferings are meant to help me to follow the Shepherd in the tracks of righteousness. Yes, indeed! It was good to know that my wise Shepherd loved me so much that He allowed those dimensions of difficulty to keep me in the right tracks.

Just as the jarring of the rough edge reminded me I needed to concentrate on keeping my bicycle in the center of the tracks, so I needed the discipline of the Shepherd's rod to remind me to watch carefully how He leads. I don't want to wander from the tracks of His righteousness.

◇

## to be a Christian

by Bernhard Christensen  
1901-1984

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20).

"Not that I . . . am already made perfect, but I press on . . ." (Phil. 3:12).

To be a Christian is not only to have found the Life in Christ. To be a Christian is also to be engaged in a lifelong quest for the fulness of that

Life's meaning and power. To be a true Christian is to be ever unsatisfied with the level of life already attained and to lift up one's eyes to the promised hills of God that beckon forward and upward.

The call to seek the higher planes of Christian life and experience comes to each generation of believers. It comes not only through the outstanding spiritual pioneers, the Pauls and the Luthers of the centuries, but through countless Chris-

### RUTS . . .

I want Him to change me, to conform me to the image of the perfect Lamb.

The other phrase that further defines the nature of this entrenchment is this final thought from verse 3: "for His name's sake." The phrase means "for the purpose of vindicating His name, of maintaining His reputation or character consistently."

What a privilege! Our Shepherd leads us in tracks that will show his character to be consistent. In other words, if His people stay in the tracks of His right ways of behaving, they will be witnesses to dimensions of this Shepherd's character. If they remain loving in the face of brutal opposition or persecution, they will maintain the reputation of a God of love. If they suffer calamity with calmness and trust, they will reveal their Shepherd to be a God of strength and grace. Again I say, what a privilege!

Our God has been revealed to us as such a God—of love and strength and grace. In our times of discipline we have the honor of passing that revelation on to those around us. Surely His goodness and mercy will follow us if that is the choice of our life! We will indeed dwell in the Lord's house forever because He has kept us in His path. And we will have invited others to join us in His house because we have revealed the goodness of His tracks to them by our choosing to remain in them.



There is more than one way to be in a rut. To be in the rut of sin, despair, and rebellion against the purposes of God leads to death. Yet, our Shepherd calls us to follow Him in the tracks of righteousness. We are guided and comforted there by the rod of His chastisement. The results of staying in those tracks are glory to Him—as His character is shown to be consistent, and joy to us—as we experience the consequent freedom, power, and blessings of pasture and rest.

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# TOWARD the HILLS of GOD

Part I

tians in humbler stations of life. Also in the Church of today there are many whose ears have been opened to hear this upward calling. The Spirit is leading us to glimpse anew the boundless riches of power in the Living Christ. Facing the need of the present world-situation and the inner crisis of the Church, as well as the deep hungers of their own hearts, many Christians are seeking and praying for a "closer walk with God."

Such a quest for the higher realms of a spiritual living on the part of both individual and group surely ministers to one of the most basic needs of the Church; and every suggestion that may help to guide our footsteps in it should be given with gratitude and joy. Who would not gladly share with others an evangel of victory which has become precious in his own life?

Where, then, we ask one another, lies the pathway leading to this life more deeply "hid with Christ in God"—a life filled with more of His power because it is more completely controlled by His life? That pathway is not new nor unknown, even though it is narrow and often steep, and it is not easy to keep our sluggish feet pressing constantly upward where it leads. As we point out some of the milestones that mark its course, they will seem familiar—and yet at times strangely new and challenging.

#### I. Personal Christian Faith

We must begin here, for this is basic to all else. We can never know the life of Christian liberty until Christ has spoken His word of forgiveness and peace to us *personally*. We cannot begin to climb toward the heights until we have definitely en-

tered upon the Way. Personal assurance of being a child of God, and the removal of all fear of death and judgment, are the precious heritage of every true believer. Such assurance is the fruit of completely putting oneself into the hands of Christ and implicitly trusting in His saving grace. Many a Christian has grown weary and discouraged because he did not at the beginning of the journey of faith wholly give himself up to Christ in full self-surrender.

*Am I personally trusting Christ as my Savior, and wholly dedicated to Him?*

## II. The Morning Watch

We need to renew our covenant of faith in Christ every day. We need to meet Him, to read His Word attentively and prayerfully. We need to listen for the voice of His Spirit in the depth of our hearts. We need to speak to Him about our difficulties and trials, our victories and joys. We need to intercede for our friends and for His whole Kingdom. And there is no better time for this daily tryst with our Master than the early morning, before the day's work begins. He Himself has set us the example (Mark 1:35). Countless Christians have proved its power. Each of us, too, needs the strength that day by day awaits us at the Source. And if we have entered into "the secret of His presence" in the morning, it will be easier to "practice His presence" throughout the hours of the day.

*Have I formed the sacred custom of beginning each day with God?*

## III. Obedience

Christ is not only Savior. He is Lord. We cannot continue to trust Him as our Savior unless we are willing to be obedient to His will. "He that willeth to *do His will* . . . shall know." His will is not a burden; it is a source of strength for bearing our burdens. Jesus calls it a yoke. And the purpose of a yoke is to make it easier to draw a load along the way.

Sometimes Christians are slow to learn that obedience is the secret of joy. We are tempted to imagine that partial obedience is more satisfying. But it is never so. Man can only be really happy when he is doing the will of God.

# the vision

"Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18).

There is a vision that the proud world needs:—  
The world that says, "I see," and yet is blind;  
That says, "I know," and yet is ignorant,  
And in its progress leaves the Christ behind;  
The world that boasts its wealth, and yet is poor;  
That says, "I have," yet is not satisfied;  
The world that says, "I will," and yet is weak;  
And in its wisdom sets the Christ aside.

This is the vision that the sad world needs:—  
The vision of the Christ upon the cross,—  
The Christ whose tender hand its woes can heal,  
Whose pitying heart can comfort every loss;  
Ten thousand times ten thousand broken hearts!  
Yet His has borne the agony of all,  
And now He waits with outstretched hands of love  
Till they shall hear and answer to His call.

This is the vision that the dark world needs:—  
The vision of the Christ who died for men,  
And from whose cross there radiates a light  
Whose brightness never shall be quenched again.  
Oh, fearful night of anguish and of sin!  
Oh, dreadful darkness where no stars arise!  
His truth alone can guide the groping soul,  
His touch alone unseal the blinded eyes.

This is the vision that the mad world needs:—  
The vision of the Christ uplifted high  
Above its battlefields of blood and death,  
Where those dark shapes in foul corruption lie.  
Ten thousand times ten thousand ghastly slain,  
An open sore that bleeds and will not cease;  
Yet this Man's wounds avail to staunch that wound,  
If but the world would take His offered peace.

This is the vision; but the world sweeps on,  
With speed and clamor filling eye and ear;  
There is no vision for the willful blind,  
There is no voice for those who will not hear.  
The world is wretched, —naked, poor and blind,—  
Yet knows it not, and chants its helpless creeds;  
Unseen, unheard, still waits the patient Christ,  
This is the vision that the whole world needs.

Annie Johnson Flint

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof" (Ps. 48:12).

Zion is that City of God about which we read in Ps. 46: "There is a river, the streams of which shall make glad the City of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High." This is the city which God has built on the foundations of the prophets and the apostles. And its inhabitants are all they who through baptism, faith and confession gather about Jesus as their King.

This city is surrounded by towers whereof not one shall be moved, but



## TOWARD GOD . . .

That will is revealed in the Word of God, and its meaning is clarified to us personally by the Spirit. The Spirit lives in the heart of every believer, and is always seeking to lead him in the Father's will. He speaks earnestly to the Christian's conscience concerning faithfulness in every daily duty; but He leads on far beyond the ordinary human conception of "duty." We are no longer merely His servants, says Jesus, but His friends—"if you do the things that I command you."

*Am I consistently obedient to my conscience, to the Word, and to the Spirit?*

(To be continued)

every tower shall insure the safety and comfort of those who dwell therein. All the attributes of God are such towers protecting this City of God, and guaranteeing safety and help to God's people.

When you feel weak and helpless, when the enemies are many and temptations are great, so that with waning courage you are forced to ask: "How will it be possible for me to remain steadfast and attain to salvation?" then look to the power of God's omnipotence until you are able to say with Paul: "I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12). When you cannot understand God's guidance, when you cannot see the purpose in His chastisement, when you are bewildered by the fact that the ungodly prosper while God's own children suffer, then look at the tower of God's wisdom and learn anew that all these things are governed by the all-wise counsels of God Himself, and rest assured that He will place no burden upon you without giving you the strength to bear it. And when all seems dark about you, and you are on the verge of despair, and your sense of unworthiness makes you ask: Is it possible for me, sinful as I am, to be a child of God? How blessed then to be able to seek shelter under that tower above all towers—the tower of God's boundless love! Take your Bible and read passage after passage proclaiming His wonderful love, until you can confidently say: Oh, think of it, God loves even me!

Under the protection afforded by these towers, weary and despairing souls of all times have found safety and peace. Never has a sincere soul found the gate to this City of God closed. It is always wide open.

Oh, enter this place of refuge, my friend, if you are burdened with sin and guilt. Find protection beneath these everlasting towers, and rest assured that no harm can reach you while you are hiding in God.

—Søren Dahl

(Courtesy, Tract Mission)

(Quotation from *Life As a Stewardship* by Guy L. Morill)

"Money talks; it expresses what its possessors actually are. The ordinary speech of men betrays their crass materialism. As you travel in a railway train, keep your eyes open and you soon catch the vocabulary in which the words most commonly recurring are these: 'dollar,' 'share,' 'acres,' 'crops,' 'houses,' 'automobiles,' and the like. With metallic click these words ring from the tongue and jar upon your ears like cash registers, recording the thought, the true tendencies, of your fellow travelers, as they make their journey of life from the station of birth onward to the final terminal. Yes, money talks, and while it is true that it is not on speaking terms with everyone, and to many it may only say 'goodby,' yet it speaks a various tongue which reveals the true inwards of man. Money is as garrulous as the most gossipy neighbor. Like the megaphone, it publishes to the world your mercy or miserliness, your righteousness or your injustice, your Christ-likeness or your covetousness. It permits him who runs to read your preferences: whether in morals or dress, in religion or real estate."

—Mars A. Dale,  
*Ten Studies in the  
Stewardship of the  
Christian Man,*

Augsburg Publishing House.

## REGRET OMISSION

We regret that when the AFLC Directory of Officers was most recently printed, Nov. 20, 1984, issue, that the name of the Executive Director of Home Missions was omitted inadvertently. It is given below:

HOME MISSIONS

Executive Director

Rev. Elden Nelson

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.

Minneapolis, Minn. 55441

# Weakness turned to strength

*One day as I journeyed down life's lonely road, my spirit grew weary, nearly fainting within.*

*It was then that I fell to my knees in distress, crying with my voice to my God overhead,*

*"I am so tired, so restless, and rushed, what but Thy grace can destroy this distress."*

*And then He did whisper these words of advice, which strengthened my spirit, and gave me great rest.*

*"My son, look up at the mountains around, ponder their height and heed their advice.*

*For though the winds rend, yet they are still calm, for they are aware their foundations are strong.*

*And surely as these you forever will be, if you will but put your trust in Me.*

*So now, my good son, be off on your way, and keep pondering anew all I have taught you."*

*So I arose and was off, for the day was near gone, but I was not rushed for by His word I did walk.*

*But then the sun set and up ahead I did see, a pack of learned scoffers making fun of me.*

*And then I did fall to my knees in distress, crying with my voice to my God overhead,*

*"I am so timid, so fearful of men, what but Thy Word can destroy my unrest?"*

*And then He did whisper these words of advice, which erased all my doubts and gave me great rest.*

*"My son, do observe this rotted old log, ponder its message and heed its advice.*

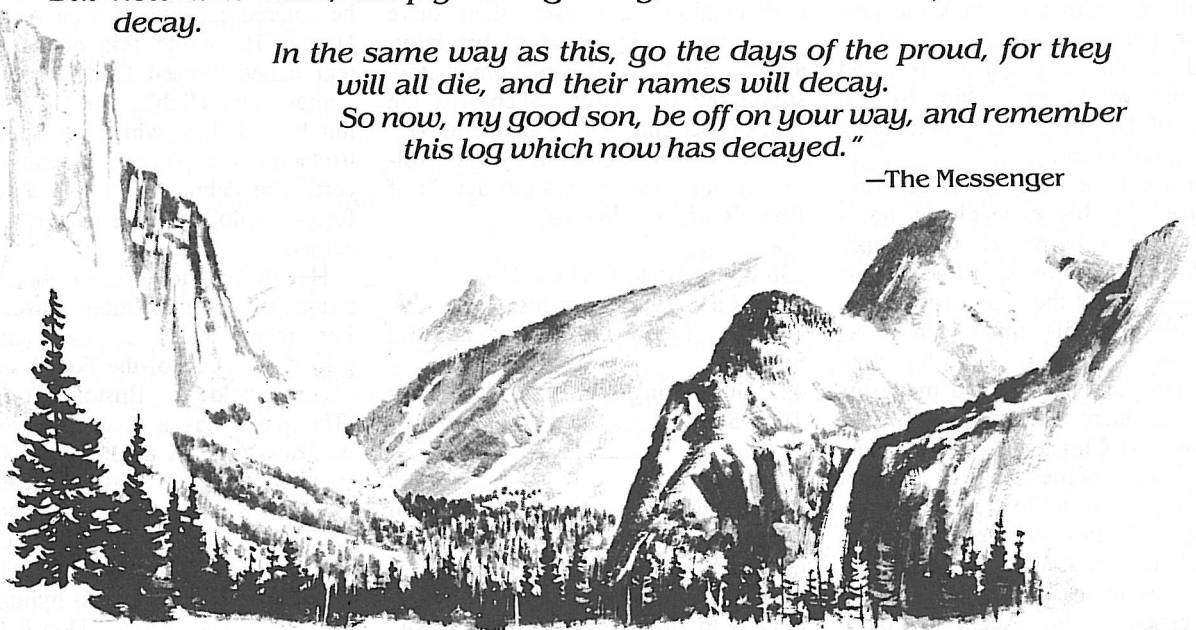
*Sure it was green and growing one day, spreading its roots in every which way,*

*But now it is dead, simply rotting away, and all that is left is dust and decay.*

*In the same way as this, go the days of the proud, for they will all die, and their names will decay.*

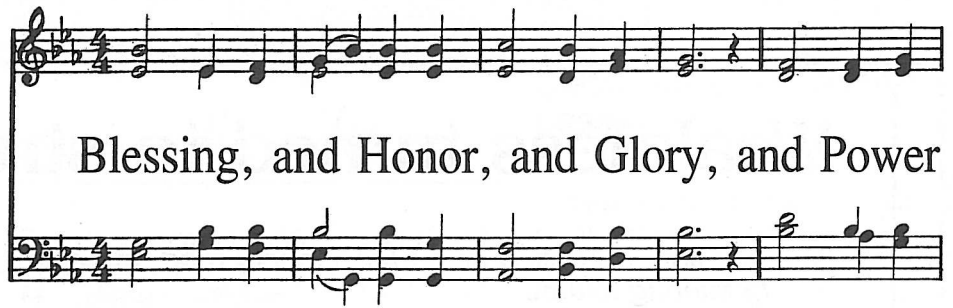
*So now, my good son, be off on your way, and remember this log which now has decayed."*

*—The Messenger*



## Our hymn study

Concordia, No.22  
Horatius Bonar, 1808-1889  
Tune: American Hymn



One of Scotland's most earnest soul-winners was also its greatest hymnist. He was Horatius Bonar, a name that will ever be cherished by all who find something of their own love for the Savior expressed in the spiritual songs of this noble Scottish clergyman (Scottish Free Church).

Bonar, from a long line of clergymen, was an enthusiastic Bible student, especially in the field of prophecy. To aid his Bible study he travelled to Egypt and Palestine (1855-56) and so obtained additional background for his preaching and writing. He was ultimately led to Pre-Millennialism and the imminence of the Lord's coming.

With the Savior's return he associated the predicted restoration of Israel, destruction of the anti-Christ, the first resurrection, the translation of the Church, the marriage of the Lamb, and the inauguration of the millennial kingdom. He believed that evil men would wax worse and worse, that the poison of sin would become more and more deadly and that immediately before the Return the dark energies of iniquity would recapitulate themselves in some person or institution or society which would be the very anti-Christ, and the Lord would smite him by the breath of His mouth and inaugurate the reign of grace.

Bonar's fame and influence were enhanced by his evangelistic tracts and devotional books. He was deeply immersed in his work. Although his church inherited the Calvinism of the 16th century, his mind and heart were more generous than his doctrine. His love of mankind made his dominant interest the bringing of individuals to Christ without consideration for predestination. (From Baily's *The Gospel in Hymns*)

One of the strange things in Bonar's history is that he did not use his hymns in his own church, while the outside world, except Scotland,

Blessing, and honor, and glory, and  
pow'r,  
Wisdom, and riches, and strength  
evermore,  
Give ye to Him who our battle hath  
won,  
Whose are the kingdom, the crown,  
and the throne,  
Whose are the kingdom, the crown,  
and the throne.

Dwelleth the light of the glory with  
Him,  
Light of a glory that cannot grow  
dim,  
Light in its silence and beauty and  
calm,  
Light in its gladness and brightness  
and balm,  
Light in its gladness and brightness  
and balm.

Ever ascendeth the song and the joy,  
Ever descendeth the love from on  
high,  
Blessing, and honor, and glory, and  
praise  
This is the theme of the hymns that  
we raise,  
This is the theme of the hymns that  
we raise.

Life of all life, and true Light of all  
light,  
Star of the dawning, unchangingly  
bright,  
Sing we the song of the Lamb that  
was slain,  
Dying in weakness, but rising to  
reign,  
Dying in weakness, but rising to  
reign.

acclaimed and adopted them. Not until near the end of his active ministry did he venture to introduce his own hymns in his own psalm-singing congregation, and even then there was a protest by some of his laity, and at last two officers immediately strode out of church. Such was the lack of recognition and appreciation.

(Please read the studies on the following for more interesting details of Bonar's life and hymns.)

236 Glory Be to God the Father  
273 I Lay My Sins on Jesus  
409 Go, Labor On; Spend and Be Spent  
427 Great King of Kings, Why Dost Thou Stay

The composer, Matthias Keller, of "American Hymn" was born in Germany and educated in Austria. It was after a visit to Boston that he determined to immigrate to the USA,

which he did when he was 33.

He lived first in Philadelphia and made a living playing violin. He soon moved to New York City where he entered a contest for an American Hymn. He wrote this music and a text called "Speed Our Republic, O Father on High" and won five hundred dollars which he spent introducing the piece at a grand concert. The debut was a flop and only forty-two dollars were gathered in receipts.

He moved to Boston where his hymn was much more successful. For many years it was annually played as a part of the Fourth of July concert held in Boston Common. (The piece has a "band" flavor.) It was also used as a setting for Oliver Wendell Holmes' "Ode of Peace" at the First Peace Jubilee in Boston in 1877. It has long since been most associated with Bonar's hymn. Keller wrote over 100 songs and hymns.

—Don Rodvold

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# editorials

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## HOW MUCH TIME?

No, this isn't a discussion about how much time is left before Jesus comes again. That subject does attract a lot of attention, all right, but it isn't what we intend by the heading of this editorial.

Rather, we're thinking about the amount of time a Christian church member should spend in church activity each week. Right away the topic looms much larger than a relatively short editorial can cover. But we shall try to put something down and you readers can add to what we say.

Whenever discussion gets around to the stewardship of *time*, someone is sure to remind that *all* of time belongs to the Lord, the One who gives us all the time that we have. And that's true, even as all our worldly goods and our money really are His, too. But what is a reasonable amount of time to specifically devote to church activities? Just recently we have read about someone who tithed his or her time so that so many hours a week went into specific church activity.

The question comes, on what segment of time does one tithe? A tenth of the 168 hours in a week would come to almost 17 hours for the Lord, far more than the average Christian gives at present. If one's personal and family devotions can count toward the 17 hours, the gap would be narrowed somewhat but not entirely.

If the 56 hours people more or less concede to sleep are taken away from the total available, we have 112 hours with a tithe of 11.2 hours devoted to the Lord. Personal and family devotions, at half an hour a day, would reduce the time allowed to church to about eight per week. That still would be high in comparison to what many Christians are presently doing.

A total for a fairly active member might be: Sunday morning worship and Sunday School (including transportation)—2½ hours; midweek Bible study and choir rehearsal—2 hours; for a total of four and one-half hours. Add another hour and a half for a week in which there is a Ladies Aid or circle meeting for women or a men's brotherhood meeting for men. Add two and one-half hours for a week in which the church council meets, or an hour and a half for a youth meeting.

If one is a church school teacher, there will be the time spent in preparation to be considered. The same goes for the choir director and organist. Some are involved in evangelism witness programs, in visitation programs.

Yes, we can see where some individuals do reach the tithe of 112 working hours even apart from time spent in personal and family devotions.

We mustn't be legalistic about the amount of time one gives to personal devotional life and church work. That would be self-defeating. And yet it is interesting to think about the matter of time spent in specific Christian

work. That brings us to the question of congregational activities themselves. What constitutes a reasonable church schedule? How many nights a week should a pastor and congregation expect concerned members to be away from their homes for church meetings and functions? What parts of the programs and schedule are essential and what are of a good, though secondary, nature?

Church organizations and meetings fall into perhaps five categories: worship and learning (services, Bible studies, Christian education); administration (church council, committee meetings); fellowship and service (women's, men's and youth groups); worship enhancement (choirs, organists, pianists); and witness and charity (evangelism programs, other visitation, welfare). All churches stress the importance of worship attendance. The Association also puts heavy emphasis on the mid-week Bible study and prayer service. It is a place for both fellowship and learning, equipping believers for service in everyday life and in other areas of congregational work. The other areas of "life together," to use Bonhoeffer's term, should be entered upon as one is called to do so and as one senses the need.

How much time in the things strictly pertaining to God? That's the question we've tried to raise. Beyond doubt there are many demands on the time of most of us. Christians should be involved in a lot of worthwhile things. And they have to set aside a good portion for their time alone with God (and with their family with God) and for congregational life and activity. If you follow Jesus Christ, think seriously about what you should do.

## THE CONFESSION BOOTH

Pope John Paul II is calling for a return to the confessional booth, a place for Roman Catholics to confess sins to a priest and hear his instructions for penance (a prayer or work of reparation). The confessional has fallen into general disuse in the last couple of decades. The pope sees this as an unfortunate development.

The confessional booth was one of those things which distinguished Roman Catholics from Lutherans and other Protestants. Catholics, we said, *had* to go to confession and we suspected that in many cases it got to be largely an outward form without a great deal of meaning. We, on the other hand, confess our sins directly to God with no other mediator than Jesus. This, we felt, was more genuine.

And we still do. The New Testament, and the Old Testament, too, for the most part, speaks of the individual before the Lord. He cannot hide behind others. He must make his own confession, his faith must be his own. There is no mediator between God and man, but Jesus (I Timothy 2:5).

◇



## Letters to the editor

### CHRISTIANS, TAKE A STAND

In reply to the letter by S. M. Nordvall in the Dec. 18, 1984, issue ("Off My Chest"), it is very commendable to make a stand for the needy and abused. It is worthy of a pat on the back and congratulations. On the spur of the moment, though, I see a way that there would be less abused and illegitimate children! I visualize more Christian education, more teaching of the saving Word of God and more family prayer.

I encourage Christians to make a stand against what is wrong and immoral in this world today. Christians, train up your children in the way they should go and when they are grown they will not depart from it.

In training up children, teach them to turn to the Lord in all things. Teach children absolutes. White is white and black is black. And, yes, *love* them.

I thank and praise the Lord that we live in a country where we still have the freedom to choose where to educate our children. Christ said, we must "work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work."

Yes, make a stand against the enemy who sometimes comes like an angel of light. Yes, start thinking! Dare to be a lion-slayer or a giant-slayer. Touch, love, reach out and give it to our Lord and Savior. To God be the glory forever, Amen.

—Donna Graff  
Greenbush, Minn.

### The second mile

If a man compels you to go with him one mile, you are his slave; but if you voluntarily go with him two, then you rise from your slavery, confer a bounty on him and thus become his master.

E. Stanley Jones

### EDITORIAL . . .

At the same time, the Lutheran Church has always recognized the value, and sometimes the necessity, of confession before a pastor, or another Christian. The individual decides that, however. There are times when release from guilt doesn't come unless the confession is made in the presence of a trusted spiritual counselor, who then assures the penitent of God's forgiveness. We don't mean that God doesn't grant the forgiveness, but that the sinner for some reason is not able to accept it.

Further, most Lutheran churches have confession of sin as a part of the worship service liturgy. It is a group thing. The pastor may speak an absolution (declaration of God's forgiveness) or word of grace following it. Sometimes there is a condition attached indicating that it is the repentant who are forgiven. And spoken or not, that is the way it is. Each person in a congregation stands as an individual before the Lord. God knows the hearts. His forgiveness comes only where there is sorrow for sin.

Should the Roman Catholic Church go back to the confessional booth as universal practice? We don't know. For our part we must encourage one another to sincere personal confession to God through Christ whenever we are aware of sin in our lives. Nothing must stand between our souls and the Savior.

### Sister Judith Madland passed away

Sister Judith Madland, missionary to Madagascar under the Lutheran Free Church from 1947, and under the American Lutheran Church from 1963 to 1974, passed away from cancer in Minneapolis, Minn., on December 7, 1984. While her funeral and burial were at Winchester, Wis., on December 17, a memorial service was held at Augustana Home, Minneapolis, on December 13. Many attended that service, including former missionaries with her in Madagascar.

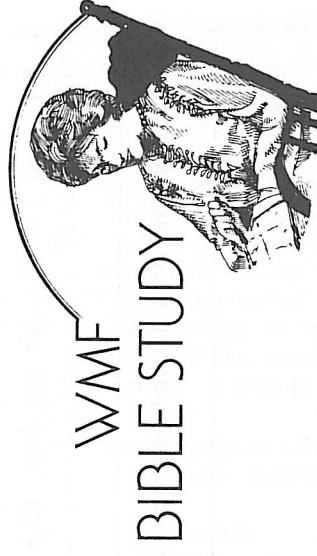
Judith Madland was born on September 16, 1909, to Rev. and Mrs. N. J. Madland. She lived with her parents in Wisconsin, Montana and Minnesota, where her father served parishes. After her childhood schooling she attended Scandinavia Academy, Central Junior College and Concordia College, the latter in Moorhead, Minn., where she earned her B. A. degree.

She taught high school for eight years, which also included some principalship experience. Then she realized that God had some other plans for her life. She did some graduate study at the University of Minnesota, studied music at MacPhail School of Music, Minneapolis, and attended the Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis before entering the Diaconate and Nurses' Training at the Lutheran Deaconess Hospital in Minneapolis. She then did some more graduate study and taught at the School of Nursing at Deaconess. Judith Madland was assistant to Sister Anna Bergeland in administration at Deaconess for a time.

Her foreign missionary service began in October, 1947, when she left for France for language study and then went to Madagascar where she taught schools in Betroka, Manasoa, Bezaha, Manatantely and Fort Dauphin.

She retired in 1974 and spent most of the years since in Minneapolis, residing at the last at Augustana. She is survived by a brother, three sisters, nieces and nephews and a host of friends.

Thanks be to God for her faithful service.



## Lesson III A CLOSER WALK WITH JESUS

### A Prayerful Walk

The Lenten Season is a very special time of the year. It is special to me and it should be to all of us, as we think of the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, who willingly gave His life a ransom and shed His precious blood for our redemption. This month, as we study about Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, let us allow the Lord to teach us the importance of our prayer life in our walk with Him. There is so much to learn about prayer in God's Word. "Watch unto prayer" (1 Pet. 4:7).

1. Read Matt. 26:36-46. When we think of the agony of Jesus over our sins and the burden He felt as He faced going to the cross, let us not take it lightly. We should continually love Him and thank Him for what He has done for us. "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 Jn. 4:19). "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16).

2. Who went with Jesus to the Garden of Gethsemane? Jn. 18:1

11. Jesus dealt tenderly with His disciples even when He was in anguish and suffering. What does He say to them in Matt. 26:41b,45

He knows our weakness. (Ps. 103:8-14). *Beautiful Savior!*

When Peter denied Him, we read in Lk. 22:61: "the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter," and Peter went out and wept tears of repentance. The Lord forgave him. After Jesus had risen, in tenderness He asked Peter: "Lovest thou Me?" (Jn. 21:15,16,17). Peter answered that he did love Him and Jesus said to him: Feed my lambs, feed my sheep and follow Me. Do we love Jesus today as we ought? May our prayer be, as we close this lesson, that we love Him more, that we are concerned, awake, alert, alive, that we would not deny Him but stand up and be counted for Him, serve Him faithfully and that our very lives would be lives of prayer. "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17).



## Women's Missionary Federation Budget Prayer Project for March

### My Missionary for a Day—\$21,000

This project supports our missionary wives, Mrs. George Knapp, Mrs. Connely Dyrud, Mrs. John Abel, Mrs. David Abel and Mrs. Charles Knapp. Pray for strength and courage for these workers. Write to encourage them through the WMF.

3. Which of His disciples did Jesus take to go a little farther with Him? Matt. 26:37 \_\_\_\_\_

What was another special time *they* were with Jesus? Matt. 17:1-8 \_\_\_\_\_

4. Jesus went on yet a little farther to be alone in prayer with His Father. What was His prayer? Matt. 26:39,42,44 \_\_\_\_\_

5. What did Jesus tell the three disciples? Matt. 26:38 \_\_\_\_\_

6. Did Peter, James and John prove to be concerned over Jesus' agony and watch and pray with Him? \_\_\_\_\_ What were they doing when He came back to them? Matt. 26:40a \_\_\_\_\_

7. What searching, convicting question did Jesus ask Peter? Matt. 26:40b \_\_\_\_\_

What does He admonish him in verse 41? \_\_\_\_\_

8. Why do you suppose He directed this question directly to Peter? Matt. 26:40. Also read Matt. 26:33-35. \_\_\_\_\_

Even when Jesus woke them up and spoke to His disciples they fell asleep again (Matt. 26:43,45).

9. Are we like the disciples? Are we apathetic, sleepy and unconcerned at times? Jesus speaks to us today, those same words, through His Word: "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?" Read the following verses: I Thess. 5:6, I Pet. 4:7, I Pet. 5:8, Rom. 13:11, Eph. 6:18, Lk. 18:1, Col. 4:2. What is similar in all of them? What are we admonished to do? \_\_\_\_\_

Let us be spiritually awake, praying and concerned with the things that concern the heart of Christ: salvation of lost souls (II Pet. 3:9), and that Christians live a life pleasing to Him (I Jn. 3:22). Discuss other prayer concerns.

10. What was the result for Peter and the others and will be for us, too, for not watching unto prayer? Matt. 26:56,58,69-75 \_\_\_\_\_

## *a prayer for the middle-aged*

Lord, Thou knowest better than I would myself that I am growing older and that someday I shall be old. Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion. Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs. Make me thoughtful but not moody, helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all, but Thou knowest, Lord, that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from recital of endless details, give me wings to get at the point. Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing, and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by. I dare not ask for grace to enjoy the tales of other's pains, but help me to endure with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory but for growing humility, and a lessening of cocksureness when my memory seems to clash with the memory of others. Teach me the glorious lesson that, occasionally, I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet—I do not want to be a saint—some of them are so hard to live with, but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil.

Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places, and the talents in unexpected people. And give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so.

—Reprinted from *Permanent Lights*.  
—Submitted

## Honorary memberships



### Everett, Wash.

Calvary WMF recently honored Alfreda McDowell and Vivian Forsberg who were presented certificates by Solveig Hays. Also honored, but not pictured, were Sandra Shafer and Violet Lane.



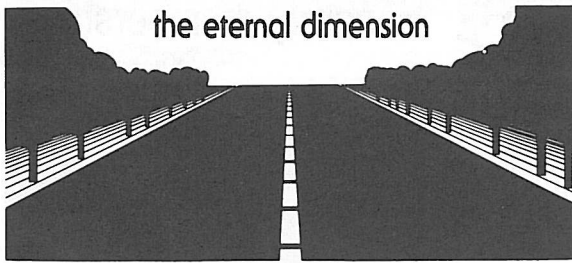
### Colfax, Wis.

The 1984 recipient of an Honorary Membership pin at Faith Lutheran Church of Running Valley at Colfax, Wisconsin was Mrs. Carl Rasmussen. The pinning was done by Mrs. Morris Gustum.

## Encouragement needed

A study reported in the *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, concluded "both pastors and pastors' wives experienced significantly more loneliness than those in non-pastoral roles." The study also showed that "pastors' wives experienced higher levels of emotional exhaustion" than other females. The common basis for this experience is reported to be a lack of time for the family because of over-involvement.

So what can we do? Paul instructs us in I Thes. 5:12-13. Let us consider and encourage one another.



## getting the most out of life

If you could have what you wanted most, what would it be? Would it be money? Would it be more leisure time, or would it be fame and prestige? Though everyone seeks that which they consider most desirable, it may be you have never seriously reflected on this question. But now that we've brought it up, how about it? What will it take for you to get the most out of life?

In Jesus' contact with ordinary people He received several different answers to this question. There was the rich young man who was seriously interested in having eternal life, but he was not willing to give up his wealth in order to have eternal life. Then there was the prosperous farmer who decided he had enough to enter into a comfortable retirement, but God brought his earthly life to an end on the day he made his retirement decision. It often happens that way. You probably remember Jesus telling of the prodigal son who decided the big thing for him was to grab the good time. But his excursion into the world of pleasure ended in poverty, near starvation and shame. Think of the religious leaders who resisted Jesus. They couldn't see that they were wrong. They got the most out of life through fame and recognition as great religious leaders in their community. They weren't willing to repent and seek something better.

In all these cases there is one common thing. Whether it involves riches, or pleasure, or fame and recognition, each person made earthly things his great pursuit. He sought after that which could not last. Jesus told such people to lay up treasures in heaven where they would be eternally safe, but few people followed His advice.

Now let's bring this matter back to our times, and to your world. The

question for you is, "How can I get the most out of life?" Wouldn't your answer be greatly affected by what your definition of "life" may be. Wouldn't your answer depend on whether you believe life ends at death or continues on after death? If life goes on after death, wouldn't you be wise to consider that when determining how to get the most out of life. That must have been what Jesus had in mind when He asked, "What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?"

There is another common characteristic in the pursuits of the people we have thought about. The things that everyone of them sought after pushed God out of first place in their lives. Perhaps God had been completely forgotten by some. Jesus taught them the greatest commandment of all was that they should love God with all their hearts, and souls strength. But that wasn't the case, so there needed to be radical changes. That kind of change Jesus called repentance. He told such people that if they didn't repent they would perish. What is your idea of how to get the most out of life? In the light of what we have considered, is there need for repentance on your part? If so, do it today. Begin to lay up treasures in a place which will outlast time.

Pastor Emerson Anderson  
Cleveland, O.

## Personalities

Please change the address of **Rev. Roy B. Johnson**, pastor of the Winger, Minn., parish, to Route 1, Box 178A, Mentor, Minn. 56736.

## CLARIFICATION

It has been called to our attention by Evangelist Kenneth Pentti that he will not be filling appointments in his schedule until March 17, when he is to be at Maple Bay Lutheran Church, Mentor, Minn., through the 21st. The appointments listed in the Jan. 1 *Ambassador* prior to that date are being filled by other men in his behalf. We were not aware of that when we printed that schedule and we are sorry for any misunderstandings that may have arisen because of this.

Pastor Pentti is recuperating from serious illness and two surgeries last fall and is doing well.

—The Editor

## School's Missions Week

The annual Missions Conference at the Association Schools, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn., will be held February 3-6. The theme is "To Go and Bear Fruit" (John 15:16).

Rev. Morris Watkins of All Nations Frontier Missions will be speaking each evening at 7:30 and also at the worship service of Medicine Lake Lutheran Church on Sunday morning.

There will be morning sessions on the other days and a 6:30 p.m. hour each evening. On Monday night a Third World meal will be served.

Also taking part will be AFLC pastors John H. Abel, Brazil, Eugene Enderlein and Elden Nelson, as well as Paul Abel, missionary candidate.

All interested persons are welcome to attend.

## AFLC Schools benefit

Association Free Lutheran Schools have recently received \$7,961.00 (AFLBS—\$6,180. AFLTS—\$1,781) from Lutheran Brotherhood's IMPACT program, Inviting Member Participation in Aiding Lutheran Colleges and Theological Seminaries.

The IMPACT program matches, at 75¢ per dollar, Lutheran Brotherhood members' gifts of \$25 to \$100 per year to Lutheran institutions of higher education.

*from here and there*

**Brandon, Minn.**—People came from 80-90 miles away to attend the Scandinavian Christmas Festival at Chippewa Lutheran Church on Dec. 9. Rev. and Mrs. Joseph Aarhus, retired, participated in the service. The church was full for the occasion.

**Tioga, N. Dak.**—Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, Culbertson, Mont., spoke at the Luther League evening service at Zion Lutheran on Jan. 20. He and his wife also sang.

**Roseau, Minn.**—New members received at Roseau, Lutheran on Dec. 30 were Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Simmons, Mr. and Mrs. Wally Simmons and Merissa, Mr. and Mrs. Alden Hugg, Tim and Lisa, Mr. and Mrs. Julane Ingeman, and Mr. and Mrs. Ingvald Stenbekken. Mr. and Mrs. Ron Torkelson, Andy and Matthew will be taken into membership at Rose Lutheran later.

**Kasson, Minn.**—Mt. Sion Independent Lutheran Church of Kasson, Minn., held their first service in their new sanctuary on October 7th, followed by a fellowship dinner. The choir from Our Saviour's Lutheran of Zumbrota participated in the service.

On October 28th three new members, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Mattison, and Mrs. Doug Pietrzak, were honored at a fellowship dinner. Also honored were Mrs. Lyle Carstenson and daughters Teresa and Tammy who joined the congregation on July 15th. Martin Horn is the pastor of Mt. Sion Lutheran.

—Corr.

## from IMPACT program

Since the beginning of IMPACT matching program in 1979, AFLC Schools have received \$96,384 in IMPACT funds. During the same period Lutheran Brotherhood has allocated more than \$7.4 million to 72 institutions, responding to 121,178 gifts.

Lutheran Brotherhood is a fraternal benefit society with headquarters in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

## news of the churches

**Stacy, Minn.**—The parish is planning to attend the District "Snow Daze" at the ARC, Osceola, Wis., Feb. 1-3. Pastor Allen Monson of St. Cloud, Minn., is to speak and an AFLBS Gospel Team will be present. The theme is "Eager to See Your Face." In the recreation time the 1st Minneapolis District Olympiad will be held.

**Thief River Falls, Minn.**—The annual meeting of Our Saviour's Lutheran was held on Saturday afternoon, Jan. 26, at 4 o'clock. (Ed. note: That's a new time for an annual meeting. Anyone else tried it?)

**Sedan, Minn.**—Twenty-seven carolers from Scandia Lutheran enjoyed refreshments at the parsonage of Pastor and Mrs. Verle Dean after singing at two retirement homes and many individual homes on Dec. 9.

## In memoriam

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

### NORTH DAKOTA

Buxton

**Alfred Hanson**, 65, Nov. 29, Ny Stavanger

### WASHINGTON

Everett

**Amy Christenson**, 73, Dec. 4, Calvary

### MASSACHUSETTS

Fall River

**Miss Karolina Trimbarn**, 81, Dec. 8, St. Paul's

## We need a youth worker

Having the privilege of serving as Luther League Federation Treasurer the past four years I have increasingly become aware of the necessity to hire a Youth Worker in the AFLC.

The Youth Worker could serve the local and district leagues in a tremendous way. He could be a resource person providing ideas and materials that would aid the youth ministry. He could also be responsible for the printing of a quarterly Luther League newsletter, bringing our youth closer together, helping them to become acquainted with each other. Finally, and most importantly, he could be able to travel and minister to our local and district leagues through leadership workshops, retreats and summer youth camps.

The need is great and action has to be taken now to hire a Youth Worker. At first he could be hired at part-time and the duties could begin to evolve under the direction of the Luther League Federation and Youth Board. We have to start some place and the time is now as action has been delayed for too many years.

I believe this person should be a

layman who has had experience working with youth, relates well to them and has a firm Biblical background.

The question of whether or not there are enough finances to support a part-time Youth Worker should not be the barrier holding us back. As has been mentioned before, if each local league contributes \$50 annually to the Luther League Federation the salary would be covered. There are some congregations that contribute more than this and some not at all. Share in this goal to make the hiring of a part-time Youth Worker possible now. With earnest prayer and God's guidance everything is possible. "If God be for us, who can be against us" (Romans 8:31b).

—Alan Arneson, Spicer, Minn.

Please send all contributions toward the hiring of a part-time Youth Worker to:

**YOUTH WORKER**

Alan Arneson, LLF Treas.

Route 2, Box 101-A

Spicer, Minn. 56288

## Missions

We are prone to shut ourselves up inside our own little world and become selfish. The cause of missions breathes the Spirit of Him who gave Himself up that others might live. May that spirit enter our hearts and give us a vision of the larger world where benighted souls are groping about and waiting for light. We shall be happier for getting that vision and sharing our blessings with others.

G. Nordberg

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## Remember the winter Bible Conferences

### February 6-9,

Bethel Lutheran Church, Grafton, N. Dak.

### February 13-16,

Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis.

### March 8-10,

Elim Lutheran Church, Lake Stevens, Wash.

### Theme:

**Coping with fears, trials and afflictions.**

Ps. 34:19

### Evening speakers

Grafton—Rev. Peter Franz

ARC—Rev. Allen Monson

### Bible Study leaders

Grafton—Rev. Donald Greven

ARC—Rev. Richard Anderson

Local pastors will share messages on Psalm 34.

"Oh, taste and see  
that the Lord is good;  
blessed is the man  
who trusteth in him."

Ps. 34:9

## for home and church



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—Luther's Small Catechism Explained \$3.00

—*Baptism and Spiritual Life* by Dr. Iver Olson \$4.50

—Biblical Baptism, by J. S. Melby \$.35

—*Waters in the Wilderness*  
(daily devotions, edited by Dr. Olson) \$1.50

—*The Augsburg Confession* \$.50

Also available through the Booknook:

*I Know in Whom I Believe* by Wisløff  
\$3.50 paperback  
6.00 hardcover

Order from:

Department of Parish Education, AFLC  
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Minneapolis, Minn. 55441