

Conference
Committee No. 1



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

July 11, 1989



Dr. Steven Lombardo gave the opening address.



Missionary
Ruby Abel,
Brazil,
spoke to the
WMF breakfast.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT

LIGHT on the WAY

meditations on God's Word

Conference photos
by Solveig Hjermstad

Volume 27 Number 13

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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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Subscriptions: \$10.00 per year.

Write to:

The Lutheran Ambassador

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

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

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

USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413

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

Aliens, scattered, chosen

(The beginning of some studies in I Peter.)

This epistle is written by Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. As an apostle, Peter was a "sent one;" his word and his authority are the word and the authority of Jesus Christ, who sent him. This letter, then, is not simply the letter of one man writing to a group of people; it is, indeed, the very Word of Christ, written from Christ to His Church.

Peter is writing to Christians, but not to any one particular local congregation. Rather, he is writing to Christians who are scattered throughout the whole region of Asia Minor. Some of the recipients of the letter were likely Jewish Christians; many of them were Gentile believers (1:18). The letter is a general letter written to the Christian Church. Its purpose is to comfort in the midst of the suffering and struggle of this present life (4:12-19).

I Peter 1:1, 2

Peter uses three very important words to describe his readers (the Church) in these verses. Peter describes the believers as "aliens." An alien is someone who is residing where he doesn't really belong; he is a temporary resident who lives in an area but is not a citizen of that area. The reminder here is that the final citizenship of the Church is not this physical world. "Our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20). With the word "aliens" Peter also establishes a continuity between the Church of the New Testament and the Church of the Old Testament.

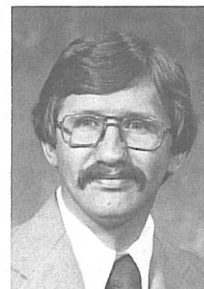
Abraham, who is the rock from which the nation of Israel was cut (Is. 51:1,2), described himself as "a stranger and a sojourner among you" (Gen. 23:4). The writer to the Hebrews tells us that Abraham "lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land" (Heb. 11:9). In I Chron. 29:15, King David refers to the Old Testament people of God as "sojourners before Thee, and tenants, as all our fathers were." Peter, in describing the Church as "those who reside as aliens" is recognizing that the condition of the

Old Testament Church is illustrative of the New Testament believers. The New Testament believers also are a people who with Abraham are "looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Heb. 11:10).

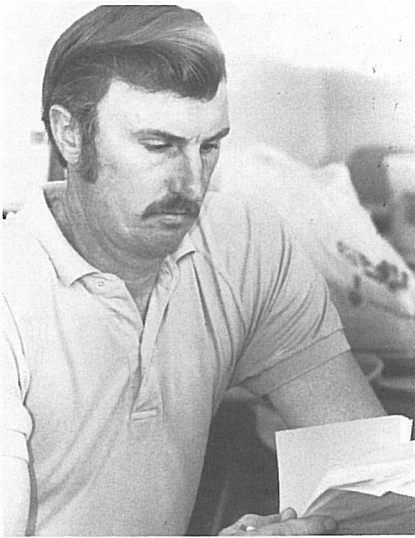
Another word of importance which Peter uses to describe the Church is the word "scattered." Again, this word serves to establish a continuity with the Church of the Old Testament. God declared in Deut. 4:27 that He would scatter the people of Israel among the peoples and that the people of Israel would be left few in number among the nations. History shows that the people of Israel were indeed scattered and dispersed among the nations, where they lived with the longing and the hope of one day being gathered together again. The picture that Peter gives is of the Christian Church as scattered and dispersed, existing as lights in the midst of a dark and perverse generation. The word "scattered" also speaks of hope. The believers who are scattered live with the expectation and hope of being gathered again (Deut. 30:4; I Thess. 4:13-18).

Peter also describes the Church as those who are "chosen" of God. In the Old Testament, the people of God were described as "chosen" (Deut. 7:6-8). Israel was chosen by God not on the basis of merit or worth, but because of the love and the promise of God. The word "chosen" is a Gospel word and it teaches us that the work of salvation is entirely the work of God.

We who are His children by faith in Jesus Christ rejoice in His work of establishing us as His Church.



By Rev.
Philip Haugen



Mr. Dave Gunderson, Chamberlain, S. Dak., chairman of Committee No. 2 (Schools Resolutions).



27th Annual Conference held in Minot, N. Dakota

The 27th Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations was held in Minot, N. Dak., June 14-18, with sessions taking place in Swain Hall. Host congregation was Bethel Lutheran Church, Jerry Moan, pastor. The service of Holy Communion on Sunday morning was held at Bethel.

The Conference was the second best attended in the church's history and only the second time pastoral and lay delegates totaled over 500, excluding visitors. This year there were 525 delegates. In 1987, at the silver anniversary conference in Thief River Falls, Minn., there were 654 registered, with 111 congregations represented. People came from 14 states for this year's conference, as well as Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan in Canada, and from Brazil and Mexico. A pastor from Costa Rica visited the Conference.

Administration Building

In a major action of the Conference, delegates voted that an administration building be constructed on the church's property in Plymouth, a western suburb of Minneapolis, Minn. The vote was 255 in favor with 68 opposed, a 79% majority. The two-story structure would be situated between the present church building and East Medicine Lake Boulevard. Parking would be placed between the two buildings off to the north side.

Estimated cost of the office center is \$630,000. Construction will not begin until a debt of about \$69,000 is paid up on the Association Retreat Center near Osceola, Wis. That facility was purchased in 1979. Further,

delegates were concerned that work not be started until a significant part of the cost is secured. The motion which passed calls for three-fourths of the amount to be secured through cash or pledges and that financing for the remainder has been arranged before any building takes place. Some legacy money is available for the office center. More information about that will be supplied as the drive for funds and pledges gets underway later.

The new building will provide offices for the executive officers of the AFLC, World and Home Missions and Parish Education. The business offices will be housed there and there will be an area for youth and women's work. A board meeting room will adjoin the president's office.

An optimistic forecast is that construction on the center could begin in 1990.

Co-incidental with this is the decision by the Annual Conference and the Schools' Corporation to buy the present church-administration building from the Co-ordinating Committee for \$100,000. When the AFLC offices are no longer housed there, that space will be used by the Seminary particularly. In a year or so, Medicine Lake Lutheran Congregation, which has been renting space since its beginning, will be moving to its own building. The church-administration building houses the cafeteria and chapel for the Bible School, as well as the Seminary classrooms and the library for both Schools.

Vice-President, Secretary

Rev. Robert L. Lee, instructor at the Schools and assistant editor of *The Lutheran Amba-* ◇

**Delegates
totalled
over 500
for second
largest
conference.**

REPORT

sador, was re-elected vice-president of the Association. This will be his fifth term, a record. Also a record is the fourth term of Rev. Ronald Knutson, Canton, S. Dak., as secretary. The terms are for one year.

The president's terms are for three years each and Rev. Richard Snipstead is in his second year of his fourth term.

Prior to the balloting at Minot on Thursday of the Conference, a resolution was debated concerning the adoption of the so-called ecclesiastical ballot method of voting for the executive officers (the three listed above) of the church. The system proposed by the Co-ordinating Committee has been presented in the *Ambassador* twice recently.

The motion to adopt the ecclesiastical ballot (Com. No. 1, 4) passed with the amendment that the first ballot be a nominating ballot. It was understood that any contender would need a 75% majority to win on the *first* ballot. But following that ballot any incumbent would eventually need a similar majority to be declared the winner or be dropped from consideration, as per the Co-ordinating Committee's proposal.

In the balloting for their offices, Pastors Lee and Knutson received three-fourths majorities and more. Mr. Lee got 79% of the vote among 15 candidates. Mr. Knutson had some over 75% in a smaller field.

In subsequent balloting for board and committee positions the practice was followed that where no simple majority was gained on a ballot the lowest candidate was dropped and voting proceeded until someone had the simple majority. In the voting for the five-year pastor's position on the Co-ordinating Committee, four ballots were taken before Rev. David Barnhart, Eagan, Minn., was selected. In two other cases three ballots were needed.

India

The Conference encouraged the World Missions Committee in its "Scriptural mediation" effort to resolve the impasse and problems relating to the Bible Faith Lutheran Church in India and its board in the U.S., Bible Faith Lutheran Ministries to India. Rev. B. Rao Dasari, an AFLC pastor, is director of the Indian church. The Conference vested full authority in the WMC, stating that "we prayerfully support the WMC as they continue to seek wisdom in the difficult decisions relating to these issues." Prayer was urged, too, for the churches in India.

The AFLC entered into a mission work in India in 1980 as the BFLC came into being. In



Rev. and Mrs. John Strand, Remer, Minn., Mrs. Florence Heipler, Valley Center, Calif., and Mr. Morris Borstad, Tioga, N. Dak. Mr. Borstad, a retired lawyer, provided counsel and advice to the AFLC during its early days in the 1960's.



Swain Hall, where Conference sessions were held.



Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Carlson, Eagan, Minn., and Rev. and Mrs. Gerald Gettis, Vernon, B. C.

1984 or 1985 a building was bought in Guntur to be used as an orphanage. It was dedicated as such on Nov. 10, 1985, with Rev. Eugene Enderlein, World Missions director, in attendance.

On February 20, 1986, Pastor Dasari resigned as on-field director of AFLC work in India and informed the Committee that BFLC was becoming an independent organization with its own American board in order that it could appeal to a wider constituency for support. Thus official relationships ended between the AFLC, through the WMC, and the BFLC, although some people continued sending gifts to the work through BFLMI.

More recently, apparently there was a division among the workers and some made an overture to the WMC in an attempt to re-establish relations. A news report of this appeared in the *Ambassador*, Apr. 4, 1989. The BFLMI (American Board) took exception to the report, calling it unfair. A "Clarification and Apology" was printed in the last issue of the *Ambassador* (June 27).

Contacts between the BFLMI and the WMC have been made over a period of some weeks, but at Conference time no agreements had been reached. Some have hoped that the exact status of the situation in India could be determined, possibly through a neutral third party and some resolution effected. The question has been asked whether there is a place in the India work for the AFLC or whether it must consider the area where she was once involved permanently closed to her.

The matter rests in the hands of the WMC and its director. The whole church is asked to pray about this difficult matter.

Ordination

Four men were ordained into the ministry of the AFLC in a service on Sunday morning in Swain Hall. The men and the places they will be serving are: Timothy Carlson, Christian Lutheran, Wheatland, Ia., Michael Crowell, Christ Lutheran, Wichita Falls, Tex., Reuben Unseth, Roseau and Norland, Roseau, Minn., and Lynn Wilson, Lake Region Parish (Tabor, Saron, Hope, Buffalo Lake), Roslyn, S. Dak. Rev. Einar Unseth, father of Reuben, preached the sermon on the Conference text. Lynn's father, Rev. Woodrow Wilson, Lincoln, Nebr., also took part in the ordination.

Evangelism

The position of evangelist in the Association has been vacant since the death of Rev. Kenneth Pentti on July 24, 1985, at the age of 44 years. He was the second man to hold that position, the other being Rev. David Molstre.

In the past four years numerous pastors have spoken at special meetings in the congregations. Rev. John P. Strand, former president of the AFLC, reminded the delegates that much evangelism takes place in the local congregations through the week by week preaching and teaching and through the administration of the Sacraments.

The Conference declared its prayer support for the Commission on Evangelism in its search for a full-time evangelist.

In another action, a resounding voice vote of approval was given to a resolution calling for the adoption of a statement, "Principles and Practices of Evangelism" written by Dr. Francis Monseth, dean of the Association seminary, in consultation with his colleagues. The statement is seen as setting forth "a Biblical understanding of evangelism in response to Roman sacramentalism and Reformed synergism." Synergism is the belief that man contributes to his own salvation.

The statement or paper was first presented to the annual conference last year in DeKalb, Ill. At that time delegates felt that they were not familiar enough with it and asked that it be studied for a year before taking decisive action.

New Missionaries

It was reported that two missionary couples in Brazil may retire within the next two years, the John Abels and George Knapps. If that is so, or even if they do not, there is a need for more missionaries in Brazil.

The Conference encouraged the WMC to call an additional missionary or missionary couple before the end of 1989 and a second couple in 1990. There are persons willing to go out.

The work in Mexico is also growing. Next year Mr. Milton Flores, who has interned under the Association seminary in Nogales, Ariz., this past year, will return to Leon, Mexico, as a pastor.

One pastor made a plea for investigation of other countries of the world where the AFLC might do mission work.

The Missions Corporation amended its rules so that the World and Home Missions Committee were expanded from five to seven members. It was felt that this spread out responsibility more.

Pensions

Concern was expressed that not enough pastors are enrolled in the church's health plan. Insurers are reluctant to take on groups unless there is 75% participation. Finding another carrier would not be easy.

A number of pastors spoke glowingly of the



Rev. Kenneth Moland,
Kirkland, Wash.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION REPORT

Lay people404
Visiting Pastors 10
Pastors.....121
Total535
(In 1988 the total was 406.)

*denotes re-election
Vice-President
(1 year)
Rev. Robert L. Lee, Minneapolis,
Minn.*

Conference elections

Secretary
(1 year)
Rev. Ronald Knutson, Canton, S.
Dak.*
Commission on Evangelism
(5 years)
Pastor Lyle Twite, Bagley, Minn.*
Board of Pensions
(5 years)
Mr. LaVern Thompson, Fergus Falls,
Minn.*
**Board of Publications
and Parish Education**
(5 years)
Mrs. Rodney Stueland, Kenyon,
Minn.*
Youth Board
(3 years)
Rev. Keith Quanbeck, Camarillo,
Calif.
(5 years)
Pastor Mark Olson, Ottawa, Ill.
Stewardship Board
(5 years)
Mr. Walter Peterson, Ishpeming,
Mich.*
ARC Board
(2 years)
Mr. James Ray, Cloquet, Minn.*
(5 years)
Mr. Allen Anderson, Clear Lake, Wis.*



Coffee breaks were furnished by WMF's in the Western N. Dak. District. Pictured are ladies from the Beaver Creek - Norman parish, Ray, N. Dak.

REPORT

service received from Ministers Life, the present carrier. One pastor said he and his family will be returning to the AFLC plan because they see it as better than what they have.

The Conference urged all congregations to pay the full premiums for the medical plan and that new pastors and congregations be encouraged to take part fully in the medical and pension plans of the Association.

Again, congregations were exhorted to share in the special love offerings for emergency help for pastors, pastor's wives and Association employees. The fund is also now paying ten per cent of all premiums in the medical plan. The offerings are usually taken in October and the fund is called Help in Service (HIS).

New Hymnal

Rev. Thomas Olson, Cumberland, Wis., reported on the status of the project of producing a hymnal for the AFLC. That report or one

similar will appear in the *Ambassador* later. For the present, a list of hymns is being compiled from which the final selection will be made. The committee which he chairs welcomes suggestions. Pastor Olson foresees a minimum of three years from now before a completed book can be expected.

Next Year's Conference

An invitation that the 1990 annual conference be held in Emmaus Lutheran Church, Bloomington, Minn., was accepted. Donald Richman and James Ritter are the pastors. That will be the first conference in the Twin Cities since 1984, all of the previous ones having been held at Medicine Lake, Plymouth.

Invitations were also extended from the ARC, Osceola, in 1991 and Camarillo, Calif., in 1992. Both of these will be made again next year and with recommendations from the Coordinating Committee.

Elections by corporations

Co-ordinating Committee

(2 years)

Mr. Clifford Johnson, Esko, Minn.

(5 years)

Rev. David Barnhart, Eagan, Minn.

Home Missions Committee

(4 years)

Rev. Allen Monson, Dickinson, N. Dak.

(5 years)

Rev. Herbert L. Franz, Dollar Bay, Mich.*

Dr. Wayne Sletten, Faith, S. Dak.

World Missions Committee

(4 years)

Mr. Vernon Russum, Grafton, N. Dak.

(5 years)

Mr. Kenneth Williams, Ishpeming, Mich.

Rev. Ted Kennedy, Jr., Nogales, Ariz.

Board of Trustees

(5 years)

Mr. Kent Quanbeck, McVie, N. Dak.*

Schools Corporation

(4 years)

Rev. Mark Molstre, Larimore, N. Dak.

(5 years)

Mr. Don Carter, Lake Stevens, Wash.*

Rev. Bruce Dalager, Grand Forks, N. Dak.*

Rev. Philip Featherstone, Pukwana, S. Dak.*

Rev. James Fugleberg, Ferndale, Wash.*

Mr. Wayne Floan, Fertile, Minn.*

Rev. Rodger Olson, Fergus Falls, Minn.*

Mr. Marlow Nash, Colfax, N. Dak.*

Rev. Emerson Anderson, Cloquet, Minn.*

Mr. Emory Flaten, Newfolden, Minn.

Rev. Ralph Rokke, Minneapolis, Minn.

Missions Corporation

(3 years)

Mr. Ellis Olson, Eden Prairie, Minn.

(5 years)

Mr. Paul Flaten, Newfolden, Minn.*

Rev. Alvin Grothe, Astoria, Ore.*

Mr. Owen Myhre, Abercrombie, N. Dak.*

Rev. Ted Berkas, Wallace, S. Dak.*

Mr. Truman Rolf, McIntosh, Minn.*

Mrs. Gerald Knudsvig, Buxton, N. Dak.*

Mr. Donald Hansen, Minneapolis, Minn.*

Rev. Paul Larson, White Earth, Minn.*

Rev. Jeff Swanson, Kalispell, Mont.

Rev. John Skeie, Morris, Ill.

1990 Annual Conference committees

Nominating Committee

Rev. Bruce Dalager, Grand Forks, N. Dak. (END)

Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, Culbertson, Mont. (WND-EM)

Rev. Todd Klemme, Faith, S. Dak. (SD-N)

Mr. Tom Fugleberg, Roseau, Minn. (NWM)

Mr. Wayne Floan, Fertile, Minn. (NCM)

Mr. Kenneth Nash, Colfax, N. Dak. (SWCM)

Rev. Michael Brandt, Cloquet, Minn. (LS)

Rev. Thomas Olson, Cumberland, Wis. (M)

Rev. Harvey Jackson, Ishpeming, Mich. (NM)

Mr. Eric Westlake, Tucson, Ariz. (A-SC)

Rev. Stephen Snipstead, Kalispell, Mont. (WC)

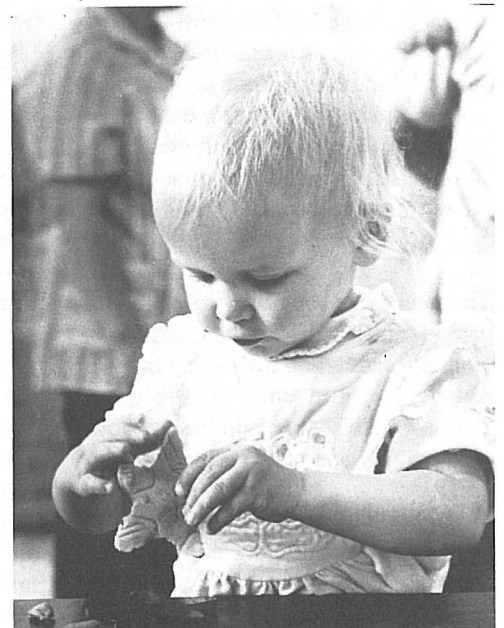
Mr. David Murray, Massapequa, N.Y. (E)

Mr. Merv Mathison, DeKalb, Ill. (I)

continued on p. 10



Lay Pastor and Mrs. Ken Thoreson, Beloit, Wisc., visited with Mr. and Mrs. Dick Fladmarck, members of the new Home Mission congregation in Janesville, Wisc.



Jerilyn Klemme, Faith, S. Dak., enjoyed the nursery services. The host congregation also provided VBS and youth activities throughout the week.

Encouraged by good examples



—By Lay Pastor J. A. Grimstad
Thief River Falls, Minn.

Even a casual reading of the Epistle to the Hebrews reveals a concern that every Christian crosses the “finish line” in the race to which the Christian life is likened. The writer desired every Christian to testify with the Apostle Paul, “I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (II Tim. 4:7). Therefore, we read in Heb. 12:1-2, the Scripture we want to share with you, the unknown writer’s exhortation to all Christians: “Therefore, seeing we also are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (KJV).

Please look with me at the writer’s method of encouraging and challenging the Christians to “press toward the goal” (Phil. 3:14), that is, the finish line of a life of faith! He did not give a lengthy discourse (or sermon); nor did he employ a parable or similar illustra-

tion. Heb. 12:1 starts with the word “Therefore.” This word was like a sign declaring “check back on that which immediately preceded the word.” And that takes us to chapter 11 which recounts the living faith of some of the heroes and heroines of faith from the Old Testament.

How then does the writer urge the Christians not to give up in the Christian life, but rather to “run with endurance the race that is set before us?” Simply by reminding them and us of the examples of the men and women who knew it was impossible to please God without a faith that perseveres. A 17th Century preacher and scholar once wrote: “A good example is the best sermon.” Surely, the author of Hebrews was led by the Holy Spirit to make use of the exemplary lives of godly men and women “as examples...written for our admonition” (I Cor. 10:11).

“A 17th Century preacher
and scholar once wrote:

‘A good example is
the best sermon’.”

The writer’s exhortation is stated briefly in Heb. 12:1-2. Four times he urges “Let us...” The first advises, “Let us lay aside every weight” which would hinder our living the life of faith. These weights, I believe, are very personal, including:

- (1) The priorities we establish for our lives,
- (2) Our catering and giving in to the self-life,
- (3) Good interests, hobbies and activities which begin to dominate us.

No runner can be burdened with non-spiritual interests. God desires every Christian to share with the Apostle Paul the holy ambition to “lay hold of that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:12). The

Savior gave His all on the cross to make us acceptable to God. Every encumbrance which prevents us from being our best for Jesus is a “weight” and it needs to be laid aside.

Next, the writer has a bit of a rebuke in mind when he calls out, “Let us lay aside...the sin which so easily ensnares us.” Here we are confronted with a spiritual problem. What sin entraps us so easily? I believe it is unbelief. Verse after verse in Hebrews 11 starts with these words, “By faith...” Very real problems, perils, obstacles and distractions faced the men and women of Hebrews 11, but faith led the way through all of them.

Many of us confess that our faith is weak. God knows how true that is, but He provides for growth in faith. Peter, who had so much to learn about following the Lord all the way, advised Christians to “desire the pure (or sincere) milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby” (I Peter 2:2). And Paul adds, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Neglect reading the Word, then expect faith to fade.

Thirdly, the writer says, in effect, “Let us run the race of life with endurance.” Not weighted down with things and self; no longer held back by unbelief; now the Christian is assured that he will complete the race, because “this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith” (I Jn. 5:4). And God Himself provided the motivation and the strength for that life. How? “It is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phil 2:13).

Finally, the inspired writer urges, let us always be “looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.” What an impact on our lives should the example of Jesus make! Again, the impetuous Peter testifies that Jesus Christ in His sufferings and life set “us an example, that you should follow His steps.” What a holy example! “He who

continued on p. 14

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

This issue of the *Ambassador* had to be prepared prior to and immediately following the Annual Conference in Minot. Due to lack of time and space our editorial comments must be brief, but in August, after more reflection, we hope to have more to say.

The Conference was a good one. Attendance was very good, second best in our history. If attendance trends continue, even more attention will have to be paid to the adequacy of auditoriums, committee rooms, housing and food service at future conference sites. The Minot situation was a very fine one although it would have been nice if on-campus food service had been available on Saturday and Sunday.

It was good to see our church in Minot, Bethel Lutheran, and worship in that beautiful sanctuary at the Sunday morning Communion service. Excellent acoustics. Great foresight was shown in securing a large parcel of land so that parking is readily available and there is room for eventual church expansion.

Thanks to Pastor and Mrs. Jerry Moan, general chairman Toby Knutson, and the many friends at Bethel who did so much to prepare for the Conference and make everything so nice for us.

It was pleasant to spend those days in Minot. There are more new people at our conferences now and that's good. Apparently many people did think, why not Minot?

More next time.

REMARKABLE RECORD

When it was announced at the Annual Conference that there was a vacancy to be filled on the Co-ordinating Committee for a layman for three years, too little was realized about the record that had been set.

Mention was made that Sheldon Mortrud, the man who declined to fill out his latest term, had served a longer time than is usually the case, but the full truth wasn't known. With time to check it out, we find that he was a member of the Co-ordinating Committee for 19 years, a remarkable record. And he could have served three more years before he would have had to leave for at least one year.

Mr. Mortrud was first elected in 1968 to fill out the four-year unexpired term of the late David C. Hanson, who was then no longer a member of an AFLC congregation. He was re-elected to a full term in 1972, but in 1977 came in second to Ernest Miedema, now the business administrator of the Association.

Mr. Mortrud was called back into service a year later to fill the unexpired three years of James Gerdeen, who had enrolled in the seminary. Re-elections followed in 1981 and 1986. Now for his own reasons he felt that he had been on the Committee long enough and he resigned.

Sheldon Mortrud served on the Co-ordinating Committee under two presidents and with 23 fellow members. That is

quite a catalog of people. He has been present at many meetings where matters sometimes routine, sometimes grave were discussed. We don't think he plans to write a book about his years on that administrative body, but he would have an interesting story to tell, almost a history of the AFLC.

Some people find it impossible to serve on a board or committee for one term. Mr. Mortrud served what amounts to almost four full terms on the most crucial board in the Association. He deserves the sincere thanks of the AFLC for this.

Another member of the Co-ordinating Committee leaves now, Rev. Terry Olson, after one term. We are sorry he declined re-nomination, but that was his decision. He has served in a time of great expansion in the church, a time when the AFLC entered a new era.

Several other persons leave board memberships this summer. Mr. Martin Bjornson leaves the World Missions Committee after one term; Mr. David Russum completed two terms on the Youth Board and couldn't be re-elected; and Rev. Allen Monson leaves the Youth Board with three years left on his term to accept election to the Home Missions Committee. The church expresses gratitude to God for the faithful service of all these men over the past years.

FOR ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST

For me to live is Christ,
To die eternal gain;
Oh, may I speak the Word,
The pow'r of Christ proclaim!
Eternal joys await;
There's hope in Jesus' Name!

For me to sing is Christ!
O sweet the song refrain;
Though troubles bring forth tears
In grief or untold pain,
My soul is in His care;
He's promised to sustain.

For me to live is Christ;
My heart can ne'er contain
The joy that gives me strength;
'Tis giv'n for all to claim,
By faith through grace alone —
Believe in Jesus' Name!

— Faith Call
Viroqua, Wis.

letters to the editor

MISPLACED PRIORITIES

I recently reread "What About Sports?" by Rev. Gerald Mundfrom, as printed in the February 7th issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador*. I certainly agree with the views expressed.

In many cases sports have departed far from their origins as forms of wholesome exercise and enjoyable social interaction.

Now, individuals forsake the worship services of the church for periods of many weeks in order to attend Sunday sports events of the season. Pastors and Christian youth leaders experience much frustration in trying to find youth meeting times that do not conflict with community sports events. Christian radio broadcasts must forfeit their regularly scheduled air time when World Series games take precedence. Surely, these examples indicate misplaced priorities and that sports have become far too predominant in our society.

I commend Pastor Mundfrom for bringing this to the attention of the church. Several members of my family have also expressed their appreciation for his article.

*Mrs. Ingvald (Iola) Rokke
Thief River Falls, Minn.*

BUDGET

The budget adopted by the Annual Conference for the fiscal year 1990-91 is as follows:

General Fund.....	\$ 223,110
Parish Education	64,970
Schools.....	323,672
Home Missions	433,616
World Missions	366,198
Capital Investments	30,000
Total	\$1,441,566

(The current budget, 1989-90, is \$1,318,281.00.)

"INCRIMINATING EVIDENCE"

I was glad to read Pastor Gerald Mundfrom's article about sports (Feb. 7). Years ago I told a sports-enthusiast pastor that I thought that sports were meant for active participation, not passive onlookers. At school the able students made the team. The others got little training in sports. I learned to play ping-pong at Bible camp and volleyball at church picnics.

I am glad that "Christian athletes" find an outlet; I wonder whether it is God's permissive will! WCTS-FM offers alternative reporting of sports events.

Minnesota Twins pitcher Joe Niekro, in 1986, was told, "Empty your pocket." Out came the "incriminating evidence" — an emery board and a piece of sandpaper, resulting in a 10-day suspension." Richard Scholnik, in his article in the June 10, 1989, *TV Guide*, also quotes Chilli Davis, "...if you ain't cheating, you ain't trying." Some pitchers don't cheat because "it's just not easy to control a scuffed ball." Both balls and bats get illegal treatment. Only the "dumb cheaters" get exposed.

I enjoyed watching the Belmont Stakes on Channel 5 today. I like the Budweiser horses, but not the beer advertising. I also was aware that betting goes with horse racing!

I would like to distribute copies of Pastor Gerald Mundfrom's article.

*(Mrs.) E. L. S. Barron
Minneapolis, Minn.*

CONFERENCE GREETING

Dr. Gordon Olson, president of Minot State University, gave a greeting and welcome to the 1989 Annual Conference on Thursday morning. In it he told the delegates that they and their congregations were people on the "cutting edge."

An interesting personal note is that Dr. Olson is the father of Mrs. Kerwin (Wendy) Sletto, wife of the AFLC pastor in Bismarck, N. Dak.

ELECTIONS REPORT—

Committee No. 1, Administration

Rev. Thomas Tuura, McIntosh, Minn.
Rev. Norman Dornquast, Weslaco, Tex.

Mr. Ole Borseth, Williston, N. Dak.

Mr. Robert Broden, Fertile, Minn.

Mr. Donald Jacobson, Binford, N. Dak.

Committee No. 2, Schools

Rev. Harvey Jackson, Ishpeming, Mich.

Mr. Kermit Berge, Larimore, N. Dak.

Mr. Erling Emerson, Eden Prairie, Minn.

Rev. Richard Gunderson, Lake Stevens, Wash.

Rev. Ernest Langness, Ishpeming, Mich.

Committee No. 3, Missions

Rev. Robert Koepp, Fosston, Minn.

Mr. Adrian Hamann, Tucson, Ariz.

Rev. Paul Larson, White Earth, Minn.

Mr. Bud Haugen, Lake Stevens, Wash.

Mr. Dale Miller, Webster, S. Dak.

Committee No. 4, Publications, Parish Education, Youth Work

Rev. Lynn Kinneberg, Wadena, Minn.

Mr. Merle Johnson, Williston, N. Dak.

Mr. Pete Ward, Grafton, N. Dak.

Rev. Jerry Moan, Minot, N. Dak.

Rev. Lyle Aadahl, Grafton, N. Dak.

Committee No. 5, Stewardship and Pensions

Rev. David Skordahl, Pipestone, Minn.

Rev. Milo Gudim, Argyle, Minn.

Mr. Harold Erickson, New York Mills, Minn.

Mr. Dale Smith, Lake Stevens, Wash.

Mr. Bill Buck, Sinai, S. Dak.

Colloquy Committee

Rev. Emerson Anderson, Cloquet, Minn.

Rev. Philip Rokke, Greenbush, Minn.

Rev. Robert Lewis, Newark, Ill.

Rev. Terry Olson, Valley City, N. Dak.

Rev. John Rieth, Amery, Wis.

Budget Analysis Committee (3 years)

Mr. John Schlenk, Minneapolis, Minn.

Mr. Reuben Quanbeck, Grand Forks, N. Dak.

More Conference reports next time. Also WMF Convention review.

"MY GOD! HOW WONDERFUL THOU ART"

- 1) My God! How wonderful Thou art,
Thy majesty how bright,
How beautiful Thy mercy seat
In depths of burning light!
- 2) How dread are Thine eternal years,
O everlasting Lord,
By prostrate spirits day and night
Incessantly adored!
- 3) How wonderful, how beautiful,
The sight of Thee must be,
Thine endless wisdom, boundless pow'r,
And awful purity!
- 4) O how I fear Thee, living God!
With deepest, tend'rest fears,
And worship Thee with trembling hope,
And penitential tears!
- 5) Yet, I may love Thee too, O Lord!
Almightly as Thou art,
For Thou hast stoop'd to ask of me
The love of my poor heart.
- 6) No earthly father loves like Thee,
No mother e'er so mild,
Bears and forbears, as Thou hast done,
With me, Thy sinful child.
- 7) My God, how wonderful Thou art,
Thou everlasting Friend!
On Thee I stay my trusting heart,
Till faith in vision end.

PSALMS IN THE NIGHT

WMF BIBLE STUDY

AUGUST 1989

PSALM 103

Memory Verse: "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him."

(Psalm 103:10-11)

Purpose of the Psalm: Praise for God's mercies.

Verse 1 - 5

In these verses the psalmist praises God for personal blessings. What are these blessings?

v. 1 — (see Psalm 104:1) _____

v. 2 — _____

v. 3 — (see Psalm 130:8) _____

v. 4 — (see Psalm 5:12) _____

v. 5 — (see Isaiah 40:31) _____

Should we praise Jehovah also? _____

Why? _____

Verses 6 - 14

In these verses the psalmist shows God's blessing upon the nation of Israel; it was the same in the day of the psalmist, too. List the proof of God's mercies.

v. 6 — _____

v. 7 — (see Psalm 147:19) _____

v. 8 — (see Exodus 34: 6, 7) _____

v. 9 — (see Psalm 30:5) _____

v. 10 — (see Ezra 9:13) _____

v. 11 — _____

v. 12 — (see Isaiah 43:25) _____

What are some of the attributes of God as shown in these verses? _____

Also in verses 13 and 14 _____

Verses 15 - 19

What is the outlook for man as shown in verses 15 and 16? _____

What is the extent of Jehovah's loving kindness as seen in verses 17 and 18? _____

What are the conditions laid down for the righteous? _____

Compare v. 19 and Psalm 11:4 _____

Verses 20 - 22

In these verses, who are to praise the Lord? _____

Does this include all of creation? _____

Who are the following? _____

His angels? _____

His hosts? _____

His ministers? _____

Verse 22 sums up who are to bless Jehovah. Does this include all of God's creation? _____

The psalmist ends the Psalm: "*Bless the Lord, O my soul.*"
So should we as we end our study.
Take time to bless Jehovah
for all His goodness to each one of us.

forgiveness

by Ruth Jesness Tweed
McHenry, N. Dak.

I could probably forgive a great wrong if my transgressor came in tears of repentance — even without the tears I think I would forgive him for the asking. But I've noticed in my everyday world people don't usually ask my forgiveness.

A rumor is repeated. No one deliberately lied but the story spreads, grows and returns, multiplied a hundredfold. I rankle.

A promise is broken. The other person doesn't even remember. I sulk.

An unkind word is spoken. The speaker doesn't realize the raw nerve he has hit — or he doesn't care. I burn.

An undeserved criticism is leveled at me. I seethe.

I have been cheated or my trust has been betrayed. Someone has taken advantage of my good nature. I want revenge.

Can you identify with me? I have reason to be angry. I hurt and no one cares.

The men who walked with Jesus must have carried hurts and grudges, too. Remember Peter, the impulsive one? Maybe he had emotional scars. No doubt there were times when he had been wronged. Very likely he had his reasons to ask his Lord, "How many times shall I forgive my brother? Seven times?"

Seven times? Seven lies? Seven unfair rebukes? Seven acts of malice? When can I stop forgiving?

Jesus answered, "I do not say seven times but seventy times seven."

Four hundred and ninety transgressions!

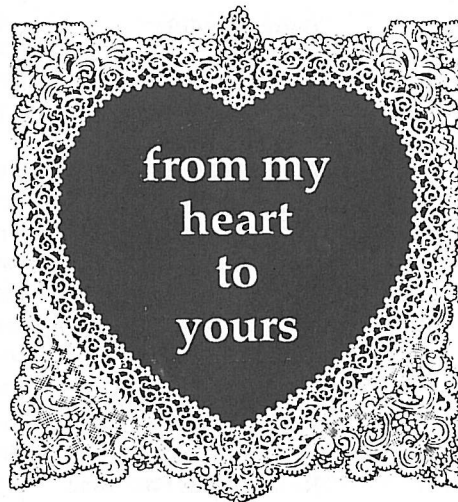
Four hundred and ninety times to forgive — and then to keep forgiving!

Jesus was not unreasonable. This was a common-sense piece of advice for Peter and for us. It was meant for our well-being, physical, mental and spiritual.

A noted Christian psychologist says that many of our emotional problems

come from bitterness. Grudges and hurts, real and imaginary, get carried around like a bunch of junk in a sack and added to until the burden becomes too great to bear. The result can be burn-out, depression, physical problems and even separation from God. We suffer from the wrong itself and again from the great weight of carrying it around.

Forgiveness doesn't just happen. The memory of past wrongs comes back. We want our side known; we want to get even; we want things to be fair. The resentment boils up, again and again.



Remember the Prodigal Son? His father forgave him. As a parent, I can understand. As a sibling, it would be harder. I, too, might have pouted and complained. I might have even wished that the bum had stayed away!

"He asked our father for forgiveness," he probably said. "But what

about me? I was wronged, too. I stayed home and was stuck with the responsibility. Dad just takes me for granted. I'm angry and I have a right to be!"

The story doesn't tell what happened to the brother. He had two choices; He could hold on to his anger. He could sit in the house and nurse his grudge, but that wouldn't change anything. The celebration would go on and his brother was home to stay.

He could do something else, he could rejoice over the return of the lost brother and join the festivities.

Putting it that way, I seem to know what I would do, but would I be that strong? Could I forgive?

Corrie ten Boom wrote, in "The Hiding Place," of meeting her jailer at a church service in Munich after the war. He thanked her for the message but didn't recognize her. As he reached for her hand she held back. She prayed, "I cannot forgive him. Give him *Your* forgiveness."

Then *she* experienced true forgiveness. "As I took his hand a current seemed to pass from me to him and into my heart sprang love for this stranger."

"It is not on our forgiveness," explains Corrie, "that the world's healing hinges but on His. When He tells us to love our enemies He gives with the command the love itself."

We carry burdens of our own guilt, or worse we cover it and make excuses for it. It is only through God's grace that we can see our need and ask forgiveness for our sins. It is only through His grace that we can receive it. The next step is to forgive. I can at least do that, as hard as it might be. But, no, I can't. Forgiveness received and forgiveness given *both* come from God. Only He has the power to forgive me and only He can give me the power to forgive others. It's very simple when I think about it and a wonderfully comforting promise.

AFLC Wilderness Family Bible Camp

Camp Schedule

Wednesday, July 19th: 7:30 p.m. – Worship Service led by Pastor Verle Dean, Spicer, Minn. 9:00 p.m. – Campfire Fellowship.

Thursday - Saturday, July 20th - 22nd: 10:00 a.m. – Adult Bible Study led by Rev. John Strand, Remer, Minn.; Children's Class led by Mrs. George Hartman, Dalton, Minn. 7:30 p.m. – Worship Service led by Pastor Verle Dean. 9:00 p.m. – Campfire Fellowship.

Sunday, July 23rd: 10:00 a.m. – Adult Bible Study led by Rev. John Strand; Children's Class led by Mrs. George Hartman. 11:00 a.m. – Sunday

Worship Service with Rev. Gordon Grage, liturgist; Morning message by Pastor Verle Dean. 12:00 noon – Potluck dinner.

Camp Staff:

Mr. Sheldon Mortrud, Camp Caretaker.
Rev. Gordon Grage, Dean.

There is no charge for the camp or for camping facilities. There will be free will offerings taken to defray camp expenses.

Facilities:

The Wilderness Camp is located on 77 acres of beautifully-wooded property 11 miles south of Lake Park. There are hook-ups for campers as well as drinking water available at the camp

Lake Park, Minnesota
July 19 - 23

Family Camp Theme:

"Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

II Peter 3:18

sites. A dumping station for recreation vehicles is available, showers and outdoor toilets.

This is a wilderness camp facility, so bring your tents, motor homes and campers, as well as lawn chairs and mosquito lotion.

We are looking forward to a rich time of blessing as we fellowship in the Word of God, have time for recreation and do some relaxing. Come and join us!

'89 Family Camp at the ARC

"Occupy till I Come" Luke 19:13

Aug. 6th-12th

Theme Song: "O Master
Let Me Walk With Thee"

August 6 - 12

Evening Speaker — Dr. Steven Lombardo; Adult Bible Teacher — Rev. Don Richman.

Camp Staff: Dean — Mr. Larry Johnson.

COSTS: Adults — \$60; Teens — \$55; Grade School — \$40; Under 4 — free.

* Maximum family fee — \$180.00.
Recreation vehicles — \$5.00 per day.

Costs for partial weeks: Meals only:
Breakfast — \$ 1.50; Lunch — \$3.00;
Dinner — \$2.00. Room per night — \$5.00; \$2.50 — *under* 9 years of age;
Free — *under* 3 years of age.

*Family rate is limited to both parents and children only

Send non-refundable registration of \$5 per individual or \$10 per family to:
ARC, Route 1, Box 92, Osceola, Wis. 54020.

Association Retreat Center
Mr. Bob Dietsche
Camp Manager
Route 1, Box 92
Osceola, Wisconsin 54020
(715) 294-2877

Sunday, August 6th
5:30 p.m. — Supper

Daily Schedule

7:00 a.m. Rising Bell & Devotions
7:30 Flag Raising/Prayer Time
7:45 Youth Breakfast
8:00. Adult/Children Breakfast
9:00-9:50 Clean up
10:00- Bible Classes/all ages
10:45 Youth Discussion
Confirmation Discussion
11:00- Missions Hour/older group
11:45
12:00 Youth Lunch
12:15 Adult & Children Lunch
1:00 Quiet Time/Choir
1:30-4:30 Recreation & Free Time
5:00 Youth Supper
5:15 Adult & Children Supper
7:00 Prayer Time/all ages
7:30 EVENING SERVICE
9:15 Afterglow
10:00 Dorm Devotions
11:00 Lights Out

Saturday,
August 12

8:00 a.m. Breakfast
9:00 VBS Program
10:00 Clean-up
11:00 PRAISE SERVICE
12:00 Dinner

RACE

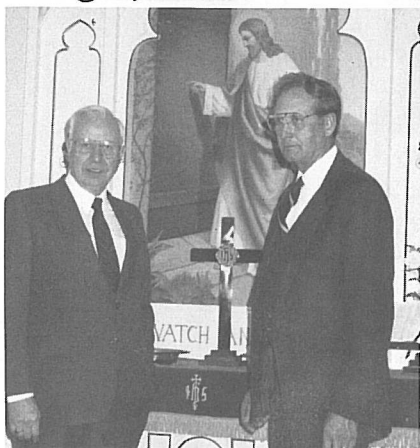
has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). Looking to Jesus will enable us also to finish the race successfully.

"Is the world slowing down
your enthusiasm for Jesus?"

Has your "first love" turned cool? Are you lagging behind in the Christian's race? Is the world slowing down your enthusiasm for Jesus? Let me share with you a more recent example than those in Hebrews 11. About the turn of the century a young Chinese lady named Miss Wu was sent by her affluent family to a mission school in order to improve her use of English and to learn to play the piano (but definitely not to take up the the missionaries' Christianity). But the daily hearing of the Word of God and experiencing the kindness of God's servants led her to conversion. Her family was outraged They sent a relative to bring her home at once. As they boarded a small boat the relative said to the girl, "You have disgraced your family and turned against their religion. You have a choice to make. Either abandon this

News of the Churches

Winger, Minn.



Rev. C. Lloyd Bjornlie, right, formerly of Alexandria, Minn., was installed as pastor of Dove and Union Lake Lutheran Churches, Winger, Minn., on May 21 by Rev. Richard Snipstead, president of the AFLC.

Newfolden, Minn.



Mrs. Alice Rokke was honored for 50 years as organist-pianist of Bethania Lutheran Church, rural Newfolden, Minn., following the Family Night on June 4. She is the mother of Mrs. Dennis (Marilyn) Gray, DeKalb, Ill.

Personalities

Rev. Wallace Jackson is temporarily serving Our Saviour's Lutheran, Zumbrota, Minn., and Mt. Sion, Kasson, Minn., since the resignation of Rev. Martin Horn.

Rev. Hubert F. DeBoer is interim pastor of Christ Lutheran, Devils Lake, N. Dak., which was previously served by Rev. Joel Rolf.

MRS. GERALD MILLER

Mrs. Gerald Miller, Williston, N. Dak., president of the Women's Missionary Federation in her local church, Emmanuel Lutheran, died from injuries suffered in an automobile collision between Ray and Tioga as she was on her way to the WMF convention in Minot, June 14. She was 38 years old. The daughter and youngest (son) riding with her were injured and hospitalized in Minot and later transferred to Williston. Valora has been released and Luke may have been by the time this appears in print.

Virginia Seidel was educated at the University of North Dakota in Williston and received her Bachelor's degree in elementary education at Minot State University. She was married to Gerald Miller on Aug. 17, 1975, in Williston. As well as being WMF president, she was a member of the Gideon's Auxiliary and other organizations.

Her funeral was held on Mon., June 19, at First Lutheran in Williston with pastor Jon Wellumson, officiating.

She is survived by her husband; four sons, Gerard, Arthur, Vincent and Luke; one daughter, Valora; two brothers; one sister, and a maternal grandmother.

Messages of sorrow came to others at the Conference also. Mrs. Gust (Susan) Nordvall, Roseau, Minn., received word that her mother, Mrs. Susan Thiessen, Manitoba, Canada, had passed away Thursday morning.

The father of Toby Knutson, general chairman of the planning committee for the Conference, passed away on Friday. Theodore Knutson was from Norma and Kenmare, N. Dak.

Blessed be the memory of these saints of God and may their families be sustained in their loss.

NO ISSUE NEXT TIME

There will be no second issue in July. To give you earlier coverage of the Annual Conference, we are printing early this month and omitting the scheduled July 25 issue. The next *Ambassador* will be dated Aug. 8. It will contain some more information from the recent Conference and more reflections about it.

The Editor

new religion and return to your family's religion or, then he handed her a rope and a dagger, and continued, "Hang yourself with a rope or slay yourself with the dagger or drown yourself in this river." Turning pale, the young Miss Wu calmly stated, "I cannot give up Jesus. He died for my sins and opened the way for me to heaven. I belong to Him. You may take my life, but you cannot harm my soul."

The relative and family were overwhelmed by her stand. And she ran the race by faith to the end!

We are surrounded by a multitude of faithful witnesses. Let us heed their example!

IOWA CONGREGATION LATEST TO JOIN

Stavanger Lutheran Church, Garden City, Ia., recently voted to affiliate with the AFLC after over 20 years as an independent congregation. The Iowa church, organized in 1892 as a member of the Hauge Synod, withdrew from the ALC in 1968 and has been served by AFLC pastors since that time together with Salem Lutheran Church, Radcliffe.

The AFLC has considered Stavanger Church a part of its fellowship for many years and rejoices that the congregation has come to the conviction that affiliation is not a surrender of freedom but rather a commitment to the bonds that free congregations share with one another.

ACADEMY POSITIONS OPEN

Wanted: One full-time Supervisor, licensed to teach in Minnesota.

One part-time Music Teacher

Positions are in Our Saviour's Christian Academy, Thief River Falls, Minn. For More information, please contact Mrs. Delores Kading. Call 218-964-5788.

Prison Ministry, a forgotten work of the church

By Rev. Marvin Haara
Sacred Heart, Minn

There is a work of the church that has been forgotten or should we say ignored by most of the churches. Yet it is a very vital part of what should be included in the church program.

Jesus said, in Matthew 25:36, "I was in prison, and ye came unto Me." He added the negative aspect in verse 43, "in prison, and ye visited me not." The next verse goes on to say, "Then shall they answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when saw we Thee — in prison, and did not minister unto Thee?' Then I say unto you, in as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me'."

My wife and I were introduced to prison work through Prison Fellowship and the work of Chuck Colson. I was asked to write to an inmate and share with him in this way. I wrote a couple letters and received prompt replies. Then I became involved with work and was not able to write due to limited time. My wife, who wanted nothing to do with this originally, became involved when I was not able to write. I did not ask her to write but she saw the need to keep in touch. The Lord used this means to start something that has become very precious to her. It became a joint effort from then on. She wrote to this original inmate and found out that there were many similarities in their backgrounds. She

became excited about the involvement and the Lord has opened many doors since.

We began our prison work through Prison Fellowship but as we began to reach out involvement increased through the help of inmates. They began getting others for us to visit and we now have a ministry to several institutions in four different states. The Lord has blessed us so richly in sharing the Gospel and just sharing the love of Jesus with them. We have chosen to call our work Prison Evangelism Ministries.

It took someone like Chuck Colson to start a work that is fast spreading also to foreign countries. It involves 13 countries besides what is being done in the United States.

I would challenge the churches of today to get involved in the blessings that are available through this means. Will Jesus have to say to our churches, "I was in prison and you visited Me not?"

If anyone would like to know more of what is taking place with our work, we would be more than happy to come and share in the churches about this exciting ministry. We can add that this year we will be seeing our original inmate released and another one as well. Next year will see yet another one released. This is exciting, to know that these men will be out and can serve the Lord in society again. May the Lord stir our hearts to fulfill this commission of our Lord Jesus Christ.