



# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

July 7, 1992



# CULTS

# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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## The Hardest Article of Our Faith

*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you (Colossians 3:13).*

Forgiveness, wrote Luther, is the hardest article of our faith to apprehend (grasp). Forgiveness is also vital to our Christian walk. It has been said, "the individual who cannot forgive others, destroys the bridge over which he will have to journey."

Each of us has a deep need to be forgiven. We sin daily in thought, word, and deed as the catechism reminds us. It is beyond our human comprehension to grasp the sin in our lives, both against God and our human relationships. We need to daily come to Jesus with our sin and ask Him to forgive, cleanse and renew us.

Then, too, we need to forgive others. In one petition of the Lord's Prayer we pray: "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." That old phrase: "I can forgive but I can't forget," is just another way of saying, "I will not forgive!"

Forgiveness must be treated as you would a "bill" that has been paid in full. You tear it up, throw it in the garbage or burn it and throw the ashes to the four winds so there is no evidence of the debt any more.

A third area of forgiveness is in our ability to forgive ourselves. One of the greatest burdens we pastors see is in the lives of people who are either hesitant or unable to forgive themselves. Too often we hear the words: "I'll never forgive myself for having done that." If we have come to God with the problem, that should end the matter. This attitude can block the grace of God from healing a life. It is like a poison that can stunt spiritual health. In the Golden Rule our Lord taught a powerful principle that also applies to this matter of forgiveness. It is this: if we forgive everyone without exception, no matter what he or she has done, then forgive yourself from the heart. A spiritual healing of soul and mind will come as a result. When we deal with others

as we would have them deal with us in all areas of life, then God can truly bless our lives and relationships.

Someone has put it like this: "It is a truly noble gesture to forgive others for their offenses, but it will strengthen your character and greatly assist you through this new strength to be of more value to yourself and others when you definitely, finally, and conclusively learn how to forgive yourself." Forgiveness is not only the privilege, honor and duty of those who aspire to greatness, but it is also the secret of their self-preservation. It can be a priceless boomerang when applied properly to the forgiving of yourself as well as the forgiving of others.

When we forgive from the heart a real healing power from the Lord is the result.

Jesus is our example when it comes to forgiveness. Colossians 3:13 reminds us to "forgive as the Lord forgave you." When Jesus prayed on the cross "Father, forgive them ..." He left no Christian any excuses to carry any grudge or resentment.

God's first act at the time of conversion is forgiveness in response to our faith in Christ (Ephesians 1:7).

The continuing act of God is constant forgiveness for the repenting Christian (I John 1:9).

As we considered, God's forgiveness depends also upon our forgiveness toward others (Matthew 6:14).

There is much more that could be said about forgiveness as Scripture teaches. Concerning this "hardest article of faith" as Luther put it, we must look to Jesus for our example and forbear with one another as God in Christ does for us.



—by Rev.  
Larry Severson



There are many strange "birds" swimming around in the accommodating waters of religious pluralism. They are, for the most part, deceptive, dangerous, and ultimately deadly. The apostle Paul, in a moving farewell speech, warned the elders of the church at Ephesus:

"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears" (Acts 20:28-31).

Paul warned of false teachers and faulty teaching, the produce of the devil's garden, landing on the church's dinner table. Bad spiritual food would turn up, both from within and without the church. Paul's counsel: Be alert, be on guard, don't settle for the devil's delights!

Cults, or spiritual counterfeits, flourish today. While it is difficult to

adequately define the term "cult," it may be helpful to describe cults generally. Spiritual counterfeits are characterized by: extra-biblical revelation; a false basis of salvation; uncertain hope; presumptuous messianic leadership; doctrinal ambiguity; claims of special discoveries; a view of Jesus different than that taught in the Word of God; segmented biblical attention, with certain teachings emphasized to the exclusion of other biblical truths; enslaving organizational structure; financial exploitation; denunciation of others; and, syncretism (the attempt to put together the best aspects of different religious points of view into one new religion).<sup>1</sup>

There are six basic categories of spiritual counterfeits. These are:

1. Eastern-mystical (Transcendental Meditation, Hare Krishnas).
2. Aberrational-Christian (The Way International, Children of God).
3. Psychospiritual or Self-Improvement (Scientology, Silva Mind Control).
4. Eclectic-Syncretistic (Unification Church).
5. Psychic-Occult-Astral (New Age Movement, Eckankar).
6. Established (Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science).<sup>2</sup>

The deception of the cults is real. These spiritual counterfeits are enemies of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and keep legions of people in bondage to Legion. It is imperative for Christians to heed Jude's call "that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). But how does a believer contend for truth in an age of untruth?

First, the Christian must know the Word of God and live in that Word. When you are thoroughly familiar with the genuine you are much more likely to spot the counterfeit. One researcher of cults writes: "The greatest single reason for the advance of the cults in our world today is ignorance of Holy Scripture on the part of Christians."<sup>3</sup>

While it may be good to learn about various spiritual counterfeits it is surely the best to learn God's Word and store it away in your heart. The Word will keep you in that narrow way which leads to life.

Second, remember that your own heart will deceive you long before any cult will. For the heart "is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). You are prone to deception, your flesh is alive to it, and you are susceptible to the wiles of the devil. Live in daily repentance of sin, die to the old life and rise a new person in Christ — every day!

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"The Word will keep  
you in that narrow  
way which leads  
to life."

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Third, let Jesus Christ be pre-eminent in your life. Praise Him for His finished work of salvation. Give Him glory and thanks. Thank your heavenly Father for justification by faith and for "grace greater than all our sin." Martin Luther said, "We cannot vex the devil more than by teaching, preaching, singing, and talking of Jesus." Admit your nothingness and your absolute dependence upon Him.

## NOT EVERY BIRD——

**Fourth**, be evangelistic and win souls for Christ. Walter Martin comments:

"The Biblical perspective then, where false teachers and false teachings are concerned, is that we are to have compassion and love for those who are enmeshed in the teachings of the false prophets, but we are to vigorously oppose the teachings, with our primary objective the winning of the soul, and not so much the argument. It must never be forgotten that cultists are souls for whom Jesus Christ died, for 'He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world'" (I John 2:2).<sup>4</sup>

**Fifth**, don't think you have to actually participate in spiritual counterfeits to really know about them. That is the world's philosophy and it is a doctrine of demons. God's Word is clear: "And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them" (Ephesians 5:11).

**Sixth**, do not encourage those who embrace and promote the teaching of spiritual counterfeits. John writes:

"Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds" (II John 9-11).

Hospitality and fellowship were not to be offered to false teachers. No welcome, no greeting, no expression of acceptance. True Christian teachers

and preachers were to be welcomed heartily as they traveled from place to place. But not the counterfeit!

"The injunction not to receive any one who does not bring 'the teaching of Christ' means that no such person must be accepted as a Christian teacher or as one entitled to the fellowship of the church. It does not mean that (say) one of Jehovah's Witnesses should not be invited into the house for a cup of tea in order to be shown the way of God more perfectly in the sitting-room than would be convenient on the doorstep."<sup>5</sup>

The Thomas Alva Edison Museum in Menlo Park, New Jersey, has a so-called "eternal light" in honor of Edison. In 1929 the special light bulb was placed on a pedestal and the great inventor himself pressed a remote control button to start the "eternal light" shining. For years people have come to the museum and have marveled at the "eternal light" burning for such a long time.

However, a newspaper reporter became curious just a few years ago and began questioning a caretaker. Finally, it came out: The "eternal light" couldn't burn forever because it had never burned at all! The "eternal light" did not have a filament and was merely a good reflector and got its light from reflecting the glow of lights concealed in the pedestal. The "eternal light" was shown to be a fraud. It wasn't eternal and it wasn't even a light!

The true Light of the world is Jesus Christ. The spiritual counterfeits, the "eternal lights" of our day, are a deception. These are darkness and face the wrath of God. Therefore, live in the Light and remember not every bird that swims is a duck.

— Dr. Steven Lombardo  
AFLC Schools Faculty Member  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

End notes:

<sup>1</sup>Dave Breese, "Know the Marks of Cults," p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>Ronald Enroth et al., "A Guide to Cults and New Religions," p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>Breese, p. 30.

<sup>4</sup>"The Kingdom of the Cults," p. 15

<sup>5</sup>F.F. Bruce, "The Epistles of John," p. 142.

# LOOKING AT WHAT IS IMPORTANT

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"Don't think you  
have to actually  
participate in  
spiritual counterfeits  
to really know about  
them."

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In the early 1980s people from all over the world flocked to a small town in central Oregon to be in the presence of a guru from India who collected Rolls-Royces and, at the time, said nothing publicly. The devoted followers were called Rajneeshes and they would always dress completely in red. They acted the way we maybe think a cult is suppose to act. They lived out in the woods away from us. They dressed in a way that made them easily identifiable. We were not too afraid because we did not think too many of our church's youth would want to live on some ranch in the desert and dress in those funny looking outfits.

Cults do not always live in the desert and appear strange. It would be handy for us if they did, but Satan is more devious than that. Cults often are right down the street, meeting in a beautiful building with a well-cared for lawn. They may be clean-cut, dressed nice and look like the kind of people you would want to put on a poster as an all-American family. The appearance is of a great role model. The teaching is inspired in the pits of hell.

The Mormon Church has an image that can seem very attractive. They speak of family values and clean living. They often demonstrate much commitment to other members of their group. They seem to have great programs for youth. In the small, evangelical church down the street, envy can rear its ugly head. Our building isn't that fancy and our choir isn't that big. We don't even have a gym. We wonder how we can compete and then the tempter comes with the questions: "Should we compete? Maybe we ought to work together? How can a group that works so hard, says such good things and looks so nice be all that bad?"

The prophet Samuel was impressed with the older sons of Jesse. The Lord told him, though, that He had not chosen one of them to be king of Israel. The youngest son, David, was the chosen one. The Lord told Samuel He does not look at the things man looks at. "While man looks at the outward appearance, the Lord looks at the heart" (I Samuel 16:7).

When dealing with cults, it is important to remember that God calls on us to look at the things that are important to Him. A cult such as the Mormon Church can have characteristics that seem very attractive to us. What matters to God, however, is not whether they smoke or drink or dance. He does not judge a group on the basis of the looks and behavior of their kids. God looks first and foremost at the heart, desiring to see faith in Jesus Christ. He looks for true doctrine and right beliefs, not just good appearances. Let us not be deceived

by the evil one who tries to cover over doctrinal heresy with a veneer of respectability.<sup>1</sup>

J.T. Mueller, in his book "Christian Dogmatics" says that only two religions exist: religions of the law and the religion of the gospel.<sup>2</sup> At first, we may think this man must not have traveled much and been exposed to the wide variety of belief systems that exist. The more, however, other religions are examined, the more his statement makes sense. Mormon teaching advocates good works, not as a response to the grace of God but as a fruitless attempt to earn salvation. In Mormon doctrine, salvation is described as not by grace alone<sup>3</sup> but two-fold: **General** — that which comes to all men irrespective of belief (in this life) in Christ and, **Individual** — that which man merits through his own acts through life and by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.<sup>4</sup> This is completely contrary to the truth of God's Word which teaches that salvation is by grace through faith. It is not earned through good works. It is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

The Mormons may seem to have an impressive life-style and great facilities while some of us may feel like nothing more than failures with good intentions (and no gym). Let us remember, though, what we do have. In Jesus we have a Savior. We have hope for all eternity based not on our weak and uncertain selves but on the completed and perfect work of Christ. We have, offered to us by Jesus, life abundant (John 10:10). Why, then, be jealous of those who in comparison have nothing? What is a gym compared to forgiveness of sins? What is a big choir compared to peace with God? We do not envy; we evangelize. We do not see in the cults role models as much as we see lost sinners in need of salvation. What we have when we are in Christ is what they need! Let us not be fooled by a facade and compromise the greatest Gift. The cult may look good on the outside but inside of those who believe in the cult's false teaching is a lost soul. Life with Christ and salvation by His grace looks much, much better than that.

<sup>1</sup>Ruth A. Tucker. "In Search of Respectability," *Christianity Today*, February 5, 1990, 17.

<sup>2</sup>J.T. Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), 6.

<sup>3</sup>Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 671.

<sup>4</sup>Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1 (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1955), 134.

"Let us not be fooled by a facade and compromise the greatest Gift."



— by Rev.  
Craig Johnson  
Eugene, Oregon



**H**ow can anyone possibly pray an entire hour? Here's how to structure an hour in prayer with twelve scripturally based aspects. Conveniently, each hour can be divided into twelve five-minute "points of focus," allowing specific time for each of these vital areas. Of course, some of these aspects may require only a minute, whereas others — such as intercessory prayer for the world — will require far more than a mere five minutes.

# How To Spend An Hour In Prayer

**1. Praise.** Psalm 63:3; Hebrews 12:15; Matthew 6:9b

All prayer should begin with a recognition of God's nature. The Lord's Prayer — our model for all praying — begins with "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." Praise is that aspect of prayer which vocally esteems God for His virtues and accomplishments.

**2. Waiting.** Psalm 37:7; Isaiah 40:31; Lamentations 3:25

Not only should we begin it with praise, but time also should be given to being "quiet" in God's presence. This is not meditation or just a time for listening; it is simply taking time to let God love you.

**3. Confession.** Psalm 139:23-24; Psalm 51:10; John 1:9

The psalmist asked God to search his heart for unconfessed sin. He knew sin was one of the greatest roadblocks to answered prayer. Early in prayer we need to make time for confession. This clears the way for powerful praying.

**4. The Word.** II Timothy 3:16; Psalm 19:7-8

"The commandment of the Lord (His Word) is pure, enlightening the eyes," wrote young King David. When we bring God's Word into our prayer, we are opening our eyes to new possibilities in God. At this point in prayer, read God's Word.

**5. Intercession.** I Timothy 2:1-2; Psalm 2:8; Matthew 9:37-38

Our prayer now centers on intercession for a lost and dying world. This concerns praying for others who have desperate needs.

**6. Petition.** 7:7; Matthew 6:11; James 4:2

This aspect of prayer concerns our personal needs. Petition is included in the Lord's Prayer in the expression, "Give us this day our daily bread." To petition God is to open our need to God through prayer.

**7. The Word.** Jeremiah 23:29; II Samuel 22:31; Numbers 23:19

Earlier we suggested you read God's Word. Now, pray God's Word. Here we bring actual Scripture into our prayer. We can never pray out of God's will when we pray God's Word.

**8. Thanksgiving.** Philippians 4:6; Psalm 100:4

When Paul wrote to the Philippians, he instructed them to offer prayer and supplication "with thanksgiving." Thanksgiving differs from praise in that praise recognizes God for who He is, and thanksgiving recognizes God for specific things He has done.

**9. Singing.** Psalm 100:2; Ephesians 5:19; Psalm 114:9

Melody in its truest sense is a gift of God for the purpose of singing praises unto Him. Many Christians, unfortunately, have never learned the beauty of singing a "new" song unto God dur-

ing prayer. These songs may come straight from the heart with the Holy Spirit creating the melody. Paul spoke of singing "spiritual songs." To sing unto the Lord is to worship God in melody.

**10. Meditation.** Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-2; Psalm 77:12

To wait in God's presence is simply to be there to love Him. Meditation differs in that our mind is very active. To meditate is to ponder spiritual themes in reference to God.

**11. Listening.** Ecclesiastes 5:2; I Kings 19:11-12

Whether through His written Word or by an inner "still small voice" of His Holy Spirit, God speaks to praying Christians. But we must take time to listen.

**12. Praise.** Matthew 6:13; Psalm 100:4; Psalm 150

We begin our prayer by recognizing God's nature, and we end in similar fashion. Jesus taught this when He ended his prayer with the statement, "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

These are just suggestions — everyone has a different prayer life. Developing such a prayer habit will lead you into a ministry that changes you and the world around you as well.

— Dick Eastman

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# SONGS FOR PILGRIMS

**W**henever I have written hymn texts during the years of my ministry, I have always worked from a specific point of view — my hymnological point of view.

## **Cradle of existence**

I believe that we are orphans longing to return to the cradle of existence: the home of our Father. Our days and nights grow long and tedious with the cares of living. On the horizon the bright morning star shines and penetrates our being. We are adopted. We are made sons and daughters in Christ through the cleansing of baptism. We sing. We have the new life of the resurrection.

Our hearts and minds and bodies join with all creation singing songs of joy and thanks. The bright star, our risen Lord, kindles our weary lives. We begin the pilgrimage of return.

## **What a hymn does ...**

In this context, hymns are songs for pilgrims. When we sing a hymn, we begin as orphans in halting confusion. God speaks and works through the hymn refreshing us and moving us beyond confusion. The corporate act of hymn singing is more than an musical exercise; it is theology in action.

Theology on the academic plane moves at a very rapid pace. Students and pastors are constantly bombarded with new approaches for ministry. Sharing those ideas with parishioners is almost impossible: teaching schedules are tight, and opportunities for preaching are limited (in bygone eras preachers had captive audiences a total of three to four hours a week!).

In a sermon a pastor can only spend two or three minutes on any one idea. On the other hand, hymns enable worshippers to become familiar with the academic made understandable. We sing a hymn several times, we take it home, we remember it — it becomes a part of us. A hymn acts.

## **How a hymn acts ...**

Hymns speak simply and boldly. Hymns dovetail the bulky thought of

learned theologians into precise statements of faith. Hymns summarize the faith for the pilgrim people of God.

Hymns speak to the whole person. A hymn touches the heart, the mind and the body involving the whole person in worship. I have never been able to explain this phenomenon, but the little old ladies, the middle aged fathers and the enthusiastic teenagers have told me that it is true. Hymns grab them.

Hymns speak to the memory. One singing of a hymn is not enough. New texts, especially, must be sung over and over. Hymns enable us to internalize new theological thrusts through repetition. I tell the congregation, "We'll sing this new hymn until we like it or hate it." Usually we learn to know and like it — I think!

Hymns are theology in action — speaking simply, touching the whole person and enabling us to remember new concepts.

## **Hymns reflect us ...**

The thought pattern of a hymn reflects culture as an archeological dig betrays its ancient citizens. After a little practice, it is possible to date a hymn by its thought pattern. A hymn speaks from the sociology and psychology of the time in which it was written. When a hymn no longer fits our cultural setting, we must use it cautiously.

The language of a hymn also reflects the culture in which it was written. Some hymns seem ageless, but most, like the frayed, yellow leaves of an older professor's notebook, give away their age. Hymns sung today should reflect our culture, inspiring beyond the present moment when possible.

The poetry of a hymn reflects the literary style of its day. The Psalms of the nomad Hebrews are metrically simple. Old time Gospel songs are rhythmic offspring of the blues age. Most contemporary hymn texts seeking to express "newness" rely on new imagery rather than strong rhyme patterns. Although each style reflects its

culture and is equally valid in its time, we should not be limited by the standard of another age.

Hymns must point beyond culture. Although Christians in each age reflect their own culture in their hymns, the Gospel is broader than one particular age. Healthier hymns must point beyond a particular day.

## **Hymns for the future ...**

When looking beyond culture for hymnody, our first concern is biblical content. A hymn, old or new, is worthless if it is not biblical! If the believer does not hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ in every line, the hymn is a failure! A second concern is communication. Hymns are communication with God, opening paths for speaking and listening. If both do not happen, the hymn is a failure! The third concern is the heart. Hymns for worship must originate in the heart and must stimulate the hearts of the pilgrim people of God. If heart is missing, the hymn is a failure!

Whether a hymn reflects our culture or points beyond our culture, a good hymn melts. When God's pilgrim people sing a hymn, it should disappear and a unity created by the bright morning star, our Savior, should appear. When a hymn melts, the people of God grow in their understanding and experience of the reality of the presence of Jesus — the Spirit's ever-present gift to us.

Finally, having written a number of hymn texts, I know the need for evaluation of new hymnody. When I write a text, I try to reflect our cultural needs and attempt to point worshippers beyond themselves to our Lord and Savior. When a hymn text is sung, I know that it works, but I usually receive little feedback. Hymn writers need to know the reactions of the people who sing their texts. When you sing a new text, jot down your thoughts and send them to the writer of the hymn text.

We are pilgrims together. We sing and feel together — loving and being loved. Through hymn singing, we move closer to the cradle of existence: our eternal home.

— by Rev. Roger L. Tappert,  
St. Mark's Lutheran Church  
Indianapolis, Indiana

## The 1993 AFLC Luther League Convention

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### *Guard Your Heart*

Proverbs 4:23

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Bible Study ..... Rev. Peter Amerman

\$25 registration fee.

Cost \$225 before March 1, 1993.

Afterwards \$250. Deadline is June 1, 1993.

**Start Making Plans Now!**

# Satan Is Real And Working

1. This is a Bible Study on Satan, for youth groups. While it is not exhaustive, it can be used in discussion. Satan is indeed alive and well. He can be involved in the lives of Christians, if they allow him. It is very important that we flee Satan and fill our lives with the presence of Jesus Christ James 4:7-8.

2. Satan is real and he is at work!

Ouija Board — Dungeons and Dragons (advanced D&D).

3. He has been since the beginning of time.

4. He probably was the one in charge of music in Heaven!

He is involved in much of the world's music today. The video "Hell's Bells" documents this fact.

5. Satan is a liar and the father of all lies!  
See John 8:44.

6. He told his first lies to himself when he said he would become like God!

See Isaiah 14:12-15.

See Ezekiel 28:12-17.

7. He told lies to Adam and Eve.  
See Genesis 3:4-5.

\*The tree of knowledge of good and evil, is it with us today? Do we still have it?

Yes, it is an experiential tree!

We may eat of it! Even Christians can eat of it!

It is a matter of choice!

## Vernon, B. C., Hosts Rally

West Coast District Luther League — Vernon, B.C. was the host for the district rally on May 1-3. The theme was "About My Father's Business." Dr. Francis Monseth, AFLTS Dean, was the speaker. About 45 youth from British Columbia, Washington and Oregon got involved by going to a senior citizen center, hospital, shopping mall and a home for the mentally disturbed. They sang, shared testimonies and visited with the var-

ious people. It was a good weekend to challenge all that attended to always be prepared to share what Jesus means.

The West Coast District also elected officers: president, David Gettis, Vernon; vice president, John Gettis, Vernon; secretary, Darcy Watson, Woodville, Washington; treasurer, Erick Miller, Lake Stevens, Washington; devotional secretary, Michelle Tiel, Vernon; and district advisor, Terry Stach, Vernon.

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# ng On Planet Earth!

8. Satan actually told Adam and Eve they would become gods!

This is the basic lie of Satan! This lie permeates all of his lies! Jeremiah 17:9.

Basis for all false religions. Humanistic Movement, New Age Theology, etc.

9. Satan mimics the Trinity of God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

First Beast  
Second Beast  
The Dragon of Revelation.

10. God's Word teaches us Satan poses as an angel of light.

See II Corinthians 11:14.

11. This even offers a problem for Christians because they can wonder who is speaking to them. Is it Satan or is it the Holy Spirit?

\*Note that the difference is seen in that when Satan convicts of sin he hounds and nags getting us to confess the same sins over and over again.

\*While the Holy Spirit gives us the assurance through the Word of God that our sins are forgiven. The Holy Spirit is gentle and kind presenting Jesus to us!

12. The Christian who will know the difference between the lies of Satan and the truths of God.

I John 4:1 and following.

13. We must therefore be careful of what we look at, what we read, and make certain we make a stand for Jesus!

14. Satan's influence is all about us!

He is like a roaring lion — like my cats! (same family)

15. Satan is involved in the rock music scene!

16. Satan is involved in the drug scene. (combined)

17. He has developed his own ways of communication:

With various alphabets.

With various signs.

18. He is able to "possess" and actually enter into the bodies of people and animals.

19. He can so take over that He can get the people so possessed to do his bidding.

20. **It is important for us to know that Satan cannot possess the bodies of the Christians.**

**There is no room for Jesus and Satan to live together in the same person!**

21. Satan does have his influence on us!

22. The cross of Christ makes Satan powerless!

Jesus Christ defeated Satan on the cross!

He gives us His victory when we are saved!

See as an example: I John 5:18.

23. Satan is like a **chained** dog.

\*You must step into his area of influence.

\*You might step into the sphere of influence and get away with it for a time.

\*But the dog, as Satan will catch up with you! (Unless you are saved and not yielding to sin.)

24. Satan's areas of influence have been faced by Jesus who had absolute victory!

\*Contrast I John 2:15-17 and Matthew 4.

1. Physical — bodily — sexual.

2. Power and prestige — look who "I" am!

3. Possessions — look what I own. Sin pride.

25. Always remember you do have victory in Jesus and that you must turn yourself over to Jesus daily. Romans 8

26. No time for the Devil. Concentrate on Jesus! Colossians 3:1-3.

— Rev. Dennis Gray  
AFLC Youth Resources Director

# Special Christians?

The true nature of our Christian commitment sometimes is seen only when faced with real challenges and difficult decisions. Such is the story of a group of people in France in World War II who showed a unique commitment to the Lord under very difficult times.

A PBS special showing of the film "Weapons of the Spirit" directed by Pierre Sarivage and interviewed after the film by Bill Moyers gave some very special insights into this group of people that we hear very little about.

In LeChambon, France, was a group of Huguenots who were followers of John Calvin and members of the Reformed Church. The name is believed to come from the Swiss religious leader Bezanson Hugues. These Protestants in predominately Catholic France for a time held quite a bit of political power. King Henry of Navarre issued the Edict of Nantes in 1598 that gave them political and religious freedom until 1685 when it was repealed by Louis XIV. When this happened, many of the Huguenots fled to England, Germany, Holland and America. It is said the Huguenots played a large part in the building up of the English textile industry as most of them were craftsmen. The Huguenots did not have religious or political freedom in France again until the French Revolution.

During the occupation of France in World War II the Huguenots of LeChambon gave refuge to many Jewish people fleeing the edict of Adolph Hitler against them. They did this at great peril of their own safety and even their life. It is an incredible story of facing up to the unbelievable hatred of the Jewish people by the Nazis.

In an interview by Bill Moyers of the director Pierre Sarivage, himself a Jew, he (Sarivage) calls these Huguenots "Special Christians." While he says that all of Europe is supposedly "Christian" these Huguenots in LeChambon showed a very special kind of Christianity that made this story so unique and fascinating. What

qualities did these Huguenots show that was so different?

1. **Humility** — the Huguenots of LeChambon did not believe they were heroes in any sense of the word. They were only doing what they believed they should do under the circumstances. This strong conviction that no peoples should be hunted and killed simply because they were of a certain ethnic background came from their Christian conviction that "all men are created equal and endowed with certain inalienable rights" such as we have as a foundation of our freedoms in the United States of America. They were not championing a cause, they were simply living out their convictions.

2. **Immoral laws must be challenged** — It was pointed out how the intellectuals during the Nazi period acted in a terrible way by not standing up to the wrong. These Huguenots believed the random extermination of the Jews was morally wrong. They had to obey God rather than man, Acts 5:29. The statement made many years ago saying that all it takes for evil to exist (we might add **thrive**) is for good

men to do nothing. It was pointed out how everyone at that time had a choice. Why were the other nations allowing this to go on when we certainly knew it was wrong. This was not a sin of commission but rather of omission on the part of nations and people outside of Nazi Germany. We can recall that slavery was legal for many years. The Holocaust was legal according to Nazi law. Is abortion any less a moral issue that can be ignored or tolerated? This is only one of many issues in our day that we know we have a choice as to what our reaction or action is to be. Good people doing nothing is the way all groups advocating issues that are morally wrong can thrive.

We have been challenged and humbled by events in our AFLC in recent months. Are we "Special Christians" who walk God's way even if it may be unpopular or costly to us personally? It is good for each of us to ask ourselves this question personally. I believe that the Lord has called the AFLC into existence for just such a time as this. My prayer is that I personally and the whole AFLC will be faithful to do the Lord's will even as the Huguenots did so heroically in WWII in France.

— Rev. Laurel Udden  
New Hope, Minnesota



**Cokato, Minnesota** — On June 16, 1992, a tornado ripped through this west central community. Good Shepherd Free Lutheran Church was seriously damaged as shown on this photo taken the next morning. Twelve homes were destroyed but no lives were lost.

11. What possibilities did Paul see in Timothy? I Timothy 4:14; II Timothy 4:5
12. What course did Timothy's life take? Romans 16:21; I Corinthians 16:10; Philipians 2:19-22; I Thessalonians 3:2

It was Eunice and Lois who nurtured Timothy in a cradle of faith. "It is no wonder he was converted on Paul's first missionary journey, that he was his secretary and helper on his second missionary journey, and that he was accepted as Paul's son" (Edith Deen, "Wisdom from Women in the Bible," p. 144).

## Women of Wisdom and The Word

### Lois and Eunice

The Women in Timothy's Life  
Key Verse: II Timothy 1:5

Timothy was the son of a Greek father and a Jewish mother (Acts 16:1). On Paul's first missionary journey, he visited Lystra where he met Timothy. Paul took an interest in young Timothy and became a spiritual father to him. Paul referred to Timothy as "my true child in the faith" (I Timothy 1:2) and "my beloved son" (II Timothy 1:2).

#### Family Life of Timothy — A Home of Training

1. Who were Lois and Eunice? II Timothy 1:5
2. In what kind of a household was Timothy raised? II Timothy 3:15
3. What does this suggest to you?
4. List a few suggestions in raising children, according to the Bible. (This list will not, of course, be exhaustive. Whole books are written on the subject.)

Proverbs 22:6

Deuteronomy 6:1, 2; 6, 7; 11:19

Psalms 119:11

Discipline can mean different things to different people. The word "discipline" comes from the same word as "disciple." There is a difference between discipline and punishment. God has entrusted children into your care to guide and teach, nurture and point to Jesus. Parents can be either far too permissive with their children or too harsh and restrictive. The key is to be balanced.

5. What does the Scripture teach you **not** to do. Rather, what are you to do? Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21.

### A Home of Testing

There are subtle indications that Timothy's home life may have been difficult at times. Strangely absent from many key verses is Timothy's father.

6. Was Timothy's father a believer? Acts 16:1

Imagine for a moment Eunice coming home with her future husband. Lois, being a godly Jewish mother, wanted the best for her daughter.

7. What conflicts did Lois probably have? Deuteronomy 7:3; Joshua 23:11-13; Nehemiah 13:23-27

Scripture clearly teaches that believers “should not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?” (II Corinthians 6:14)

8. Did Lois disown Eunice because of her decision? II Timothy 1:5; 3:15

9. What attitudes should you display when someone you know plans on marrying an unbeliever?

I Corinthians 8:1b

Ephesians 4:15

I Peter 1:22

I Corinthians 4:14

I Corinthians 4:14

10. When someone in the church is married to an unbeliever, what can you do? **Help** — Yes! **H-e-l-p** that person. (This chart may be applied to any problem a person may be experiencing. That's the miracle of the Word of God. It is so practical for everyday living and everyday problems!)

### What you can do

### How to help

**H** — Hear or listen —

Galatians 6:2 — Romans 15:1

**E** — Encourage — I Thessalonians 5:11

**L** — Love — Proverbs 17:17a

**P** — Pray — Philippians 4:6; Ephesians 6:18; II Corinthians 1:11

### Life Response

God knows that we are needy people. But often Christians cover up their problems. Why do you think Christians do that?

The answer to our problems comes from the Word of God. This month, seek to be a friend to someone. If you need ministry, are you willing to put aside your pride, and receive love and healing from a friend?

### A Home Triumphant

“Read distinctly, and exhort convincingly, in your pulpit. But above and before all else, let the Word of God dwell richly in yourself. Even after you have known the Holy Scriptures from a child, still continue to call them constantly to mind by your systematic and assiduous reading and meditation. And by so doing thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” (Alexander Whyte's paraphrase of what Paul might say to Timothy.)

Be encouraged that through the perseverance and prayers of two faithful women, young Timothy was nurtured in the faith. They were triumphant through Christ Jesus.

# Visiting One Of Our Chaplains

Our trip to Brussels, Belgium

On March 10, Margaret and I flew to Chicago where we changed planes for a seven-hour flight to Brussels. We were met at the airport by our son-in-law Chaplain Mark Antal.

Brussels is the headquarters for NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). Its history as an organization began in Paris sometime after the second World War. In 1967, it was moved to Brussels. It has a membership of 16 nations, all European except for the United States, Canada and Turkey.

Mark has been loaned by the Army to NATO. He is the only American Army Chaplain (Protestant, Catholic, Jewish or Muslim) to U.S. citizens (military and government employees) in the Brussels area, a total of about 3,000 people. He is responsible for the Protestant worship service held at the American school, where the Antal children attend.

Spiritual life is at a low ebb here among the U.S. citizens, and like a pastor in a parish one can only be of help to those who want the kind of help you can give. Only a few of the 3,000 attend the service on Sunday morning where Mark shares the Word of God. However, there are some dedicated Christians to whom Mark has been able to minister and fellowship with.

There was a noticeable increase in the attendance at the worship service after Mark and his wife, Ruth, (our daughter) came to Brussels. Ruth has played the piano and helped in various ways. She also leads a women's Bible study group in her home. Much of Mark's time is spent in counseling with those who have problems.

About 40 miles southwest of Brussels, near the French border, near the city of Mons, is a large military establishment called SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Powers of Europe) and sometimes referred to as the Pentagon of Europe. There are troops stationed here from 15 nations, the same nations, with the exception of



In front of the Antal home.

France, who belong to NATO. Mark's superior (Chaplain Noble) is the U.S. Protestant chaplain at SHAPE. Occasionally Mark is called upon to conduct the Protestant worship service there.

After a brief stop at NSA we continued to Mark and Ruth's home. They live with their four children in a small town called Everberg, several miles northeast of Brussels.

Mark and Ruth rent their home which is located on a narrow, crowded street with most of the houses abutting the next one. They have a long, narrow yard behind their house in which the children can play. Their street is a busy one with many cars and trucks speeding by, especially during rush hours.

On our first Sunday there (March 15) Mark spoke at a chapel service at SHAPE. There were about 175 in attendance. On Sundays a different service is in session about every hour in this chapel. Just prior to the American Protestant service there had been a German-speaking service. There was a time during the service for introducing guests and Ruth introduced us. Several came to us after the service, introduced themselves and bid us welcome. I had the opportunity to hand out a few folders introducing my books and several became interested. One woman asked me to send her copies of each book. Later I received a thank you letter in which she stated her intentions to share the books with others. On the second Sunday I had the privilege to speak at

the Protestant service in Brussels. There were about 30 present (enlisted men, officers, civilian workers and families).

There is much depression among the American citizens in Brussels. Mark wanted me to speak on depression. And, therefore, an evening was planned for this.

One of the concerns of the army personnel is the cutback which is taking place. Every day, officers and enlisted men, some who had served in the army for many years, were being given notice of discharge.

Mark, too, was concerned. His friends assured him that it wouldn't happen to him because of his unique position as the only army chaplain on loan to NATO. But shortly after we got home, we received word from Mark that he, too, was being cut from the army. This came as a shock and a great disappointment to Mark. He was given the choice of continuing until his assignment in Brussels is completed, which would be the summer of 1993, or to leave whenever he chose. Mark notified the AFLC president that he would be available for a call, hoping that he could again be in the parish ministry in the near future.

While in Brussels we were able to visit such places as Paris, Holland, Brugge, Waterloo, Bastogne (site of the Battle of the Bulge) and other places of interest.

— Rev. Gerald F. Mundfrom  
Osceola, Wisconsin



## PEOPLE and PLACES

**Dr. Jonathan Strand**, a 1985 AFLTS graduate, received his Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Notre Dame on May 17, 1992. He also received the Graduate School Award in the Humanities, one of four doctoral candidates honored for outstanding scholarship.

Dr. Strand began teaching at Valparaiso University this past year. The Strands live at 408 Fair St. Valparaiso, Indiana 46383.

**Rev. Paul Nash** has moved to Rt. 6 4510 FM 1954, Wichita Falls, Texas 76301. Phone number: (H) 817-767-8827 and (O) 817-766-5757. Pastor Nash began serving Christ Lutheran Church, Wichita Falls, in June.

**Rhonda Waage**, a student at Northwestern College, Roseville, Minnesota, is spending part of the summer in Ireland where she is working with children's ministry. She is a member of United Free Lutheran, Greenbush, Minnesota.



Pictured are Rev. Steven Kneeland (left) with new members Cliff and Virginia Eastvold who were commissioned on May 31 to be short-term missionaries in Kenya, East Africa.

**Duluth, Minnesota** — Last spring, 52 souls were welcomed into membership at St. John's Free Lutheran Church. The families were Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Johanson; Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Anderson; Brian Brostrom; Mrs. Laura Peterson; Mrs. Rhonda Wenzel; Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Walker; Mr. and Mrs. Ken Anderson; Mr. Steve Anderson; Mr. and Mrs. James A. Denney; Mr. and Mrs. James J. Denney; Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Laurila; Mr.

and Mrs. Rick Marsh; Mr. and Mrs. Mark Peterson; Mr. and Mrs. Jim Sandness and Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Thompson.

**Greenbush, Minnesota** — United Free Lutheran Church enjoyed its Sunday School and congregational picnic on Sunday, May 17. Gary Erickson roasted a pig for the nearly 240 people. Third graders also received their Bibles that Sunday.



The new AFLC Administration Building was dedicated on June 21, 1992, at 3 p.m. Both inside and outside finishing work continues as it is readied for occupancy.

**Morris, Illinois** — The members of Bethlehem Lutheran Church invite all to join them as they install Rev. Scott Gray as their pastor on July 26. The installation service will begin at 2 p.m. with a luncheon to follow. The AFLBS Ambassadors will share their program at 5 p.m. at the church.

**Rev. Charles Knapp**, Karlstad, Minnesota, began serving Hegland Lutheran Church, rural Karlstad, on June 1.

**Rev. Todd Schierkolk**, who was ordained at the annual conference, accepted a call from Ebenezer Lutheran Church of Evergreen Park, Chicago, Illinois.

**Jonathan Unverzagt**, a 1992 AFLTS graduate, has accepted the call to St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Jewell, Iowa. He will be ordained at Mt. Sion Lutheran Church, Kasson, Minnesota, on August 2.

**Rev. Gordon Grage**, Kasson, Minnesota, continues to serve the congregations in Kasson and Dexter, but he has moved to Rt. 1, Box 51, Dexter, MN 55926; phone (507) 594-6300. Pastor Grage is available to visit AFLC church members who are hospitalized in nearby Rochester.

**Rev. Jerome Nikunen**, Escanaba, Michigan, has accepted the call to Our Saviour's Free Lutheran Church, Chilli-cothe, Illinois. He will begin his new ministry August 1. He has served Escanaba Free Lutheran Church since 1988.

**Elaine Klug**, wife of Rev. Raymond Klug, Fairbury, Nebraska, is a patient at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, 600 42nd Avenue South, Omaha, NE 68198, waiting for a liver transplant. A fund has been established to help cover expenses.

Look for the 30th Annual Conference review in the next issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador*, August 4.

**Faith, South Dakota** — Bethel Lutheran had their Confirmation Sunday on May 17. After a potluck dinner, approximately 30 people went on a fossil hunt. A daughter of the congregation and a geologist, Jill Waterland Schilling, led the hunt. Numerous salt water fossils were found, giving evidence of Noah's Flood.

**Labor Day Family Camp** is again scheduled at the ARC for September 4-7. Speakers are Dr. Craig Jennings, Rev. James Asp and missionary Arne Gronning, Japan. The camp is sponsored by the Hauge Foreign Mission. For more information, contact Lenny Nelson, 16300 Hilltop Rd., Eden Prairie, MN 55347, or call 612-937-8941.

## Encourage One Another Daily

*See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first (Hebrews 3:12-14).*

As we go through this life, it's very easy to become discouraged. Discouragement can come from many sources. It can come from situations in life such as financial circumstances that don't work out the way we had hoped. Our physical body ages, and the aches and pains of life get us down. Other people often are critical and misunderstand what we do. There are many ways we can become discouraged. But, these verses direct us to **encourage** one another daily as long as it is called Today.

As we look at these verses in context, they are instructing us to encourage one another in a very specific way. We are to encourage one another to trust in the promises and grace of God.

The illustration used prior to these verses was the example of the Israelites and their refusal to take God up on His promise that He would give them the land of Canaan. They looked at the land, saw how great its inhabitants were, and despaired over the work it would take to possess it. God wanted to give it to them as a free gift. They did not believe He would do it. Rather, they saw nothing but their own work involved in taking the land. Because they hardened their hearts and refused to simply believe that God would graciously give them what He promised, He said, "I declared an oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'"

How does all this relate to us? God has offered each of us eternal rest in His promised land, heaven. What do we do with His offer? Far too often we try to obtain eternal life by our own works and labor. When we approach eternity in this way, we become frustrated and discouraged because the cost is far more than we could ever pay. Our focus is on self and not on Christ.

We must return to God's gracious promise that Christ paid the price on Calvary. Simply take God at His Word.

In this way, these verses become very meaningful to us. "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But **encourage** one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."

Encourage each other daily to take God at His Word. His grace shall be sufficient for you.

— Rev. Del Palmer  
From June, 1992, *Our Saviour's Parish Newsletter*  
Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

## Bored?

*II Timothy 4:1-8*

**S**ome time ago I was told that there is little difference between one of our congregations and the others in the community!

If that is the case then two legitimate questions need to be faced squarely and honestly. One, is there need for our congregation to duplicate that which already is being done in the community? Does such a statement show lack of understanding of the real spiritual issues of our day?

A pastor recently mentioned that Christians today are "bored with the Word." Sad and tragic but I believe he hit the nail on the head! We are living in a time where we experience much of having a "form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Both the preaching and the experience of **repentance** is tragically lacking in our day!

The story is told about an old Native American who attended a church service one Sunday morning. The preacher's message lacked real spiritual food, so he did a lot of shouting and pulpit pounding to cover up for the same. After the service someone asked the Native American what he thought of the message. His response was: "High wind. Big thunder. No rain." Yes, when the Scriptures are neglected, there is "no rain." Only when preaching, teaching and living is based on the Word of God, are people blessed and refreshed.

To **obey**, in the New Testament terms, means to give earnest attention to the Word, to submit to its authority and to carry out its instructions. Obedience is the center of a living faith springing forth out of love for Jesus.

Pastors and teachers, when sermons and lessons lack biblical content, they offer little spiritual nourishment. They are mere 'sermonettes' being presented to parched, thirsty 'Christianettes.'

After the resurrection of our Savior a few of the believers were walking toward Emmanus and Jesus joined them. Those men experienced heart-

burn — the kind where relief is not spelled Roloids. It was the kind of heartburn we need today. When an individual leaves a biblical congregation for personal reasons and joins another, that person almost always joins a group with a lesser estimation of the Word of God!

Not so long ago one of our sons stated that when we share the Word and it doesn't disturb anyone, we haven't really said much. Thus you know when the Word of God no longer **disturbs us**, we need to be truly disturbed!

Scratch a dog around its ears and it will come back for more! When you have an itch on your back that you can't reach, how good it feels when some one scratches it for you! But spiritually we need to be aware of the tragic error of 'itching ears' instead of 'burning hearts.' Notice in the suggested text, verse 4, they left because of their "own desires." Do you permit the Word (Holy Spirit) to do deep plowing in your life, or to just scratch the surface?

On one occasion Babe Ruth said: "Most of the people who have really counted in my life were not famous. Nobody ever heard of them except those who knew and loved them. I was acquainted with an old minister once. His hair was white and his face shone with joy. I have written my name on thousands and thousands of baseballs in my life. The old minister wrote his name on just a few simple hearts, but **how I envy him!** He was not trying to please himself, so fame never came to him. I am listed as a famous home-run

hitter, yet compared to that obscure preacher, who was so good and wise, **I never got to first base!**"

One of our pastors and his wife were awakened very early one morning just as the sun was rising. They heard their house door open. They arose and got dressed and casually went downstairs to find upon investigation that the door had been opened from the inside. There, out on the front steps, sat their five-year-old son fully dressed. When asked what he was doing, he responded: "I am practicing waiting for the school bus." Yes, even more important than the signs of the times and correct doctrine, is the person of Jesus! Do you know him as your personal Saviour! Are you ready for His Coming? Are you clothed in His righteousness? If so, He says, "Occupy till I come!"

"Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed" (Revelation 16:15). "And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming" (I John 2:28).



— by Pastor  
Rodney Stueland