



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

June 9, 1992



*...He will baptize you
with the Holy Spirit
and with fire.*

Luke 3:16

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Light on the Way

Knowing God As Father

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:4-7).

Are there not times that these words seem to mock us? Or when our trials seem so great that we feel like saying, "Oh sure, easy for you to say! If you were in the midst of what I'm going through, you wouldn't be rejoicing; you too would be anxious." But these are not commands from man but from God. And God in His wisdom chose a man to record these words to us who himself went through severe trials. The fact is, life is full of difficulties, trials, pain and suffering. This isn't true for just some but we all have our turn at experiencing the hardships of life.

Trials in life have a way of revealing what is really inside of us not only to others, but also to ourselves. Pain will come to us in ways we might never dream. What is of great significance is how we respond. It is possible to have a foundation in our lives that we may respond as commanded in the passage above, that is without anxiety and with rejoicing. Such a response is possible by the grace of God!

First, what is inside of us? "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). And even the Christian finds in the trials of life, "... When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my

members. What a wretched man I am ..." (Romans 7:21-24). Certainly there is no hope in looking to self to obey these commands or to do anything good for that matter.

When we are forced to look away from self to God, what do we find? "The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love" (Psalm 103:8). "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). We find that God loves us and desires we come to Him as our Father and leave our needs in His capable hands. Only His gift of saving faith makes it possible for us to do this in our severest trials.

Luther lets us know in his Small Catechism as he writes of the introduction to the Lord's Prayer that God "... tenderly encourages us to believe that He is truly our Father, and that we are truly His children, so that we may **boldly and confidently come to Him in prayer**, even as beloved children come to their dear father." With our needs in His hands, there is no need for anxiety and certainly there is reason to rejoice! To truly know God through the Gospel provides the only foundation to rejoice in the trials of life!

Thank you God for being our Heavenly Father that we may come to through Christ anytime and anywhere with all our needs.



— by Rev.
Jon Wellumson

Salvation Sanctification Fruitful Ministry? **BY MY SPIRIT Says The Lord!**

Long before Pentecost someone knew of the power, hope, comfort and joy that the promise of the enabling Spirit of God could bring. That someone was a man by the name of Zerubbabel. He was involved in the work of rebuilding the temple of God in Jerusalem. The work was ridiculed for its insignificance (Ezra 3:12-13 and Haggai 2:3). The project was opposed, threatened and even abandoned for some time. Zerubbabel must have been discouraged, defeated and seemingly faced an impossible task.

Then God spoke: "... take courage Zerubbabel ... for I am with you ... says the Lord. As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!" (Haggai 2:4-5). Zechariah records this event too: "this is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel saying 'Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord" (Zechariah 4:6).

God promised that the temple would be completed. It would be filled with God's glory. How? Not by the might or power of man, but by the Spirit of God. Zerubbabel's hope, his encouragement and his promise was in what God would do by His mighty Spirit.

Our world today is filled with discouraged and defeated people. We are surrounded by people who are separated from a Holy God because of their sin. Many Christians are frustrated with their own failings and seeming lack of growth in Christ likeness. Even pastors and congregations sometimes sense a lack of power and fruit in their ministry. Perhaps as the Jews of Zerubbabel's day, we look back at the past "glory" days and wonder will we ever see God move in ways like that again?

Be assured that our might and power will not change the above situation and needs. God would say to us today, "It is only by My Spirit!"

Sinner you can not save yourself. Use all your power and might but you will not grow one

inch closer to God or His heaven. Only as the Spirit convicts of sin and reveals the truth of Christ's death and resurrection on your behalf, can you find peace with God.

Christian, you cannot be sanctified and made more like Jesus through greater self-control or any other strong self-effort. It is reliance upon the Spirit of God at work through the Word and dependent soul-searching prayer that will bring growth (I Timothy 4:5).

Pastor and congregation, do not let the world and the devil accuse, belittle and discourage you. We have not been left alone. We are not orphans (John 16:13). We have the living Word of God which the Spirit uses to convict (John 16:8), comfort and teach (John 14:26). By God's Spirit, His Kingdom marches on.

This encouraging promise of what God can and will do by His Spirit brings home to us the significance of Pentecost. If the Holy Spirit had not come there to dwell within each believer, could the early church have moved forward at all? Some call the book of Acts the "Acts of the Holy Spirit." It is not a record of mighty men, but ordinary men filled and used by the mighty Spirit of God. Is this not what we need today? Our great need is not economic or political power. Nor do we need greater intellectual or military capabilities. We have had these and have they moved the nation or world closer to God? No! What we need is a moving of the Spirit of God convicting us of sin and righteousness and judgment. We then need the Spirit to guide us into the truth of the Gospel wherein individuals can be born again of the Spirit and transformed by the renewing of the mind.

Let us pray and preach the Word and testify that the Spirit may use us to this end. Let us thank God for the coming of His Holy Spirit. Then let us rest in the knowledge that our salvation, sanctification and ministries are dependent solely on the Spirit of God.

Lead on oh King eternal!

— by Rev. Jeff Swanson
Kalispell, Montana

BEGINNING TO

Wouldn't it be great to tell God what we want and then He immediately does what we demanded? What if becoming a Christian meant the instant healing of all our illnesses, increases in our bank accounts, and lots of miracles to keep things exciting? This type of religion might seem rather strange to many of us. But perhaps we have encountered well-meaning Christians of other churches who actually believe that this is the norm and if you have problems, it is evidence that you are either not a true Christian, do not have the Holy Spirit, or really do not believe the Bible.

There is a movement within the United States which strives to emphasize that Christians are all guaranteed perfect health, wealth, and the answer to all of our prayers as a divine right to the children of God. A historical or critical study of such movements is not the intent of this article, but it will try to answer the more pressing practical and personal questions we face as believers.

All Christians may be assured that the Holy Spirit of God lives within them. Joel prophesied that the Lord would pour out his Spirit on "all flesh" (Joel 2:28). The apostle Peter applied this verse with the important distinction that all who would repent of their sin and would be baptized would also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:14-39). In Christian baptism, we are baptized into the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19) and therefore have received the Holy Spirit just as we have Jesus Christ.

We receive the Holy Spirit by hearing the Gospel with faith (Galatians 3:2) and through faith (Galatians 3:14), yet it is always the work of God and not ours to create belief and salvation. The danger for us is to resist or quench the work of the Holy Spirit. We do this by refusing to believe or accept the message of salvation.

The Holy Spirit exists within every believer and without Him, we could really never become a Christian (Galatians 4:2; Romans 3:14). What joy to truly know the Triune God and to realize that the Holy Spirit of God wants to open up the Word of God so we might understand it and believe it!

A common misunderstanding is a failure to understand who the Holy Spirit really is. The Holy Spirit is true God. He is not a force or a

power, although He is powerful. He is not a commodity as though we could have some of His mighty works for a price. Consider the terrible mistake of Simon the Sorcerer who thought that the Holy Spirit was like a new magical force (Acts 8). I would not compare Simon with people of today from other Christian churches for there is a certain fascination with miraculous activity among us all. We all long for God to do great works in our midst. If all of our pastors could lay hands on all who were ill and they would be healed instantly, who among us would not want that to happen? The troublesome question is not so much if God still heals today, but rather **must** He heal simply because we ask or because we are Christians?

An examination of some of the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament and the lives of early Christians might help us to understand these troublesome issues. The Holy Spirit did mighty works in the early church, yet the believers were often scorned, rejected, and martyred. The apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and at times mass conversions of thousands of people took place. At other times, the apostles preached only to face stonings and arrest. Paul, filled with the Spirit, healed many who were ill, but he himself had an ailment which God purposely allowed to remain. Tradition tells us that excluding Judas Iscariot, all of the apostles except for John died as a martyr. Did the apostles not have enough faith or not have the Holy Spirit? Such a question seems absurd because we know from the Scriptures that they were truly men of God. Knowing that the righteous suffer helps us to be free to seek deeper understandings about the nature of God rather than doubt our salvation or the presence of the Holy Spirit.

We are faced in our own times with famine, disease, war, and the onslaught of evil. Christians do not always escape these situations. We can pray and claim the promises of the Bible, yet have the most horrible of situations befall us. We must wrestle with these situations and the perplexing question of where is God when these things happen.

The Christian who assumes that God is in a position in which He must give us everything for which we ask is in grave danger of not only having that position challenged, but even of

"All Christians
may be
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within them."

UNDERSTAND

rejecting God altogether when prayers are not answered in the affirmative.

The problem is not our faith, or the lack of the Bible's truthfulness, or the failure of the Holy Spirit. The problem is that we cannot grasp the concept of eternity or life as God sees it. While we focus on our pain and the longing for a better life, God is still in control. He has promised "I will never fail you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:6).

When our church is in crisis or when it seems like we cannot continue because of the lack of members or support, the Holy Spirit is speaking. I sense that the Holy Spirit works through times of adversity to get our attention, to break us, to mold us, and finally to use us. One man said several years ago that God had been speaking to him for years but he was always too busy. Then he had his heart attack and in the solitude of his hospital bed was now forced to listen.

If there is sin in our personal lives or in our church, it must be confessed and forgiven. We cannot be fully used of God if there is pride, jealousy, envy, greed, gossip, or whatever else in our lives. True repentance is one of the key works of the Holy Spirit, but our arrogance all too often hides behind self-righteousness and we grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:20-32).

Does God answer prayer? He most certainly does, but in His love and wisdom He is free to be our Heavenly Father who may choose to say, "Yes, No, or Wait." Does God guarantee perfect health? Yes, He does, but it is in heaven. On this earth He frequently heals our illnesses, but we still have times when we go through incredible pain and eventually death. At such times, the Lord is not causing the illness, but He is present and we may draw closer to Him and to each other.

Finally, the Holy Spirit is in the heart of every believer. We, however, may not be fully yielded to Him and thus prevent Him from working in us. Several years ago I heard a statement which has proven to be very wise: "It does not make any difference how much you have of the Holy Spirit, but rather how much He has of you." We are all just beginning to know and understand the mighty work of the living God. Let us not stand in His way.

— by Chaplain Timothy K. Skramstad
Colorado Springs, Colorado

"The problem
is that we
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God Is With Us

The Christian life can be a perilous one at times. We often suffer from misunderstandings, persecution, but we can turn to Scripture for both comfort and proof of His love toward us. Psalm 23 verse 5, for example, reads:

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over."

God is truly good to us. He protects us, sustains us, and even uses our troubles as a witness of His glory and greatness to our adversaries.

Christ also reminds us in John 15, verse 19 that we won't be accepted in this world.

"If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

Yes, we can expect trouble in our lives. We may lose our job, be the victim of a false rumor that ruins our reputation, or even be rejected by our peers because of our beliefs. Whatever the situation, we need to remain faithful and not doubt God's love for us, or His ability to see us through our troubled times.

We need to remember that God's ways are not necessarily our ways. What may seem like terrible trouble for us one moment, can turn out to be a blessing in disguise the next. Consequently, it's through the trials and tribulations of life that we are brought closer to God. We can experience the blessings He has to offer more greatly when we are in desperate need of His help. And, unfortunately, it's often only when we are facing these trials and tribulations, that we can truly appreciate the mighty blessings and miracles of God as we should.

— by Gregory J. Bownik
Medicine Lake Lutheran Church
Plymouth, Minnesota

No condition is more dangerous for a Christian than to become self-satisfied ... A Christian's dissatisfaction with himself and his own Christianity and the continual longing for more holiness are the absolutely necessary requirements for attaining to the fullness of the Spirit. What is more: This dissatisfaction and this longing are characteristics of the person who is filled with the Spirit.

For a proper Christian the highest point in life always lies in the future. It is not a memory but a confident hope of future blessing. The richest days of my Christian life ought to be the last days that I live on earth — before attaining to eternal bliss. Being filled with the Spirit is not a finished act: it is a continual becoming. To be filled with the Spirit means ever anew to become filled; and continually in greater and richer measure. To be filled with the Spirit is not to be in a settled condition from which I can make no further progress. He who is filled with the Spirit always longs for more. God fills the Christian to his capacity. The believer's growth consists in opening heart and mind more and more to the Spirit and thus attaining to an ever richer fullness ... What a Christian needs is a stronger and more abounding experience of Christ. That is what the Holy Spirit will give him.

To Be

Filled

To be filled with the Spirit then means that the life and being of God are realized in man in his daily life and in all his being. Hence, the Spirit-filled person is a holy man who really bears the impress of Christ.

With The Holy Spirit

But from all this we can also know what the fullness of the Spirit is not. It is not the same as speaking in tongues. In the first place, neither speaking in tongues, nor prophesying, nor exhibiting a miracle-working faith is any guarantee of a really Christian life (1 Corinthians 13:1-4). These things a man may do without having the life with God.

Nor is the fullness of the Spirit the same as being baptized with the Spirit. In this matter many modern sanctification groups lead their listeners into the way of despair, and inflict deep wounds on their souls.

There is no experience of the Spirit which is not also an experience of Christ. And there is no experience of Christ except by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not glorify Himself; He directs us to Christ only. I cannot see Christ without the Spirit ... What you need is not more than Christ, but more of Christ.

God be praised! All in Christ. In a sum: To be filled with the Spirit means an ever richer and more glorious experience of Christ whereby He Himself by the Spirit still more takes possession of the believer's heart and fills it, and leavens and fashions his whole life.

The one thought that we need is this: The fullness of Christ is attained to by growth ... The fullness of the Spirit is the work of sanctification seen from the inside. That is the reason that fullness of the Spirit is attained to as a result of Christian growth.

The Christian life is a life in faith, a life of obedience. Faith and obedience are so closely joined together in Scripture that they are almost made into one.

God fills as much of the human heart as is open to Him. God sanctifies as much of man's life as is absolutely yielded to Him. So Christian growth consists in this that more and more of the heart is open to God, that more and more of life is sanctified by Him. It is by the obedience of faith that the soul opens the heart and admits God.

Now and then a man has very special experiences of God, when Christ appears unusually great and glorious, and the Spirit fills his soul with perceptible grace. God be praised for every such experience!

Rejoice every time God gives you such a special experience of Him, but do not let your spiritual state be dependent on special occasions. Do not spend your time waiting for something extra ordinary ... No one can make rules for God ... But God has given the world one law, and He acts according to that: The law of growth of life.

"The fullness of the Spirit is experienced as the fullness of sin" (Hallesby). It is humiliating to become a Christian, for everything must be of grace. It is still more humiliating to grow as a Christian, for that is a growth in grace. It is most humiliating of all to reach the goal of growth: the fullness of the Spirit. For then all is grace.

When a man begins to pray for fullness of the Spirit, God answers by humiliating him. The praying person had expected to be lifted up into a higher sphere, but his experience is that he is bowed down into a deeper knowledge of self. The more God puts into one plate of the soul's scales, the farther down that plate sinks. "The branches that are heaviest with fruit, bend farthest down toward the earth" (Scriber).

For to be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with grace; and it is only where there is a growth in the knowledge of self that there will be more room for grace. Where the knowledge of sin is deepest, the need for grace is greatest. The fullness of the Spirit is not attained by the jubilation of the third heaven, but by the helpless sinner's sigh for grace ... The fullness of grace is the fullness of the Spirit.

"The price for attaining fullness of the Spirit is high."

Declare your willingness to give up everything that the Spirit points out. Do not coddle any sin, even if it may seem innocent and insignificant ... Let it be noticed by all who associate with you that your own ego has been crucified. You may be overlooked, forgotten, suffer injustice without even a hidden complaint. You live for others and forget yourself.

The price for attaining fullness of the Spirit is high. It cannot — even seen from a purely human standpoint — be made higher. And yet it is not too high. For the treasure that the soul receives is so precious that the price seems small. It is so small that he who receives the treasure will say: "All of grace!"

The painful death of the ego is the blessed joy of the soul.

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Greenbush, Minnesota — Oiland Free Lutheran Church WMF vice president, Edna Wahl is shown pinning Honorary Membership pins on Ruth Graff and Ruby Brekke.



Lake Alma, Saskatchewan — Faith Free Lutheran Church graduated three children from their Cradle Roll program earlier this year. Pictured are Verna and Jessica Rude, Grace and Kyle Hagen and Dawn and Rachel Johnson.

Sebek, Minnesota — Bethany Free Lutheran Cradle Roll graduated Christie Davis, daughter of Danny and Diane Davis.



A Tribute to Leone Snipstead

Leone, my friend,

I loved Leone. She was a very special person in my life as I know she was in the lives of many others who knew her. She was very unselfish and always gave of herself.

I first met her when Dick accepted the call to Greenbush. I thank God for bringing them to our parish. He used Dick and Leone to lead Clifford and me to Christ for which we are eternally grateful.

Dick was very busy serving seven churches so most of the caring of the children was left to Leone. Even though her days began early and lasted into the night, she always had time to watch and care for other children so the moms could get a break.

She gave me encouragement during times when I did not "feel" that I was a Christian. She told me that I can not rely on my feelings. Rather I could rely on God's Word. She suggested I claim I John 1:9 and make it personal by using my name as I read the verse. Needless to say, that verse is very precious to me.

Leone was an excellent seamstress and she sewed a lot for me. I remember several times there would be material left over and I suggested she keep it and use it. She would say, "Why don't we make a dress for Tina with the remnants so she can have a dress like her grandma." Yes, Leone was so giving of herself. No matter how busy she was, she always was there for me. She cared.

I know she touched the lives of many who will miss her. Many who are grateful for her quiet yet sincere and loving ministry. We feel special because we had the privilege of knowing her.

I know God welcomed her to heaven with open arms saying, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Missing her,
Ruby Holm
Crystal, Minnesota

1992 Spring Rallies

The Eastern Montana-western North Dakota WMF District — Beaver Creek Lutheran Church, Ray, North Dakota, hosted the Spring Rally on April 25. "Praise" was the theme taken from Psalm 138:1a. Bible study leaders were Mrs. Lynn Wellumson and Mrs. Jeanie Sheldon, both from Williston. The afternoon leader speaker was Mrs. Rodica Maianu. She shared how God had led her and her family to faith in Christ and out of their homeland in Romania to the United States.

North Central District WMF Rally — Alida Lutheran Church, Shevlin, hosted the Spring Rally together with the Sell Lake WMF. The theme verse was from Ephesians 4:15. Rev. Lloyd Bjornlie, Winger, was the speaker for the day.

Lake Superior District — St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Cloquet, Minnesota, hosted the April 25 Rally. II Corinthians 12:9 was the verse for the

Women's Missionary Federation

In memoriam gifts

Spencer Jonathan Unseth, Wheaton, Ill.
 Emma Wilkins, Howes, S. Dakota
 Hilda Breckey, Fergus Falls, Minn.
 Eugena Holman, Sisseton, S. Dakota
 Mamie Pepper, Bothell, Wash.
 Cora Caurilti, Fergus Falls, Minn.
 Doris Vance, Ray, N. Dakota
 Inga Skiple, Erskine, Minn.
 Lynn Hartsoch, Tioga, N. Dakota
 Jack Card, Valley City, N. Dakota
 Rev. Arvid Nyquist, Wahpeton, N. Dakota
 Felix Grahn, Roseau, Minn.
 Emil Baumgam, Webster, S. Dakota
 Hjalmer Larson, Webster, S. Dakota
 Leone Snipstead, Minneapolis, Minn.
 Helen Larson, Colfax, Wis.
 Maynard Odegaard, Tioga, N. Dakota
 Marlene Gravgaard, Tioga, N. Dakota
 Marvin Overdorf, Tioga, N. Dakota
 Rose Engeberg, Bruce, S. Dakota
 Mary Boettcher, Brookings, S. Dakota
 Gerty Hoff, Brooten, Minn.
 Ada Svalestuen, Sand Creek, Wis.

*Blessed are
 those who die
 in the Lord*



theme "His Grace is Sufficient for Thee." Mrs. Edna Blake, Duluth, was the speaker for the day.

Western South Dakota — Slim Buttes Lutheran Church, Reva, hosted the Spring Rally for the West River churches on April 25. Pastor Henry and Linda Mohagen, Towner, North Dakota, were the guest speakers for the day. The theme was "Serve the Lord with Gladness."

Eastern North Dakota District WMF Rally — Grace Free Lutheran Church, Valley City, hosted the Spring Rally on May 9. "Lord, Teach Us to Pray" from Luke 11:1-4 was the theme for the day. Rev. Craig Wentzel, Leeds, was the speaker.

Southwest Central Minnesota District — Calvary Free Lutheran Church, Fergus Falls, hosted the District Spring Rally on May 5. Missionaries Connely and Carolyn Dyrud shared during the day on the theme "Declare His Glory" from Psalm 96:3.

Our President Writes

CHURCH GROWTH

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. (II Peter 3:18)

The occasion was the dedication of the new worship home for Faith Lutheran Church, Ottawa, Illinois. The young congregation, which has been meeting in rented quarters since its organization four years ago, moved into the impressive facility on Easter Sunday with record attendance. Its location on the developing south edge of the city also lends itself to projections of a growing future, and I join the congregation in dreaming of the day when there will be a need to proceed to the next phase of their plans for expansion.

It is good for a church to grow. The communities where the AFLC is represented do not lack people who need the Lord, and there is no surplus of churches that proclaim the way of salvation and reach out in love to the lost. Our goal must be more than numbers, but those numbers stand for souls and must not be despised, either.

Church growth means much more than counting noses, however. Peter admonishes his readers to "grow in the grace and knowledge and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," and this kind of growth is not always easy to evaluate. It is an **inward** rather than an **outward** growth, and only God can measure it.

Growth in grace is growth in dependence on God, rather than ourselves. A focus on "equipping the saints" to evangelize, for example, that is not grounded in grace will ultimately fall short in God's eyes, even if it results in numerical success.

Growth in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is "grace growth," too, for the more we know of Him the more our need of Him is apparent. This knowledge is not a mystical discovery for a select few, but is available to all believers through the faithful ministry of Word and Sacrament.

It is our goal that every AFLC congregation would be a growing church, and we rejoice with our Ottawa friends and others who witness encouraging outward results of their ministry. Our greatest joy, however, is to see signs of the inward growth that is also happening. Many of God's people are getting to know Jesus Christ better as they rest in a salvation that is "not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). They are getting excited about Jesus and sharing Him with others, and their oneness in the Spirit and enthusiastic love for one another are the outward expression of an inward experience of growth.

To God be all the glory as His church grows both without and within!

—Robert L. Lee

Testimony From Brazil

My name is Luci Vania Pereira de Oliveira. I am 24 years old, and was born in the town of Iretama, Paraná, but now I am living in Juina, Mato Grosso. I am very happy and thank God that I was born into a Christian home. Thus, since a little child I have had knowledge of the Word of God. I also went to church with my parents, but one day I began to feel the lack of a friend who would always be with me. It was not difficult to find such a friend. He was knocking at my door. I asked Him in and He came in. Today He is the owner of my heart and all my being — this friend is Jesus. Jesus is my best friend in all my hours and moments.

When I was still an adolescent I dreamed of studying at this Bible school, but since I lived so far away (about 2,800 miles from Campo) I didn't think it would become reality. But today, in answer to my prayers, I



am studying here at Bible school and I am very happy. I am learning so much from the Word of God. I am growing

spiritually. It is a year of many blessings to me.

During my year of studies I am participating in the activities of the Cohapar Church (suburb of Campo). I teach a Sunday School class to children. I like working with children, and think it is very important to teach children to love Jesus. When I go back home I want to continue working with children.

The verse that most helped me to make this important decision of studying at Bible school is I Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." It brings peace and joy knowing that our work for the Lord will prosper and when the Lord is with us He will help us and give us victory.

FORUM

Give A Student A Lift

Our schools in Brazil have grown to 19 students. By year end the Miriam Infant Home will be complete and caring for many abandoned children. For the past few years we have used two nine-passenger VW vans. The vans are old, wearing out and no longer meet the need.

We have found a 1988, 23 passenger Mercedes diesel bus for \$20,000. The dealer will give us the unbelievable allowance of \$15,000 on the two old VW vans. We have made the commitment to buy, but we need the balance of \$5,000 as soon as possible. Would you help us with a special gift?

We encourage all VBSs and Sunday Schools to make this a special summer project. Designate your gift to the: Brazil Bus Project, AFLC World Missions Department, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Boulevard, Minneapolis, MN 55441-3008.

Pro-Life Advocates Sound the Trumpet

As American citizens we need to share our convictions on abortion. When one reads Ezekiel 33:1-9, we have to speak up as committed followers of Jesus Christ. (Please take time to read the Scripture passages.)

What can we do? How can we stand up against the strong pro-abortion voice and change laws that support that voice? I would like to share with you some practical suggestions for starters.

1. Pray. Bare your heart before God. Weep for the innocent human beings that are being killed at the approval of our nation. Remember above all, this is a spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:11-12 and II Corinthians 10:3-6).

2. Be informed. Unfortunately our news media is a very poor source for information on the issue as it is extremely biased for the most part. The efforts of pro-life are often ignored or put down. To know where lawmakers and candidates stand on the issue is also difficult as an attempt is made to try and hide the importance of the real issue.

Therefore groups as Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life (MCCL) are invaluable. Organizations such as this inform its readers on current pro-abortion bills and how law makers are voting on these issues. This helps the citizen vote with knowledge and to pray for specifics (Proverbs 20:18).

It is also good to be informed about the facts regarding the life of the unborn child and abortion (Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139:13-16; Exodus 20:13).

- It is a medical fact that the life of a child begins at conception.

- The heart of the unborn baby begins to beat at three weeks after conception.

Now in giving you these "starters" let us get started. Add this issue to your prayer list. Write to your area or state pro-life group and begin receiving their newsletter. Remember abortion as we have it violates the Word of God. If we truly stand on the Word, let us stand for it as well (Jeremiah 20:8-9; I John 3:18; and II Timothy 1:7).

— Pastor Paul Pillman
Zumbrota, Minnesota

The early believers banded together for encouragement, strength and support. What does this say to you about the importance of meeting together as a fellowship (formally, as in church; informally, in homes)? Read Hebrews 10:24, 25

Do you think that we as a church are more or less hospitable today?

Why or why not?

Think of the fellowship of Christian believers as a church without walls. Is there a time this month that your home could be used as a place of ministry?

To Sum it Up

Hospitality furthered the Gospel in Lydia's day. It can further the Gospel today as well. The Christian home is a powerful witness to those needing the light of Jesus. In the warmth and intimacy of your home, unbelievers can be shown the way of salvation without being intimidated. Our homes can also be havens for our families and for those Christians who need ministry. Making your home available for prayer groups, coffee fellowships, etc., is one way in which you can further the cause of Christ. Real hospitality costs something in terms of time, money, and involvement. Is it worth it? When you hear our precious Savior saying, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," you will know that it was well worth it!

Women of Wisdom and The Word

Lydia

Study Verses: Acts 16:12-15, 40

"Essential to hospitality is the open heart which results in an open house."
Karen Burton Mains

Every woman has a mighty tool within her grasp to encourage and strengthen fellow believers and to reach the lost for Christ.

Lydia — An Open Heart Acts 16:14

As you study your Bible, become familiar with the surrounding verses. One or two isolated verses cannot be fully understood until they are looked at in their context. This helps us understand the Scripture passage being studied.

Acts records the three missionary journeys of Paul. On his first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas established many new Christian churches. Later, Paul and Silas visited these same churches. In Troas, Paul had a vision where a man of Macedonia called to him, "come over to Macedonia and help us." Paul and Silas were joined by Timothy and Luke (the author of Acts) and from Troas they traveled to Philippi, a leading city in the district of Macedonia and also a Roman colony. It was here that they began their exciting ministry in Europe. It was also here that Lydia became the first European convert.

Since there was no synagogue in Philippi, Paul and the others went to the riverside, where they surmised that people would be meeting on the Sabbath.

1. Who did Paul encounter down by the riverside? v. 13, 14
2. List several characteristics of Lydia. v. 14-16

3. What happened as she was listening to Paul speak? v. 14

The Result — An Open Home Acts 16:15

4. After Lydia and her household were baptized, what action did she take to help Paul and his companions? v. 15

5. How can you tell that this was not a casual invitation? v. 15b

6. What was Lydia practicing? Romans 12:13

In her book, "Open Heart, Open Home," Karen Burton Mains states, "We have allowed the world to force us into its mold. We think in terms of entertaining as a woman's chance to demonstrate her skill and the quality of her home. **Entertaining** has little to do with real hospitality." p. 24, 25

7. List several differences between entertaining and hospitality.

Entertaining	Hospitality
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8. To whom should you offer hospitality? How can this be done?

Isaiah 58:7

James 2:15

I Peter 4:9

III John 5-6

Luke 14:12-14

9. Is hospitality a "take it or leave it" proposition? Romans 12:10-13

Life Response

How can your home be used as a place of ministry? (Give specific examples.) Can you think of people who have ministered to you through their hospitality?

State some reasons for not practicing hospitality.

Later in Acts 16, Paul and Silas were imprisoned and put in stocks. At midnight, as they were praying and singing praises to God, a great earthquake shook open the prison doors. Fearing that his prisoners had escaped, the jailer drew his sword to kill himself. Paul intervened and the jailer asked the question of questions, "What must I do to be saved?"

10. After Paul and Silas were released from prison, where did they go? v. 40

In the home of Lydia, Paul and Silas met with "the brethren." This probably included the jailer and his family and others who had been brought to faith in Jesus. "this assembly of believers in the house of Lydia was the first church that had been founded in Europe." [Baumgarten]

11. How was the home integral to the early church? Acts 2:42, 46, 47; 5:52

Bible School Summer Teams



AMBASSADORS Bethany Hinrichs, Everett, Washington; Jodi Jacobson, Sebeka, Minnesota; Marybeth Enderlein, Plymouth, Minnesota; Kern Nash, Colfax, North Dakota and Dana Coyle, Nicollet, Minnesota.



BARNABAS TEAM members Eddie Britz, Houghton, Michigan; Nathan Dahl, Felton, Minnesota; Debbie Schindel, Calgary, Alberta; Beth Jackson, Ishpeming, Michigan and Leanne Helwig, Mondovi, Wisconsin.



MAJESTY TEAM members Brent Peterson, Portland, North Dakota; Chrystal Albrecht, Northome, Minnesota; Lisa McClenahan, Hillsboro, North Dakota; Jennifer Mohagen, Towner, North Dakota and Russ Brown, Kalispell, Montana.

CAMPUS

AFLTS Gets Grant

Free Lutheran Theological Seminary, Minneapolis, has been awarded a \$560 grant from Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL).

The funding allowed six senior students, their spouses and others from the seminary community to attend a graduate recognition event on April 24.

The grant was awarded through AAL's Church Vocations Enrichment Program. AAL, headquartered in Appleton, distributed nearly \$5 million last year to Lutheran churches and institutions through several grant programs.

1992-93 Interns Begin Year of Service

Mr. Tim Hinrichs to Faith Lutheran Church, Fairbury and Abiding Word Lutheran Church, Deshler, Nebraska.

Mr. Dan Klug to Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

Mr. Doug Wagley to Elim Lutheran Church, Lake Stevens, Washington.

Mr. Victor Young to Hauge and Emmanuel Lutheran Churches, Kenyon, Minnesota.

AFLTS Summer Institute of Theology

July 27- August 3, 1992

Studies in Daniel - Rev. R. Tjelta

The Sacrament of Baptism -
Dr. F. Monseth

History of Preaching - Dr. S. Lombardo

Lutheran Pietism - Dr. C. Jennings

Studies in Peter - Rev. P. Haugen

Introduction to New Testament Greek -

Rev. P. Haugen (This class is from July 20 - August 28).

PEOPLE and PLACES

Ishpeming, Michigan — On May 3, 1992, Hope Free Evangelical Lutheran Church celebrated its 25th anniversary. The morning worship service began the special day. The first pastor of the congregation, Rev. Albert Hautamaki, gave a greeting and the sermon was preached by Rev. Paul Nash, a former pastor. Holy Communion was administered and the sharing of memories time featured a slide presentation. After a fellowship dinner, the afternoon anniversary service was a time of sharing and singing. Another former pastor, Rev. Ernest Langness spoke during this service. The theme was "God's Word is Our Great Heritage." Rev. Harvey L. Jackson is the present pastor.

Dr. and Mrs. Wayne Sletten, Faith, South Dakota, are scheduled to leave for Kenya, Africa, on June 12, for a short-term mission assignment with Christian Veterinary Mission.

Lake Park, Minnesota — The Wilderness Bible Camp facilities were prepared for the summer on June 6. Volunteered painted, mowed, put up basketball hoops and numerous other clean-up jobs.

London, Minnesota — The dedication of Faith Lutheran Church will be held on Sunday, June 28 at 1:30 p.m. Pastor of the church is Rev. Einar Unseth.

Goldfield, Iowa — Hauge Lutheran Church is the most recent addition to the AFLC congregational roster, accepted by the Co-ordinating Committee during their May meeting. Rev. James Peterson is pastor of the congregation which has been independent since its organization in 1966.

Cloquet, Minnesota — Pictured to the right is a ten foot cross which stood in the sanctuary of St. Paul's Lutheran Church this past Easter. The cross held 50 plants donated by various members. Mr. and Mrs. Mike Wagman built the frame. If you are interested in building a similar cross, please write to them at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 18th and Wilson, Cloquet, MN 55720.

The Missionary Dan Giles family, Minneapolis, Minnesota, will be leaving for Mexico sometime in June. Their son, Daniel, will be having a tonsillectomy which delayed their planned departure.



Leone Bernice Snipstead

Born: December 31, 1931 in Elbow, Saskatchewan, Canada

Passed Away: April 27, 1992

Service: Friday May 1, 1992 at Medicine Lake Lutheran Church, Plymouth, Minnesota; Rev. John Skeie and Rev. David Barnhart, officiating.

Survived by: Husband: Rev. Richard Snipstead

Sons: Stephen and David

Daughters: Karen (Mrs. Wayne Floan)

Ann (Mrs. John Presteng)

Gwen (Mrs. Jim Berge)

Wendy (Mrs. Eric Westlake)

Jan Rieth

Born: November 21, 1946

Passed Away: April 28, 1992

Services: Amery, Wisconsin, Thursday, April 30, 1992; Rev. Michael Brandt and Rev. Elden Nelson, officiating.

Valley City, North Dakota, Sat., May 2, 1992; Rev. Terry Olson, officiating.

Survived by: Husband: Rev. John Rieth

Sons: Jason and Jesse

Tilford O. Rundhaug

Lifelong member and current treasurer of Aadalen Free Lutheran Church, passed away unexpectedly at his home in Faridale, North Dakota, March 23, 1992, at the age of 63. Mr. Rundhaug was a fourth-generation member of Aadalen Congregation, which was established in 1886.

The difficulties of life
are intended by God
to make us better —
not bitter.

— unknown

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
will dedicate its new
Administration Building
at 3 p.m. June 21, 1992

The Dedication Service will include special speakers and music. Everyone is welcome. The building continues to be readied for the projected move-in date at the end of June.

A WORD OF THANKS AND WELCOME

We want to express our thanks to Rev. Jon Wellumson for his writing of "Light of the Way" in these recent issues. We have all been blessed with his incisive and informative explanation of truths of Scripture. Thanks Jon. We welcome Rev. Larry Severson as he begins as our next writer of this feature of *The Ambassador*. Welcome Larry as you continue this feature of our magazine.

Our thanks also to Pastor Jay Erickson for writing "The Last Word" in recent issues. He has been unable to finish this series as he has not been feeling well of late. Welcome to Pastor Rodney Stueland who will begin writing this feature in future issues.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN THIS LIFE?

Iheard some comments by Dr. James Dobson, well-known Christian author and Director of the Focus on the Family ministry. He was sharing the loss he felt when his second and last child left to go to college. It was the feeling that all parents feel when the last child leaves home and the quiet and empty feeling of the "empty nest" really hits a person. When a child is born into a family there is so much joy and fulfillment and work that comes to a parent that one thinks it will continue forever. Sometimes it feels like an eternity in the responsibilities and duties that are involved in raising a child. Then all of a sudden he or she leaves home and the silence is "deafening" after those wonderful years of having that child or children around you almost constantly. Dr. Dobson said

the lesson he got was one on the "Brevity of Life." How quickly time passes and our years turn into decades. "Only one life will soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last." How often we need to be reminded of that as we get involved in all the pressures of daily life.

The other challenge that Dr. Dobson gave was thinking about what he would say to his family as he came toward the end of his life. He said that instead of leaving it until he was "on his death bed" he wanted to say it now. The word he wanted to give to his children was that when that time for separation comes and whoever it was that went first he wanted to convey the hope and truth that he would see them with Christ in Heaven.

This is certainly the desire and prayer of every Christian parent for their children. There can be problems, misunderstandings and some alienations in the relationship between parent and child at times. But the heartfelt desire and hope of any Christian parent is that when the time to leave this earth comes there is the assurance that they will be together in heaven for all eternity. What a joy it will be to see all the children with Christ in eternity. The alternative is unthinkable.

Life is filled with many temptations, many selfish desires, many foolish ambitions. When all is said and done there is only one thing that really matters and that is our relationship to Jesus Christ which is by faith through grace alone.

The 30th Anniversary Book of the AFLC "Growth and New Challenges" is now being printed.

If is a history of our church from 1962-92. Included are numerous historical photographs never printed before and current pictures of the AFLC pastors and congregations.

Cost is only \$18.

Plan now to order this 152-page hard-bound book at the 30th Annual Conference of the AFLC or by writing to the AFLC Headquarters.

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.

Minneapolis, MN 55441

Attention: Anniversary Book

*The wonder
of it all
is that God
loves us
out of His
own nature,
and not on
conditions.*

— Beecher

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