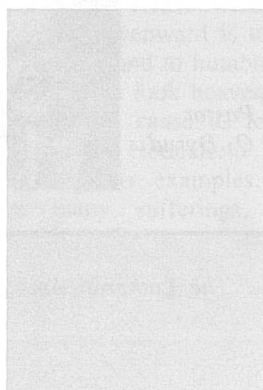


THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

March 12, 1985



**WINTER
BIBLE
CONFERENCES**
Pgs. 14, 15

at the MASTER'S FEET

"A Calvary Hymn"

Psalm 22 is "A Cry of Anguish and A Song of Praise." It is also considered a "Calvary Hymn." Even though it was a heart cry of the Psalmist, it is definitely Messianic. It is as if Christ is preaching through David.

The primary object of this Psalm may be prophetic. We are led to this conclusion as we compare it with I Peter 1:10-11, which states, "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come to you, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (KJV). And also Luke 24:25-26: "Then He (Christ) said unto them, 'O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?'" (KJV).

Verses 1-21 of Psalm 22 describe the crucifixion of Christ. Please read Matthew 27:33-46 after meditating on the first 21 verses of Psalm 22.

When the force of the words, "My God, My God, why have You forsak-

ken Me?" hits us, we begin to grasp some of the spiritual and physical agony of Christ on the cross. Words cannot describe the awfulness of such a forsaking, even though it was temporary. It makes us begin to recognize the awfulness of man's sin, yours and mine included, which put Jesus on the cross.

In the midst of being forsaken by God, Jesus did not blame Him for being unfair or unjust, for, says Jesus, "But You are holy" (verse 3a). In verses 4 and 5, all God's believing people have evidence of a blessed inheritance and assurance of His grace and faithfulness. "Our fathers trusted in You: They trusted, and You delivered them. They cried to You, and were delivered; they trusted in You, and were not put to shame." But the pure and sinless Jesus, forsaken by God, "was wounded for our transgressions, was bruised for our iniquities . . . and the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Is. 53:5-6). Oh, the awfulness of our sin that drove Jesus to the cross!

Yet, in the midst of this suffering, Jesus could say: "But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust when I was on My mother's breasts. I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother's womb You have been My God" (verses 9-10). Again, what an inheritance God's believing people have!—a rich assurance to the Christians who put their trust in the heavenly Father.

Between verses 21 and 22 let us think of Jesus as having died. Verses 22-31 describe Jesus' resurrection and glory.

Jesus is now the risen One, the victorious One with a great declaration. Verses 22-26 read: "You (God) have answered Me. I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will praise You. You who fear the Lord, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob glorify Him, and fear Him, all you offspring of Israel! For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from Him; but when He

cried to Him, He heard. My praise shall be of You in the great congregation; I will pay My vows before those who fear Him. The poor (meek) shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him will praise the Lord. Let Your heart live forever!"

Christ, the Messiah, risen from the dead, is now enthroned at the right hand of God, while He is at the same time in the midst of His brethren, in the glorious Word of the Gospel. Those who believe in Him are the congregation of the Lord. Their songs of praise rise in honor of His redemption from hearts overflowing with humble reverence and faith. The poor (meek) sinners who realize their own unworthiness and desire only the grace and mercy of the Lord shall eat and be satisfied, receiving of the fullness of Christ's redemption.

In verses 27-31, Christ anticipates and declares that as long as men live on earth His atoning death and glorious victory shall be proclaimed to Jews and Gen in every nation. For the kingdom of grace and glory is the Lord's. He rules over the nations. All people shall bow before Him. The rich and the poor, the mighty and the lowly, are on the same level before Him. For by grace are you saved through faith, faith in Christ Jesus.

Thus mightily did Christ, through the Psalmist, preach of the coming salvation through His sufferings, death and resurrection. Thanks be to God for so great a salvation.

And now as many as receive Him (Jesus), to them He gives the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name (Jn. 1:12).

Let us always remember that without the cross there is no crown.



by Pastor
Amos O. Dyrud

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Volume 23 Number 6

PROPOSALS OF THE CROSS

What
will your
answer be?

For sale: One cross, used very little. In excellent condition. Retiring. Must sell. Price is right. Call Harry at 999-9201.

I called Harry and asked him about the cross and why he was selling it. Harry explained that it wasn't a cross made of wood, stone or metal. In fact, he said, it's not even tangible! He went on to explain it more as "a way of life." Just the presence of the cross bothered him and made him feel guilty when he didn't use it. He really couldn't do things the way he wanted to! He wanted to get rid of it, so he wouldn't be bothered by its presence. Well, it didn't sound like anything that I would be interested in either, so I said, "Thanks anyway," and laid down the receiver. It's a strange thing though; even to this day, I can't get that cross out of my mind. I keep wondering what it was really all about.

Obviously, this is a fictitious story. Yet, how many people today look at the cross from that same perspective. We find so few who are willing to make a positive response to the proposal Jesus makes to us in Matthew 16:24, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me" (NKJV). What does this verse mean for us today?

First, there must be a desire to come and follow Jesus. We are not pulled by force or drafted into following Him. Salvation is for everyone, yet, only the volunteers are among those who join His ranks.

"We are not pulled by force or drafted into following Him."

Second, we must deny ourselves. Deny ourselves? Take up our cross? We say, "But, Lord, that is too tough!" "Yes," He says, "it is." In fact, Jesus says, "Enter in at the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in through it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14). It all sounds like an Egyptian taskmaster who wants to make life miserable for us and get all he can out of us. But wait! Didn't Jesus say this narrow and difficult way leads to life? That He did! Many people generally believe they get the most out of life when the going is easy, but Jesus' words contradict that belief. Could "denying yourself" be worth pursuing? The word deny used here literally means to turn someone off; to disown him. The one to be denied here is self, self altogether, and not merely some portion, some fault, some special habit or desire, or some outward practice. It's our natural, sinful nature which centers itself in the things of men, and has no desire for the things of God. We are to disown ourselves completely and turn our backs on the things and ways of the world. May we say with Paul, "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. But indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ" (Philippians 3:7-8).

Now we're ready to enter into a new relationship with Jesus and take the third step. We are to take up our cross. And just what is Jesus asking for here? The cross can mean nothing but death. Yes, that's exactly right.

Jesus bids us come and die. Some say, "Come and die? You've got to be kidding. We don't want to die! We want to *live*." Some put on earmuffs to deaden the sound, so that it doesn't become so threatening. But, yet, there is that tug at the inner spirit that says "Come on, the cross is where life begins." Remember, there can be no resurrection without crucifixion. So, we each must come and say, "Lord, we will take up our cross. We'll come, and we'll die." We will say with Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

Now, the cross proposes several things to us. First, it's the total fulfillment of the quest to deny ourselves. We give up control; we're dead as far as living our lives our way. It is God who becomes the person at the controls. It is a way of life. It's doing God's things, God's way. No more do we decide what committees we need or who should be on them. God does. No more do we decide how much money goes into the offering plate and for what it should be spent. God does. No more do we decide about buying new cars, tractors, land, houses, clothes, vacations, etc. God does. In other words, the Holy Spirit reveals God's desires to us and we carry them out.

✠



by Pastor David H. Skordahl
Pipestone, Minn.

Our crosses

Illness, poverty, pain and the like must not be called a cross; they are not worthy of that name. But if man suffer persecution for his faith, that may rightly be called a cross.

Martin Luther

GLORY BE TO JESUS

**Glory be to Jesus,
Who, in bitter pains,
Pour'd for me the life-blood
From His sacred veins!**

**Grace and life eternal
In that blood I find;
Blest be His compassion,
Infinitely kind!**

**Blest through endless ages
Be the precious stream,
Which from endless torments
Did the world redeem!**

**Abel's blood for vengeance
Pleaded to the skies;
But the Blood of Jesus
For our pardon cries!**

**Oft as earth exulting
Wafts its praise on high,
Angel hosts rejoicing
Make their glad reply.**

**Lift we then our voices,
Swell the mighty flood;
Louder still, and louder,
Praise the precious Blood!**

(The Church and Sunday School Hymnal) Fr. Filitz

PROPOSALS . . .

The second proposal of the cross is to die to sin. Paul reminds us in Romans 6:2, "How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it." John says, "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil." the cross proposes victory over sin. Luther reminds us that as we're buried with Christ in baptism, we are to daily confess our sins and turn from them. We are to drown daily the old Adam and let the new life in Jesus rise up and reign. What a beautiful aspect of the cross, to know that through Jesus we have power and victory over sin. That doesn't come without struggle. Temptations lure us from all directions. To be faithful to the leading of the Lord can be painful.

"To be faithful to the leading of the Lord can be painful."

This leads us to the third proposal of the cross. The cross proposes suffering, suffering for the sake of Jesus. It is a mistake, however, to call all our suffering "a cross." The wicked have many sorrows, but no crosses. We often hear individuals with a physical illness, handicap, or another hardship say, "This is my cross to bare." This kind of suffering is not "a cross." The cross is only that suffering which results from our faithful connection to Jesus. Paul said, We are "joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Romans 8:17b).

Finally, the cross proposes that which brings joy, as it did Paul and Silas as they sang praises to the Lord at midnight while confined in a jail. Why? Because, they discovered that in dying to their old selves and being obedient to the Lord, real life was found. May we, too, in the heart of this Lenten Season, respond in joyful obedience. Do you hear the beckon-

ing call of Jesus to come, deny yourself, take up the cross, and follow Him? Come, then, and you will find life, life in its fullness through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Pastor David Skordahl

David Skordahl is the pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church, Pipestone, Minn., and is on the fellowship roster of the AFLC.

He was born in 1935 in Sinai, S. Dak. He attended the University of Minnesota and Luther Theological Seminary, graduating from the latter in 1971 and was ordained the same year into the ministry of the American Lutheran Church. He served parishes in that synod at Columbia Heights, Minneapolis, Minn., Brooten, Minn., and Pipestone.

He is married to the former Cheryl Aldrich of Portland, N. Dak. The couple met while attending Lutheran Bible Institute in Golden Valley in 1964. They have two children, Timothy, 19, and Julie, 15.

by
Pastor Lloyd Weiland
Randall, Iowa

SURRENDER AT THE CROSS

are we
prepared
for it?

"If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me" (Matt. 16:24).

Our Savior didn't twist His syllables or mince His words. He said exactly what He meant, and He meant exactly what He said. He came to serve and to give His life as a ransom for us all, not to be served. He doesn't offer His disciple a flowery bed of ease. His mission involved the soul sorrow of Gethsemane, the rejection of His countrymen, the scourge of Pilate, the scorn of Calvary, the shame of crucifixion. This was the sacrifice of God—the price that bought us from our hell. He doesn't offer His disciple a life that is cushioned on foam rubber shock absorbers. This is the price of discipleship; these are the terms of surrender. Are we prepared for it? Are we ready for the cross—the cross of Jesus and our own?

But, do we have to make discipleship so stiff today? Dare we speak of costs involved if we would be Christians? Is there a price to pay to join the church and serve the Lord and be soldiers of the cross? Jesus tried to make His disciples understand that His kingdom mission would be finished only when He hung against the dark Judean sky in the agonies of hell. He tried to make them understand the prophecy: "All we like sheep have gone astray." And, "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities . . . with His stripes we are healed." And He tried to make them understand what you and I can sing so joyfully and piously, yet understand so slowly: "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my soul, my all."

"If any man would come after Me"—that's where we have to start if we want to know what our discipleship involves, for this is where we are. We have been called as Christ's

disciples; we did not volunteer. He has chosen us; we have not chosen Him.

Andrew, James, and John, and Matthew were not consulted when the Master called them from their fishing nets and revenue department; neither did they volunteer. They were called by grace. Saul of Tarsus wasn't going to Damascus to enlist in Jesus' service at a heavenly recruitment office; he was on a hate mission designed to rub these nuisance Christians from his memory. But he was halted in his tracks, confronted by the living Christ, converted by a gracious act of God. Simon of Cyrene, standing on the Via Dolorosa, hadn't planned on carrying a cross for a criminal condemned to crucifixion, neither was he moved by pity to bear the burden for the Sufferer with lacerated back. He was conscripted. Peter's grand confession: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," wasn't born of his religious genius. It was a revelation that a gracious God had given him. We are not consulted or asked for our opinion when He re-creates us. He calls to us, "Follow Me!" Faith is a gift of God. It is an act of grace that we are His disciples. We are His workmanship.

So also, He spells out the terms of our surrender. His will has made us willing. His voice, the voice that wakes the dead, has spoken to us through His Word and called us from our darkness. His hand laid hold on us in Holy Baptism and claimed us for His own. He holds title to our

lives. He has a total claim on us. "If any man would come after Me" means simply this, that day by day the measure of surrender and submission to His claim of grace increases and His will becomes our passion.

To walk with Jesus Christ as one of His disciples is not an easy matter, surely not the easy and anemic thing we have too often made of it. It demands the hardest thing you can imagine: the denial of ourselves, the sacrifice of pride, the crucifixion of our personal passions, the submission of our wills and hearts completely to the Lord. This kind of self-denial that the Savior underscores is not to be confused with little self-denial boxes that we use in Lent to catch a coin occasionally. It's not the sacrifice of things, particularly things we do not value. It's not a list of Lenten duties to perform, nor shallow disciplines that we impose on ourselves when we give things up for Lent. Self-denial is exactly what it says it is—the denial of the self with all its clinging claims.

Are we hanging on to life to get whatever we can get or have we surrendered it to Him Who bought it with the price of blood and in the agonies of Calvary? "Love so amazing, so divine" demands a cross! It demanded the cross of Jesus, where heaven's love paid for human sin and guilt; it demands a cross for each of us. It demands a daily cross of crucifixion for our pride, our self-will, and our sinful flesh. Our cross may also be whatever in His good and gracious will we have to suffer for His Name's sake. Christians' crosses come in sundry sizes and assorted shapes, but for each of us there is a cross.

We may be bent beneath the cross, but we are not defeated, despised but not forsaken, cast down but never in despair. Christians have given up

◇

"Is there a price to pay to join the church and serve the Lord and be soldiers of the cross?"

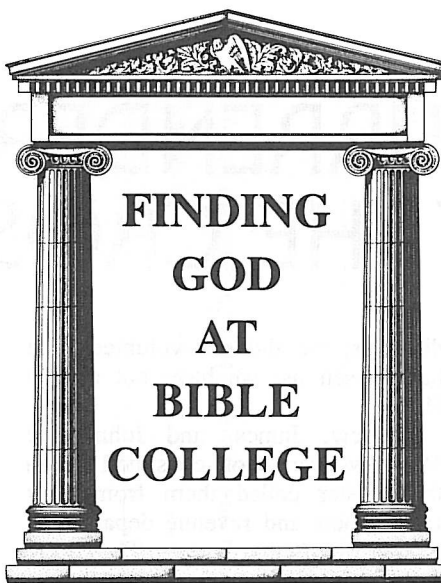
by Janet R. Prinzing

"Dear God, here I am, at Bible College. The teachers are spiritual. The chapel times are spiritual. The classes are spiritually-oriented. One question, God: why don't I feel spiritual?"

I thought this was the way You wanted it. For me to go to a Bible college. But, God, how can it have been Your will for me to come to this state, to become so empty, cold? How could You have willed it that I should cower at the mere thought of opening the precious Book I once drank in with a mixture of hunger and joy? How, Lord, could I have stopped loving people?

"Busyness, busyness, Lord, how it tires me, drains me! My body cries for rest, but I must ignore it, for I have to complete all that is required of me, at least the bare minimum. I can't let the teachers down, I can't let my friends down, I can't let the school down. But what about me? When does rest come? Where is the peace that passes all understanding?"

"I wrestle, Lord. I know that I should pick up that Book, that I should bow on my knees and pray. Indeed, I am doing just that. I pour out my heart, at last, to You, Lord. I am desperate, I have by-passed You too long, Lord, You are my Savior. Help me. I just cannot go on."



Nearly every Christian college student has prayed a prayer similar to this desperate one. In fact, many AFLBS students probably have. I did. Long before I reached this point, however, I was confidently enjoying the benefits of my new training in the Word.

1982 was a great year. I had thoroughly enjoyed my status as a senior at AFLBS. Boy, that choir tour will never be forgotten: from the colorful Finns in the Upper Peninsula to the hospitality of the Minnesotans to the masses of Quanbecks in North Dakota—those were the days.

*"One question, God:
why don't I feel
spiritual?"*

And classes! It seemed like Pastor Monseth had never exhorted so eloquently before on those doctrinal principles. Hans Neilsen Hauge and Katherine Von Bora (Katy Luther) came to life as only Pastor Lee could make them.

Summer brought new adventure as I traveled to Brazil with the FLY team. Remember the taste of the Atlantic Ocean, Lynn Jalonen Lundquist, as we got our first mouthful, being swept under and barely making it back again? I wonder where the "coffee bean grower" we photographed so repeatedly is today?

Yes, God certainly had some plans for this Free Lutheran student, so full of new Biblical knowledge and ready to test it out. Ready to try some new knowledge on for size. At college.

Decision time came. Through various circumstances, I entered the halls of St. Paul Bible College, located a few miles nearer the cow pastures of St. Bonifacius than I was prepared for. Yes, in spite of the odd mixture of the rural and the urban in this new school I'd selected, I was confident of the reasoning behind my choice. Writing was my first love and there was an appropriate program available to me there. But mostly, SPBC was a Bible college. My overriding conviction at the time, in spite of the protestations of a friend, was that a strictly Biblically-based curriculum was for me. With such, I would be

SURRENDER . . .

their lives and found them—found them in Christ as in nothing else, in no one else, and nowhere else. Money couldn't buy it, pleasure couldn't offer it, ambition couldn't seize it. We have found our lives in Christ and in the cross of Christ, and in the cross for Christ.

If our faith means anything, our faith means everything. It does demand our lives, and when we survey His cross, we can't hold back—we follow Him! Would you really want it any other way?

Pastor Lloyd Weiland

Lloyd L. Weiland, pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran church, rural Jewell, Ia., was born at Galva, Ia., in 1935, and graduated from high school there. He is also a graduate of Concordia College, St. Paul, Minn., and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

He served parishes in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod for 19 years. He came to St. Paul's last year when it also joined the Association. He is currently on the fellowship roster of the AFLC.

Pastor Weiland's wife's name is Myrna and she is a former teacher in the Lutheran school system. The couple has three sons, Brent, Todd and Troy, and one daughter, Beth, a recent college graduate.

"He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed."

I Peter 2:24

free to continue to expand my store of Biblical knowledge while avoiding the inevitable humanistic overtones inherent in the state school curriculum. I saw this as my way of protesting the anti-Christian attitudes of the secular professors.

Two years later, I knelt in desperation and, through tears, prayed the prayer I've recorded at the beginning of this article. Yes, I'd avoided a lot of anti-biblical teaching. But I discovered that Satan has a large repertoire of weapons to use against God's children. Satan used against me the conditions my busy college life had created, and he seemed to be winning a significant battle. I was exhausted—spiritually, emotionally, and mentally drained. How? How had I come so close to becoming almost a total stranger to God in spite of my good grounding in Bible school, in spite of the tremendous spiritual feeding I was receiving in church, in spite of the wonderful fellowship that SPBC had to offer?

I remember once passing the bulletin board near the chapel upon which was announced the speaker for the day. Instead of a name it read, "Worship Chapel." Worship chapel? I didn't want to go to worship chapel! The thought of sitting tightly squeezed among so many people praising and thanking God for their good lives, when mine was anything

*"At last, the peace
that passes all
understanding was no
longer an elusive
shadow."*

but "good," sickened me. I had too much to do anyway. I skipped chapel.

As I worked my way slowly to my room, a familiar thought came back to me, begging for evaluation. What profit was I gaining from my labor? Did not Jesus say that if a man had everything yet neglected his soul, he really had nothing at all? What about seeking the things of the kingdom first and having the others added later, at God's discretion? What about committing my way to the Lord, trusting in Him and watching Him bring it to pass?

As I reflect now upon those days, I see that this was the turning point—I was on my way home. Sermons followed seeming to be consistently based on priorities. Many were based

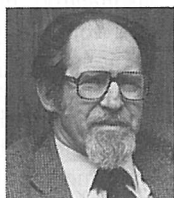
on "preacher burnout," warning clergy members not to sacrifice that precious molding time alone with God through which He so wondrously works for the good of many, for the less fruitful frenzy of church-related activities. I adapted those admonitions to my own situation. I quit working so much. I began to prioritize my life more concretely. I opened my Bible and read words that seemed to be brand new.

Time passed. Rather than seeing circumstances as directly influencing my relationship with God, I was seeing that the commitment of my way to Him in every area was influencing my circumstances. At last, the peace that passes all understanding was no longer an elusive shadow.

Finding God at a Bible college? Sounds about as obvious as finding butter in the refrigerator, doesn't it? I'm grateful now for those difficult times of having to sort through my priorities. Though the process was painful, the product is precious. Tribulation, indeed, never for the moment seems to be joyous, but grievous, yet in the end, it yields ever more increasingly the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

"Thank You, Lord. Thank You for a hungering spirit again—one that appreciates the opportunity of worship chapel again. Thank You for adding everything, as promised, when You become the Christian's priority."

WMPL installs director



Robert Andrews, resident of Floodwood, Minn. has been appointed the sixth general director of the World Mission Prayer League, an independent and voluntary Lutheran missionary-sending agency with headquarters in Minneapolis, Minn. Andrews, 52, leaves his job as director of the Floodwood Development Achievement Center, rejoining

the same mission he and his wife Joyce served with as missionaries in Bolivia for 17 years.

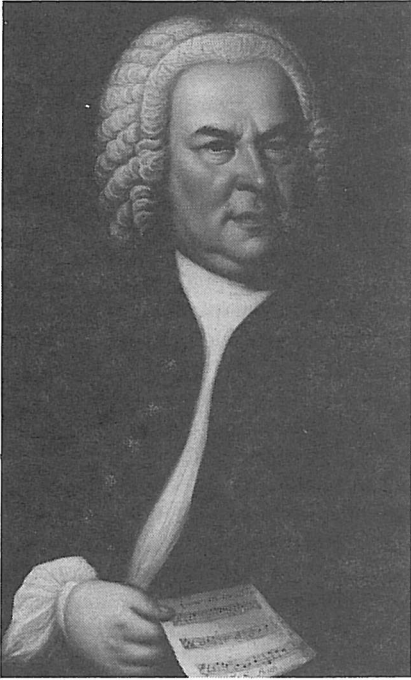
Pews for sale.

Fourteen ten-foot oak pews are for sale at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Thief River Falls, Minn. Fifty dollars (\$50) is being asked for each pew. If interested, please contact the church office at 401 South St. Paul, Thief River Falls, Minn. 56701. Or call 218-681-4643.

Arizona congregation notes anniversary

Triumph Lutheran Church, Nogales, Ariz., observed the 20th anniversary of its organization as a congregation on Sunday, Feb. 17. Rev. Richard Snipstead, president of the AFLC, preached at the morning worship service.

A potluck dinner followed the service and there was a time for reminiscing through slides, other pictures and personal experiences. Rev. Ted Kennedy, Jr., is pastor of the congregation.



Johann Sebastian Bach

GOD'S EXTRAORDINARY SERVANT

by Don Rodvold,
Association Free Lutheran
Bible School

A spacecraft, Voyager I, was launched from Kennedy Space Center in September, 1977, to explore the cosmos. Its journey will continue perhaps for thousands of years. Its mission is to communicate our best intelligence and our friendly greetings to whomever it may encounter.

On board, among other things, is a recording called "Sounds of Earth." It will play without ceasing for as long as the spacecraft survives and it could well outlive our planet. The music section of "Sounds of Earth" consists of several bits by J. S. Bach.

When you care enough, send the very best.

J.S. Bach? The best? The Lutheran choir director and organist? One of the three Bs, yes, but wasn't he just an ordinary middle-class craftsman in music, an ordinary middle-class pietistic churchman, a most unlofty matter-of-fact workman?

Why him? He's not a great figure of tragedy or fame; he's not a heroic or melodramatic figure that begs to be taken up by some Hollywood producer and made into a legend.

Why is it he's now considered so noble, while his peers, who looked

kindly on him, considered him old-fashioned. Even his children were sometimes a little embarrassed by his music and told him (in the vernacular), "Dad, you got to get with it."

True. Fact is, his bosses (church councils and school boards) were not even kindly. They were frequently on his case, scolding, criticizing, nit-picking, telling him what he may and may not play.

That J. S. Bach? He was picked over all the rest to represent the best our planet has to offer?

One and the same.

The one who was born and bred a pietist lost both father and mother before he was ten, walked 200 miles to hear an organ recital, had 20 children and whose annual salary was 85 gulden, 54 bushels of grain, 2 cords of wood and 360 bundles of twigs is the same child of God who learned by copying and studying manuscripts by moonlight (which eventually cost him his sight), studied Theology, Latin, Greek, in school, and was taught the art of organ playing by his older brother.

It is the same one who wrote so much biblically-based music that Albert Schweitzer called him "the fifth evangelist;" the same who wrote for every instrument known in his time, plus orchestra, solo voice, choral, piano, harpsichord and organ; the

same who wrote over 300 cantatas (the choir could sing a new cantata each week for five years without repeating), 48 preludes and fugues (two for every major key and two for every minor key, they're called "The Great Forty-Eight"), countless concertos (including the Brandenburg masterpieces), oratorios, motets and so on to seem endless.

J. S. Bach, born and bred a Lutheran pietist (he was born 50 miles from Halle, the birthplace of Pietism and also G.F. Handel) is that one. Yet, sadly, he and his enormous God-given talent were rejected by the pietists.

J. S. Bach, servant nonpareil to Christ and the Lutheran Church for nearly 50 of his 65 years, only to be rejected, abandoned and completely forgotten by everyone for a hundred years is that one.

Curiously, it took a 22-year-old Jew, Felix Mendelssohn, to discover Bach's ignored manuscripts. Two remarkable things resulted: Mendelssohn was converted and Bach was back.

And now, 300 years after his birth, the tremendous force of J. S. Bach is unleashed in the universe where again it breathes its nobility, its rich, genuine, subjective religious devotion.

Once intended solely for worship, Bach's sacred writings are now recognized also as perfect musical masterpieces of art and have become our pride and joy in space, our representatives to the unknown.

Once unclaimed, he now belongs to the cosmos.

(Ironically, church music has declined for 300 years, and especially so among evangelicals and pietists. After Bach's death Lutheran cantors were dismissed from their posts, choirs were disbanded and the trend toward mediocrity began.)

On Thursday, March 21, Bach's music will continue doing its extraordinary work in the minds and hearts of countless singers and listeners as the anniversary of his birth is commemorated.

And seven years into space, where perhaps only God will hear, Voyager I will delight His heart as it broadcasts the glorious sounds of His extraordinary servant, J. S. Bach.

editorials

WEDDING DANCES

In some communities wedding dances are a tradition for some families. In other communities they are making a comeback. Both situations are unfortunate.

The wedding dance is a throw back to a pagan-influenced culture. It is evidence of worldly influences and should have no place in the wedding plans of a marriage effected in an evangelical church or officiated by an evangelical pastor.

No one has warned against the modern dance in a more effective way than the late John P. Milton, when he wrote about its spirit, its associates and its fruit. Its spirit is sensual; its associates are drinking and brawling; its fruit is moral delinquency and spiritual indifference.

If two people ask the pastor of at least one of them and the church to bless their marriage and all is done to make the service meaningful and beautiful, then another activity later of a wholly different spirit should not be considered. Real friends of the bridal couple will rejoice with them without the wedding dance.

In one town where this writer lived wedding dances were sometimes held. The other Lutheran pastor and he let it be known they wouldn't officiate at weddings which were to be followed by a dance. It helped when the two took a united position on the subject.

But whether other pastors will stand with him or not, an AFLC pastor should take such a stand.

We don't mean to say that a pastor who feels this way on the issue will never be disappointed or betrayed. He likely will be, but his own conscience can be clean.

UNFORTUNATE

It is very unfortunate that one of the young men graduated from our seminary last spring was still without call, to our knowledge, at this writing. This is over a year from the time when he would have been eligible for such.

During all this time, a number of parishes have been

vacant, a number of situations possible for the candidate, but nothing has worked out.

In an association of free congregations such as we have, no one from outside can place a pastor in a particular congregation. The congregation must decide and the man be agreeable to the terms offered. So that is one side of the question.

On the other hand, any man graduated from the seminary, unless he has specifically requested it otherwise, is recommended by the faculty and Board of Trustees as a pastor in the church. If he has that approval, he should be acceptable as a pastor, shouldn't he?

Think what it must be like to have done the work, have finished the course, and then not have a place to go to when there are places which need a pastor. That could be mighty demoralizing, to say the least.

It is an odd situation and a painful one. In our fellowship of churches no one can tell another what to do, but may we have enough love for and trust in one another so that situations like this don't happen again.

PRIESTS AND KINGS

Martin Luther placed priests ahead of kings for the very simple reason that as a priest the believer can stand before God to intercede for others.

It was as a priest that Jesus went into the Holy of Holies on that greatest Day of Atonement. No king could have dared to do that. There with His own blood He interceded for all mankind.

But think of it. To approach the Throne of Grace in behalf of others! How dare we do that? Ah, but remember that the writer to the Hebrews says that we may come to that holy place with *confidence* (RSV) or *boldness* (Am. St.). So we don't have to walk uncertainly, but with steady step to that sacred spot.

If we follow Christ today, do we use our prerogatives as His children, one of them being the occupying of the place of intercessor?

Mission Conference In TRF

The annual Mission Conference in Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Thief River Falls, Minn., will be held April 14-18, under the theme "Sharing the Gospel With Those Near and Far." Scheduled as speakers are Missionary Charles Knapp, on furlough from Brazil and Paraguay, Rev. Eugene Enderlein, AFLC director of World Missions, and Rev. Elden Nelson, director of AFLC Home Missions. Rev. Leslie Galland is the pastor at Our Saviour's.

Lake Bronson Family Camp

Rev. Leslie Galland, dean of the Lake Bronson Family Bible Camp, has announced these details about the camp week, July 8-14. The theme for the week will be "In Times Like These" from II Timothy 3:1-17. Rev. Herbert Franz, Cloquet, Minn., will be the evening speaker and his son, Rev. Peter Franz, Minot, N. Dak., will be the adult Bible teacher. Further information will be made known later.

The camp is located east of the town of Lake Bronson, Minn., on the lake of the same name.



WHAT MAKES A GOOD SERMON?

by Pastor Gerald F. Mundfrom,
Osceola, Wis.

Part I

Beginning, Illustrations and Humor

Every good sermon deserves a title, which will at least give the impression that it is a message well prepared and is worth hearing. A title will give the sermon a handle which the hearers can take hold of and take with them.

The congregation should be able to associate the title with the main points, thus helping them to remember it.

A good sermon has a good introduction. I believe it should start with talking about the Word of God and not something else. It might begin with a discussion of the Scriptural content of the text, including

the background and the setting or situation to which it was first directed.

It is currently popular to start the message with some illustration or experience from present day life. Later, in a somewhat subtle way, this illustration is related to the text. I believe this can do several things which are not good. It keeps the listener guessing. He does not know where the speaker is leading him. And he may become hesitant to follow, wondering if he should continue to listen.

Such a beginning also puts the Word of God in a secondary place, giving the impression that current, everyday happenings are more important than the Word of God, because of the place they have been given in

the message. But most serious of all, it sidetracks the listener's attention from the Word of God. During the liturgy and the singing of hymns and special music, which precede the message, his mind and heart have been prepared to hear God's Word preached. But now at the beginning of the message, at least for a few moments, he is hearing something else. This approach is like starting a journey without knowing what your destination will be until after you have gone some distance.

What then is the place for illustrations and personal experience in the message? Are they helpful at all? I believe they can definitely be very helpful in explaining and impressing a Scriptural truth upon the listener.

But an illustration should follow the truth explained, and not precede it, so that the hearer can immediately associate the example with its corresponding truth. The speaker should never give the impression that the illustration is more important than the truth it illustrates. Anything unrelated to the truth proclaimed should have no place in the message.

What about humor? Some speakers like to begin by telling several jokes in order to get the audience in a laughing mood. This is more fitting for a circus than for a church where people come to reverently and quietly hear the Word of God. The truth of God's Word is not a laughing matter. As mentioned earlier, the liturgy and Scripture readings which precede the message have set the mind and heart for serious thinking. Too much humor can destroy this attitude of mind and heart.

Nevertheless, a bit of humor can have a limited place as we face the people from the pulpit. It should never be overdone and become a goal in itself. It should not cause the people to leave the church talking about the jokes they heard instead of the Word of God which was proclaimed. Perhaps a humorous remark might be in order just as the speaker enters the pulpit and before he begins the message. However, if humor is used, it should be spontaneous and should fit the situation. A joke on oneself at this point might be fitting. A little laughter at this time could help clear the mind of the listener of

(Continued on p. 13)



Letters to the editor

AVAILABLE FOR SERVICE

We greet you from Paul's letter to the Colossians, 1:10: "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

We enjoy the *Ambassador* with the news of the AFLC. The articles published are read shortly after the paper arrives and provide much food for thought. Occasionally an article may appear which stimulates much thought but this is enlightening and helps avoid boredom. Following the

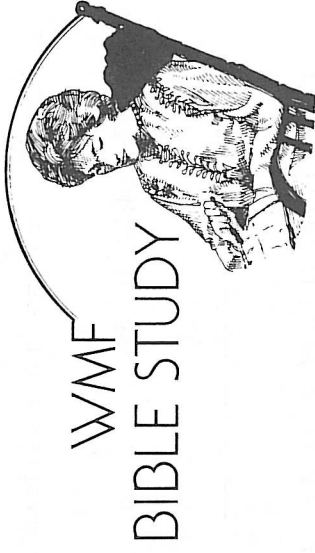
reading of the *Ambassador* it is given to our friends and thus serves as a means of serving their spiritual needs.

Our winter has been a bit cooler than normal but better and warmer days are ahead. Plans are to be in the north this summer and if a congregation or parish is in need of a pastor our services are available. We can be reached at our Mesa address: 4444 E. Escondido Ave., Mesa 85206.

Thanks for the Christian fellowship and our prayers are with each one.

Rev. and Mrs. Orville T. Olson
Mesa, Ariz.

April, 1985



A CLOSER WALK WITH JESUS

LESSON FOUR—WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE

Easter is a very blessed day in the year. As Christians we live in newness of life in Christ by the power of His resurrection (Phil. 3:10) and because He lives we shall live also (Jn. 14:19). We have new life in Him and a blessed hope in this life and beyond the grave (I Cor. 15:14, 19-22). Can you say with confidence and assurance, as Job said in Job 19:25: "I know that my Redeemer liveth"? This knowledge brings peace and joy and hope to our hearts.

Do you like springtime? I do! It is wonderful to see things come to life out-of-doors that have been so dead-looking for months. We eagerly wait for the trees to get buds and leaves and the flowers to bloom. It's the time of the year to get our seeds and begin preparing for the new growing season. God's Word speaks so much about preparing soil, sowing, planting, watering and new life in the spiritual realm. We will be centering our study on this theme this month.

1. The soil must be prepared before any planting can be done. What does God say must be done to prepare hearts to receive His Word? Jer. 4:3, Hos. 10:12b _____

6. What does Paul say, in I Cor. 3:6? _____

7. How are we to sow, according to Ps. 126:5,6? _____

8. Plants grow quickly with good soil, plenty of sunshine and rain. God wants us to grow, too. I Pet. 2:2, II Pet. 3:18 _____

9. What are we to have, according to the following verses? Jn. 11:25,26, Gal. 2:20, Rom. 6:4 (In your personal study read all of Rom. 6.) _____

The Lord wants each of us to walk in newness of life in Christ. Let us be open to His Word and will so we will daily die to our old self, be alive unto God, renewed, revived and growing in His grace and knowledge, for an abundant life now and in all eternity.

Suggested Song: "More About Jesus."

Mrs. Alvin Grothe
Astoria, Ore.

2. How does God work in hearts to break up the fallow ground?

A. Heb. 4:12, Jn. 6:63 _____

B. Jas. 5:16b _____

C. Ps. 119:67,71, Heb. 12:11, Ps. 71:20, Ps. 34:18 _____

D. Rom. 5:8, I Jn. 3:16-18, I Pet. 3:1,2 _____

3. Read the parable of the sower and the seed (Matt. 13:3-8).

Who is the sower? Matt. 13:37 _____

What is the seed? Lk. 8:11 _____

What types of soil are mentioned?

A. Matt. 13:4 _____

B. Matt. 13:5,6 _____

C. Matt. 13:7 _____

D. Matt. 13:8 _____

4. The Lord goes on to explain this parable, in Matt. 13:18-23. (In your own personal study, read verses 3-23.) The four different kinds of soil are explained so well by Jesus to His disciples and to us. Discuss what happens when the seed (God's Word) falls on each of these types of soil.

A. Matt. 13:19 (II Tim. 3:7, Prov. 29:1, Heb. 3:7,8,13,15) _____

B. Matt. 13:20,21 (Eph. 3:17-19, Col. 1:23, II Pet. 3:17) _____

C. Matt. 13:22,25 (II Tim. 4:10, I Jn. 2:15-17, Matt. 6:31-33, I Tim. 6:9,10,17-19, Matt. 6:19-21, Mk. 10:21-23) _____

D. Matt. 13:23 (Acts 17:11,12a, Col. 3:16) _____

5. What is the Word that is to be sown? Mk. 16:15, II Tim. 3:16,17, 4:2 _____



Mr. and Mrs. Ken Hagen and Matthew

First Canadian AFLC baby

The first baby in the first AFLC congregation in Canada was born Dec. 12, 1984, to Ken and Grace Hagen, Lake Alma, Sask. Matthew Gabriel Hagen was baptized at the morning service on Dec. 30, with his grandfather, Pastor Palmer Olson, Salmon Arm, B.C., officiating. Local pastor Philip Rokke led the worship service.

CORRECTIONS

In our Jan. 29 issue, page 15, please make these corrections in the Roseau, Minn., item in "From Here and There." Among those who joined Roseau Lutheran Church last Dec. 30 were Mrs. Julane Ingeman and daughter Carmen. The other change is that Mr. and Mrs. Ingvald Stenbekken, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Ron Torkelson, Andy and Matthew, will join Rose Lutheran Church later.

Luther League at DeKalb reorganized

The youth of Grace Lutheran Church of DeKalb, Illinois, recently formed a new Luther League.

At a potluck dinner on Saturday, February 2, the young people elected officers and established goals for the newly formed group.

The officers met together with Pastor Dennis Gray on Wednesday, February 5. Plans were made for a February meeting and for a film to be shown to the congregation in March.

Officers of the group are Michelle Mathison, president; Michael Gray,

vice president; Mark Mathison, treasurer; and Carla Osland, secretary.

Ron and Linda Kesterke will continue as advisors to the Luther League. Mr. Mark Olson, a graduate from our Bible school, has been hired by the congregation to be responsible for the youth program of Grace Congregation. He and his wife Dawn and son Benjamin recently moved to DeKalb from Chicago. Mark attended the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and is planning on missions. He is working at the First

National Bank in DeKalb and will be taking course work at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.

Personalities

Missionary and Mrs. Charles Knapp and family, who arrived home from Brazil and Paraguay on furlough on Feb. 2, are living at Rt. 1, Box 510, Osceola, Wis. 54020. He may be reached there concerning appointments for deputation work. His telephone number is 715-294-4117.

Sermon . . .

any troubled thoughts he has and serve to prepare him for hearing God's Word. But such humor is best used before beginning the sermon or before reading the text.

Now this may seem contradictory to what I have previously said about humor in relation to the message. Rather, this is an exception to such a ruling. Again let it be very brief, and not part of the message. If brief, it will not distract from serious thinking as a lengthy illustration in the wrong place will.

But should there be any humor or laughter at all during the body of the sermon? If it comes naturally and relates to the seriousness of the message, it could have a place and make a worthy contribution to the message. We do not wish to make a law restricting all laughter. It is not out of order to laugh at the devil, the world, and even our own flesh. When the speaker in some way describes a situation in which right-

eousness has prevailed over evil, or truth over falsehood, a chuckle or spontaneous laugh may come from the audience. This is a way in which the listeners rejoice with the speaker.

Any humor which is smutty, dirty, belittles God, His Word and the preaching of His Word is strictly taboo.

Let us always remember that the atmosphere during a worship service, where the Word of God is being proclaimed, should be one of reverence, serious thinking and quiet meditation.

I have found it helpful to pause for a few moments of silent prayer just before starting the message or reading the text. In addition to what prayer itself does for those who pray, a time of stillness before God can do much in preparing the listener to pause and seriously consider what God has to say through His Word by way of the speaker.

To be continued
Next time: *Content*.

In Memoriam

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

MINNESOTA

Roseau

Arthur O. Nelson, 80, Sept. 22, 1984, Roseau

Gota C. Hatling, 77, Nov. 21, 1984, Norland

Arnold G. Swanson, 73, Nov. 23, 1984, Roseau

Marvin Larson, 57, Jan. 2, Rose

Norman McDonald, 75, Jan. 19, Roseau

Christ A. Kompelien, 90, Jan. 26, Roseau

Newfolden

John R. Olson, 87, January 24, Westaker



Rev. Peter Franz, evening speaker at Grafton.



Rev. Roy B. Johnson, one of the presentors.



Rev. Lyle Aadahl, host pastor.

Winter Bible Conference review

For the third time, Bethel Lutheran Church, Grafton, N. Dak., hosted an AFLC Winter Bible Conference, Feb. 6-9. The two previous times were 1972 and 1979. Attendance was only fair this year, but the audiences on Thursday and Friday evenings were good.

Rev. Peter Franz, Minot, N. Dak., preached at the three evening services. On Wednesday night he spoke on the transformation of Saul into the Apostle Paul, using Acts 9:1-9 as his text. He listed five steps: 1) God made contact with Saul; 2) Conviction of sin came into his heart; 3) He was converted and became a true child of God; 4) He became concerned about God's will and asked "Lord, what do You want me to do?"; and 5) He experienced communion with the Lord. Pastor Franz closed by telling his audience that Christ can change lives today also.

On the second night Acts 3:1-10 was Pastor Franz' text and he spoke about the healing of the lame man, a man who had lost hope of ever walking again. He noted three things about the miracle which took place: 1) There was a real need for it. The man could not walk. 2) The reason why the miracle took place was because Peter and John were faithful to do three things: to pray, to share the Gospel and to lift him up; and 3) The results of the miracle were: joy for the healed man, praise to the name of God and wonder and amazement leading to faith in some. Pastor Franz called on his hearers to pray and share Christ.

Friday evening, in his closing message, the Minot pastor talked about "How We Can Have Effective Evangelism," based on Mark 1:14-20. In one survey, he said, evangel-

ism ranked 14th in priority for the respondents. Pastor Franz stated four things we need to know to have effective evangelism: 1) The message. It is the Gospel or Good News that Jesus came to die for sinners; 2) The method. Believers must be shown how to share their faith and to go out and do it; 3) The people who will evangelize. Jesus used common people then and He does so today. *You* are the kind of person Jesus can use; and 4) The kind of a mission evangelism is. One must be willing to leave all behind if that's what God asks, whether it be vocation or family or both. Do not set limits on what you will do for the Lord, Pastor Franz said. The spirit must be, "I am more anxious to do the Lord's will than anything else."

The Bible studies of the conference were given by Rev. Donald

Mrs. Grace Syverson, president of the WMF, presents a check for \$5000 to Pastor Snipstead to be used for the purchase of an off-set printing press in the AFLC.





Mrs. Burton Boyum, Kenyon, Minn. welcomed Mrs. Charles Knapp, Brazil.



Mrs. Renee Regnier and Kathy Hanson, Mpls. at the WMF banquet.

Greven, acting dean of Association Free Lutheran Bible School, Minneapolis, Minn. His studies were based on I Thessalonians, which he described as a book written to strengthen young converts in the basic truths of the Gospel, to urge them to live holy lives and to instruct them of the Lord's return. He also viewed the book in light of the conference theme, "Coping with Fears, Trials and Afflictions" (Psalm 34:19).

Five speakers gave presentations on Psalm 34 at Grafton, as did other speakers at the conferences at Osceola, Wis., and Lake Stevens, Wash.

Mr. Dan Giles, Roseau, Minn., missionary-elect to Mexico, covered "The Need for Daily Praise" (vs. 1-3). In our praise we are to tell others how great Jesus is and why we think so. God wants us to praise Him and trust Him. When the psalmist says, "O magnify the Lord with me," he doesn't mean that we can make God bigger than He is, but he calls on us to make it easier for people to see God and help to draw them to Him.

Rev. Ragene Hodnefield, Hampden, N. Dak., discussed "The Need for Daily Looking Heavenward" (vs. 4-7). To look heavenward is to look to Jesus, he said, and to humble oneself in prayer is to look heavenward. Difficulties in life cause us to look upward. Pastor Hodnefield cited David and Job as examples. And there are many sufferings, fears

and insecurities in the daily walk. Through many tribulations we shall enter the kingdom of God, but He will safely lead the one who trusts in Him

The third presentation on the theme was made by Rev. Roy B. Johnson, Fertile, Minn. He considered "The Need for Daily Resting in His Promises," (vs. 8-13). Pastor Johnson put his thoughts under the further heading "Praise for saving, keeping and sustaining grace." There is the experience of salvation and there is the further experience of taking refuge in the Lord in the time of trouble, knowing His grace to keep. The devil delights to have the Christian in darkness and despair and when the believer finds himself there he must do as Luther did, hold God to His promises. Pastor Johnson said the promises must be lived in every day.

On Friday afternoon, Rev. Joel Rolf, Devils Lake, N. Dak., brought a message on "The Need for Daily Sensing God's Presence and Power" (vs. 15-18). Before there can be a sensing of God's presence there must be a turning from sin, Pastor Rolf declared. To those of broken and contrite spirit He will reveal His presence and power. We surrender our weakness to Him so that He can empower us. Three keys were given for daily sensing God's presence: 1) True repentance, 2) Crying out to the Lord; and 3) Waiting upon the Lord in His Word. ◇

At the ARC

The Association Retreat Center hosted a Bible Conference on Feb. 13-16. The cold temperatures outside sharply contrasted the warm spirit inside. Excellent, practical discussion times followed Pastor Richard Anderson's morning Bible studies. The Apple Valley home mission pastor stressed the need to see God's love through affliction.

Evening messages were brought by Rev. Al Monson, St. Cloud. Other studies on Psalm 34 were led by Pastors Verle Dean, James Gerdeen, Harvey Jackson, Marlyn Kruse and Harris Von Someren.

Attendance swelled on Friday evening for the WMF banquet. Approximately forty ladies enjoyed the fellowship. Mrs. Renee Regnier, AFLC Parish Education secretary shared the aspects of her work. Special greetings were given by Miss Judith Wold and Mrs. Charles Knapp, recently home from Brazil.

A holy life is a voice; it speaks when the tongue is silent, and is either a constant attraction or a perpetual reproof.

—The Epistle

Saved or Lost?

If men are saved, they owe their salvation to the grace of God; but if they are lost, it is altogether their own fault, for God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Thomas Coates

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CONFERENCE . . .

The last of the five presentations on the 34th Psalm was made by Rev. Gary Jorgenson, Stanley, N. Dak. His topic was "The Need for Daily Encouragement and Comfort (vs. 19-22). Encouragement means to give courage, support. Comfort means to "strengthen by being with" (companionship). The righteous has many afflictions in this world. Some come from without, some are internal. How do we find the Lord's encouragement and comfort? Pastor Jorgenson asked. He gave five answers: 1) Look to the Word (the Bible); 2) Be people of prayer; 3) By understanding and participating in the Sacraments; 4) Christian fellowship, also in times of affliction; and 5) Active obedience instead of a complaining spirit. Be involved in God's vision of the world and His work.

Each morning a brief devotional period opened the day. Local pastor Lyle Aadahl led the evening services. Pastor R. Snipstead, AFLC president, gave some information about the AFLC at one daily session and at the men's fellowship on Friday evening at a Grafton cafe. The women were meeting simultaneously at a downtown church for their Women's Missionary Federation workshop. All other noon meals and suppers were served at Bethel.

The regional conference next year is scheduled to be held in Valley Lutheran Church, Portland, N. Dak. Nearby Mayville will provide the major housing facilities for that conference.

*"All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own
way; and the Lord has laid on Him
the iniquity of us all."*

Isaiah 53:6

*"But God shows His love
for us in that while we were
yet sinners Christ died for us."*

Romans 5:8