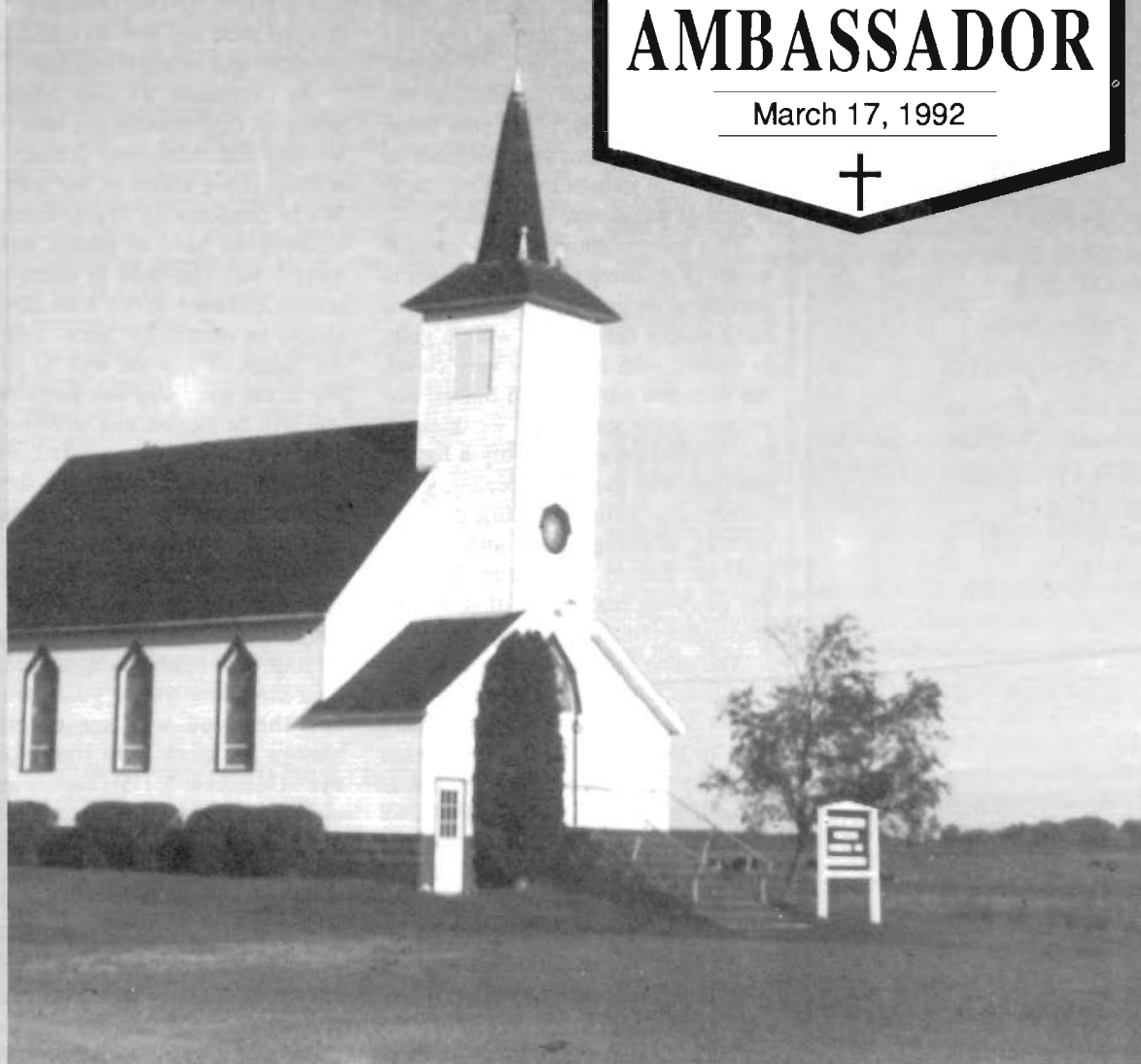




THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

March 17, 1992



Timberland Ringebu Free Lutheran Church

Barronett, Wisconsin

1892 - 1992

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

March 17, 1992 • Vol. 29, No. 6

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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

CONTENTS

God's Word Is Our Great Heritage	p. 3
Choose Devotions	p. 4
It'll Change Your Family	p. 6
Which Is The Best Version of The Bible?	p. 8
Timberland Ringebu Free Lutheran Church 1892-92	p. 11
What a Way To Live	p. 16

Subscriptions: \$12.00 year, U. S.
\$15.00 year, international

Write to:

The Lutheran Ambassador
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Send all communications concerning this magazine to: Solveig Hjermstad, Assistant to the Editor, Box 423, Faith, South Dakota 57626. Phone (605) 967-2381. Fax (605) 967-2382.

USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413
Second-class postage paid at Minneapolis, Minnesota, and additional mailing office.

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

Rev. Robert Lee, Editor
Mrs. Wayne Hjermstad, Assistant to the Editor

Editorial Board:

Rev. Wendell Johnson, Chairman
Dr. Francis Monseth, Secretary
Mr. Robert Knutson

God's Law And Our Lack

"All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?" (Matthew 19:20).

We find these words spoken to Jesus by a man who is concerned about eternal life. Even though he believes he has kept the commands: "Do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; so not give false testimony; honor your father and mother and love your neighbor as yourself." In spite of that, he still lacks assurance that eternal life is his.

This account shows us how capable we are of reducing God's commands to something we can say we've kept. One thing people cannot live with is guilt. In dealing with it, we are very clever. We compare ourselves to others who are seemingly worse than we think we are. We reduce guilt to only a feeling and deny true moral responsibility. We excuse our guilt by citing circumstances, blaming others and the list goes on. But, as the man in this text, the gnawing realization that we are inadequate remains.

The same painful but necessary service Jesus performs for this poor man, Luther does for us as he defines God's Law in the Small Catechism. Jesus made the man questioning Him look at himself as he really was. When we reduce God's Law to where we can say with this man: "All these I have kept," we need to see clearly what God's Law really requires we do and be!

An important part of Jesus' ministry was to define God's Law clearly. He did this through His words (Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7) and through the example of His life (John 13:34, John 13:15, etc.). Luther explains the commandments for us according to what he learned from the life and teaching of Jesus as he received it through the Gospels and Epistles.

Luther helps us see clearly and concisely that the Ten Commandments require not only abstention from certain wrongs, but also that we are obligated by God's Law to always do certain things God says are right (James

Light on the Way

4:17). Also, God's Law requires that not only the outward deed or word be correct, but the heart from which they proceed must be motivated only by fear and love for God (Matthew 15:18-20). So there are sins on commission, omission and wrong motivation.

As Christians, we have often been guilty of condemning the sins of the worldly and those who commit them without being aware of our own sins. While condemning drunkenness and adultery, we have let gossip, factions, hatred, etc., run wild at times in the church and even in our own lives. We should be careful for Jesus says: "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:1-5). So we should always call sin by its proper name, but not just in the case of others. The sermon my neighbor needs to hear is good for me, too!

We are blessed to have a Catechism that helps us see our sin so we can deal with it in God's way. As we confess our sins (I John 1:9) rather than excuse them, then we receive that blessed forgiveness.

Thank you, Jesus, for confronting us with your Law.



— by Rev.
Jon Wellumson

God's Word Is Our Great Heritage

Thy Word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee. Psalm 119:11 (NASB)

We live in an age where many individuals are concerned about tracing their heritage, or as some would say, "finding their roots." What many are unaware of is that when they were young their parents were carefully giving them a heritage which is priceless to them today, the heritage of God's Word.

Parents who diligently saw to it that we, as infants, were in attendance at church on Sunday morning to hear the preaching of God's Word laid the foundation of that heritage. Faithful Sunday School teachers built upon that foundation as they instructed us in the lessons systematically laid out for our spiritual edification and training. Dedicated pastors continued the building process through our confirmation instruction, insisting that we memorize the many Bible passages that support the teachings of Luther's Small Catechism.

Now that the years have passed we become increasingly aware of the great heritage of God's Word that has been passed on to us. God's divinely inspired and inerrant Word is truly our only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life.

From the beginning God stressed the importance of establishing the heritage of His Word within the family. In Deuteronomy 6:6-9, He stated: "And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the door posts of your house and on your gates."

God's master plan of salvation for sinful man is detailed from Genesis through Revelation. The messianic prophecies of the Old Testament



are fulfilled only in the person of Jesus Christ, God's Son. Incarnate by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, Jesus became both true God and true man in order to suffer and die. His death paid the wages of sin and His bodily resurrection from the grave won the victory and sealed for the believer the gift of eternal Life. What greater heritage is there than this?

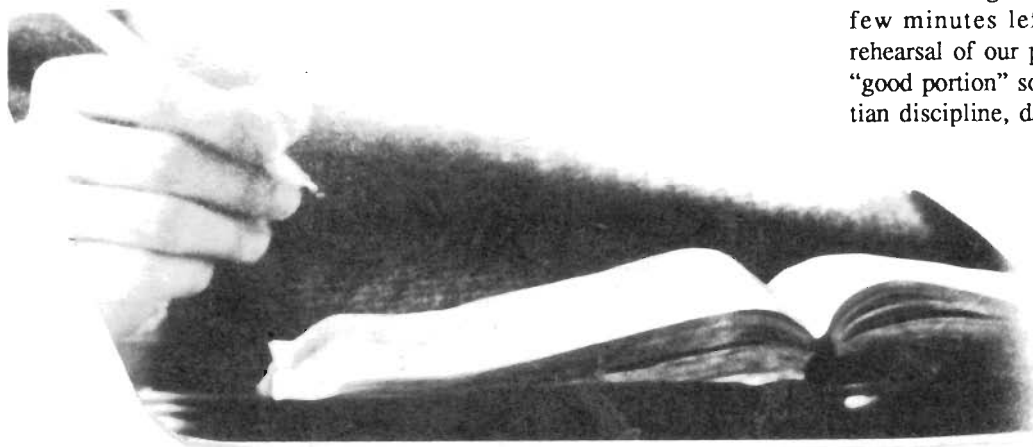
Today we have the privilege and responsibility of passing on this heritage to those who follow after us. We live in an age when even "Christian" pastors and teachers choose to challenge the authority of God's Word. They would belittle the heritage that has been passed on to us from generation to generation and even question many of the truths that form the foundation of our faith. If we truly believe that God's Word is our great heritage, then we must submit ourselves to the task of preserving that Word in its truth and purity, for future generations.

The Word itself commands us to pass on this heritage. The apostle Paul challenged young Timothy to "be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not



— by Rev.
Raymond Klug
Fairbury, Nebraska

CHOOSE DEVOTIONS



— by Jeannie Brandt
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

HERITAGE

**“It is not
enough to
just attend
church once
a week.”**

need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth” (II Timothy 2:15, NASB). He also charged Timothy, and you and me as well, to preach (teach) the word; be ready in season and out of season; to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction” (II Timothy 4:2, NASB).

Material inheritance is often the biggest concern of both those who bestow it, and those who receive it. The continuing pressure of the world to leave material wealth to our descendants is unrelenting. Accumulating money and property becomes such an obsession that there is no longer time for spiritual enrichment. Holy Scripture warns us of the futility of such endeavors. Jesus stated in His Sermon on the Mount: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth ... But lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven ... For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:19-21). There is absolutely no assurance that the earthly inheritance we accumulate will last. Only the spiritual heritage of God’s Word is eternal.

The challenge has been given! If future generations are to sing that great hymn of the Reformation we need to act today. The forces of Satan are working to destroy the heritage we would pass on to our children and grandchildren. We must not become complacent! It is not enough to just attend church once a week. Soldiers of the Cross must be properly equipped to do battle with the forces of the evil one — Ephesians 6:10-17. This comes only through continued study of God’s Word and a dedicated

Today my lunch was prepared and on the table. As I sat down to eat an unfinished task caught my eye. The telephone rang with an important message. The dryer buzzed, reminding me of clothes that should not be left to wrinkle. My husband came home ready for some relaxing conversation. Soon I had only a few minutes left to eat. Isn’t that often a rehearsal of our personal devotional time? The “good portion” so easily eludes us. This Christian discipline, daily Bible reading and prayer

prayer life. “... Give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching” (I Timothy 4:13).

Truly God’s Word is our great heritage! It has withstood the test of time, and will continue to do so as faithful believers faithfully pass it on to future generations. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, each of us must assume our responsibility of passing on this precious and invaluable heritage.

Rev. Ray Klug has served Faith Lutheran Church, Fairbury, and Abiding Word Lutheran Church, Deshler, Nebraska since 1987. Both churches are recent members of the AFLC. Since last month, Pastor Klug has been included on the permanent AFLC Clergy Roster.

He was born December 16, 1930, at Blackduck, Minnesota. After graduation from Blackduck High School, he graduated from the University of Minnesota and went on to teach Vocational Agriculture. He served in the United States Army from 1953-55. In 1960, he graduated from Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, and was ordained into the ELC, pastoring in Edmore and Valley City, North Dakota, before serving as Executive Director of Red Willow and Park River Lutheran Bible Camps in North Dakota from 1968-74. He went on to serve congregations in Blackduck and Glyndon, Minnesota, before moving to Fairbury, Nebraska.

He and his wife, Elaine (Jacobson), have four children: Rebekah, Luther, Daniel and Deborah.

may well be the number one struggle for every believer. Who of us can claim the exemplary devotional life? Who can assume to write a how-to article? Yet, I am excited about my quiet time. It consists of three valuable and precious ingredients: **God**, the **Bible** and **Me** — and blends them together with the awesome ability to communicate. In that spirit, allow me to share some ideas.

Be convinced

We talk about its importance. We confess that personal Bible reading and prayer are the spiritual nutrition of life. We compare it to our need for daily physical food and create a marvelous analogy. But until we really believe it from the bottom of our souls — that without personal devotions we will starve spiritually, we will continue in half-hearted, fruitless efforts to establish a fulfilling lifetime habit.

I must choose to make devotions a priority. It is popular now to be disciplined in many areas of life. Literature on healthy diets, exercise and “be good to yourself” flourish in our country. I, too, want some of those disciplines in my life. However, I became convinced that the number one discipline had to be devotions. What would it really profit me to take the minutes to walk two miles each day if I did not first take minutes to read God’s Word?

Be prepared

We need a time, place and plan. We all have busy schedules. We cannot find time for devotions. We must make time. Ah, don’t be too quick to shrug off the early morning hour. Even we sleepy-heads can learn to be alert. Have you heard of the “no-Bible-no-breakfast” plan? Whatever your style, choose a time and stick with it. Do it for at least six weeks as it takes that long to establish a habit.

Now, a place. Search for a quiet place. Imagine Jesus sitting there waiting for you as “My Heart, Christ’s Home” suggests. One year while in college, I met Jesus every morning in my walk-in closet. Once there, be quiet. Read and pray, but also listen. What you read is God’s voice speaking directly to you!

Then develop a plan. If we read the Bible hit-and-miss, we will usually miss. There are many prepared plans available to us: read-through-the-Bible in daily portions, a new or old devotional book; a saturated study of one book of the Bible. A Psalm at bedtime is a comforting relaxer. Select a plan and see it through to completion. For variety, select a different plan next time. Write down one thought and dwell on it through

the day. A prayer list helps me. I write them in a bound book with blank pages for me to fill, leaving space for answers to be recorded. I’ve discovered so much to pray about that it has helped to divide requests into categories for each day of the week. One plan will be just right for you.

Begin

All the plans and methods and helps are worthless unless we begin. The goal of personal devotions is to get to know Jesus better. The motivation for personal devotions is also your intimate relationship with Jesus. In this case, eating does not ever satisfy the appetite, it creates it! The living and active Word whets your desire to return for more of the precious Word.

Gather ideas from mature Christians and be willing to try something new. However, we must be careful to not compare our devotional life with anyone else’s because that often stirs up guilt. Remember, this is personal devotions. No one really knows how it is with me, except my God. I am not expecting a feeling through my devotions. The Bible says, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you” (James 4:8). Take that promise in simple faith. Draw near. He will meet you there.

Be ready

“Be ready always to give an account of the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15). Make it an exercise each day to share something from your devotions with someone else. Last week a friend excitedly related that it was necessary to be in the battle in order to rejoice in the relevance of the Bible, otherwise it may become dry. If we use what we read to help people around us, we discover the thrill and the purpose of Scripture. It also drives us back to the fortress for another supply. Answers to every question of life are there for the taking!

Be courageous

Why is this topic so peppered with guilt? Why are so many believers so irregular in this discipline? Because the power for victorious, happy Christian living is there! Satan sees our quiet time for what it is and will do his utmost to short-circuit our access to power. Daily Bible reading and prayer are our individual spiritual battlefields. I was challenged by the experience of a young mother who purposed to have devotions in the morning. The earlier she set her alarm, the earlier her babies awakened. Finally, she recognized the spiritual battle and persisted with an ever earlier alarm. Resisting the devil, he did flee. In Jesus we can choose to be conquerors.

“The living and active Word whets your desire to return for more of the precious Word”



It'll Change Your Family

— by Lyle and Sue Westrom
Crookston, Minnesota

“And these words, which I am commanding you today,
shall be on your heart;
and you shall teach them diligently to your sons
and shall talk of them when you sit in
your house and when you walk by the way
and when you lie down and when you rise up.”

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Our children have just gone to bed after a rousing game of "hyperdrive." This was not a typical family devotion time, but it does typify the excitement that God can generate when a family gathers for devotions. "Hyperdrive" was Robby's idea for devotions tonight. It is a game that his Sunday School teacher taught them in Sunday School last week. It is quite likely that she does not yet realize how her enthusiastic lesson influenced Robby's whole family. We are thankful for Christian teachers!

Family devotions have not always been a part of our family routine. Nearly seven years ago we listened as our adult Sunday School class discussed the importance of family devotions. Sue and I were convinced! But life continued on as usual without family devotions. At Christmas time, six months later, a package arrived in the mail from friends who knew of our "good" intentions to start family devotions ... and also our lack of follow through. We unwrapped the package to find a book entitled "Little Visits With God." That little nudge was enough to get us started. It is from that humble beginning that we are going to share with you about our family devotions.

Let us begin by saying our family devotions are far from being a perfect model to follow. We chose to have our devotions in the evening just before bedtime for the children. There are evenings that we miss, but many more that we now follow through. Any time that you select to have devotions will be a problem on occasion, but resist the devil's trickery when he tries to use an occasional miss as a guilt trip to end devotions.

The procedure we use for devotions is simple. We each read a portion of the devotional reading. This started with "Little Visits With God," then "More Little Visits With God," then the New Testament, and now the Old Testament. Frequently we deviate from the norm as we did tonight with Robby's request to learn the books of the Bible by playing "hyperdrive." We follow our reading with "special prayer time," where

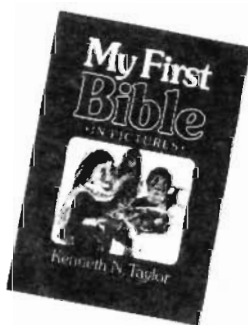
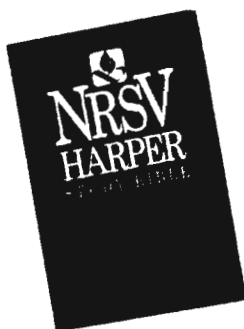
each member of the family offers prayers for their concerns of the day.

There are joys and sometimes sadness that stem from devotions, most often seen in the eyes of our children. Our children look forward to sharing our devotion time with guests ... that's a happy time. It is also a frequent time for them to open up about problems at school or play. When my father passed away, it was a time to learn about life and death from a Bible perspective as each of our four children was present as he passed away. As that old hymn reads: "What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear."

It was several years ago now that our oldest two children attended Medicine Lake Lutheran Academy in St. Louis Park, Minnesota. I will never forget when the principal told us of the importance of arming children with the armor of God. The Bible talks of it frequently, too. Deuteronomy 6:7 states: "And these words I command you this day shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you lie down, and when you rise." Proverbs 22: 6 states: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Perhaps those two references from the Bible sum it up best! You may also wish to read Matthew 18:3-7, I John 1:6, 7, and Matthew 18:20.

Our family devotion time is a time to learn about God's Word and fellowship together. We invite you to begin a family devotion time if you do not have one now. We are confident that you will be blessed by that decision.

Dr. Lyle and Sue Westrom reside in Crookston, Minnesota, and attend church at Resurrection Free Lutheran Church in Beltrami, Minnesota. Lyle is an assistant professor of dairy science at the University of Minnesota, Crookston, and Sue works for FmHA. Ryan (13) and Tracy (12) attend Crookston Public Schools and Robby (8) and Katy (6) attend Our Saviors Lutheran Day School.



When Choosing Your Bible

Which Is The Best Version Of The Bible?

A friend once asked me, "Which is the best version of the Bible?" "One that gets read and understood," I replied. Then I tried to clarify this by saying, "It depends on who will use it and what they want to use it for," explaining and illustrating my answer in more detail. The question of which version to use seems to generate endless discussion, and sometimes emotion. I hope to give some guidelines to help people make informed choices when choosing a Bible.

Versions and Editions

In considering the question, "Which version of the Bible should I use?" It is helpful to distinguish between "versions" and "editions." "Version" refers to the text itself, the words of the Bible. Well-known English versions are NIV (New International Version), NASB (New American Standard Bible), RSV (Revised Standard Version), KJV (King James Version), Living Bible, etc.

"Edition" refers to the format and anything besides the text itself. For example, it is possible to buy a copy of the NIV (a specific "version") in many different "edition:" hardcover or paperback, single column or double column format, with pictures for children, arranged for daily readings to be completed in one year, with cross-references, with a small concordance, or published with the many helps of the Thompson Chain Reference Bible. These are all different "editions" of the same "version."

Different versions have differing strengths and weaknesses. For example, the KJV has had a tremendous influence on the English language and literature for a long time, but it is not easily understood by most people today, especially those (like me) who have not been raised with it. The NASB is widely respected for its accuracy, but the style often does not lead to smooth reading. The TEV (Today's English Version, also known as the Good News Bible) has a simpler vocabulary and tries hard to simplify figurative or symbolic language, but is criticized by some for overdoing these. The list goes on and on.

Who Will Use It and For What?

As I said at the outset, the determining which is the best version, we must remember to ask, "Who will use it and what will they want to use it for?" That is, the best version (and let me also say "edition") for a fifth grader will not be the same as for a Bible School student or a Sunday School teacher.

Personally, I like to use a variety of versions and editions for different reasons. The first reason is the most obvious: what is unclear in one version is often clearer in another. Also, I sometimes like to read a different version to get away from what has become familiar phrasing; the unfamiliar word or phrase sometimes jolts me into gazing anew at the reality of an eternal truth.

The question of which edition to buy or use is, in my opinion, is at least important as which version. Such things as type size, the amount of helps and references included, the binding, etc., are all determined by the purpose for which a Bible is bought. For example, is it to be for study, preaching, meditation, witnessing? If it is to be a person's primary Bible, a leather binding or hard cover is a good investment, but if it is a secondary Bible, used less often, a cheaper paperback may suffice.

These are some of the areas that I think should be considered in choosing a Bible:

- **Personal Devotions:** At times, for my daily reading and meditation I find my study Bible too distracting with all the notes and references, so I occasionally prefer a simple text edition. For this sort of reading I often prefer a version that has a smoother flow, a more readable style, such as the Jerusalem Bible or Living Bible.

- **Lesson Preparation:** When preparing a lesson for some group, I prefer to have at least two versions in front of me, hopefully significantly different, and TEV. During my lesson preparation, I look at whatever version I will read aloud as I teach, making sure it is what most of the group are expected to be carrying. Also, a study version can be used to help find useful cross references, locate places on maps, explain different passages, etc.

- **Memorization:** I have found it harder to memorize a fairly informal version like TEV, since it is so close to my normal speech. It is easier for me to memorize from a version that is slightly more formal.

- **Serious Study:** For my study Bible, I like an edition that has big enough margins for me to write notes. As a minimum, a Bible for serious study (no matter what version it is) should have cross references and hopefully a small concordance, plus some maps. There are a number of good study Bibles on the market, from the well-known Scofield and Thompson to the newer Open Bible, Discovery Bible, Life Application Bible, with a large variety in between. Don't be swayed by exciting advertising; before buying a study Bible, do some serious comparison.

- **Reading for Children:** There are a variety of versions and Bible "story books" for children, available at a Christian bookstore. There are important reasons to buy a different version for a child than for a teenager or an adult. In choosing for children, it is useful to compare several and try to think which is most appropriate for the child's age and understanding. For example, we are giving our daughter "The Beginner's Bible" when she starts second grade.

- **Witnessing:** When we try to talk to unsaved friends about Jesus and read passages with them, it is important that the language of the version be clear to a person who is not familiar with "Christian" vocabulary.

- **Congregational Use:** Many congregations like to have a single, standard version for use in services, for unison reading and for the pastor's preaching. For this reason, the AFLC once passed a resolution agreeing on the NASB, and some congregations have adopted this version as their choice for congregational worship.

Summary

Now that I have raised so many issues and so many possibilities, maybe some will think that I am demanding the impossible, a full theological library. I realize that most believers will not want to buy several different Bibles. To cut down on expense, it is possible to buy only New

Testament editions of other versions, rather than entire Bibles. Also, sometimes we can borrow copies from friends or libraries.

For those who want to read more about the strengths and weaknesses of various versions, let me suggest a book that addresses the issues in detail: "So Many Versions?" (2nd edition) by Kubo and Specht, Zondervan, 1983.

Up to now, I have specifically avoided making any recommendations regarding specific versions. Let me now make a few gentle suggestions. First, despite its lower price, I recommend people not to buy a KJV. (For children, this is not just a recommendation but a strong plea.) Speaking from personal experience, it is not well understood. More importantly, the KJV can help feed the mistaken notion that the Bible is an archaic, outdated, incomprehensible book that is not relevant today. We want to convey the opposite message!

Secondly, in choosing a version for serious study, NASB, NIV, and RSV are all good options. In considering a second more informal version, I suggest the TEV or Living Bible.

A third general suggestion, since the Bible is God's eternal Word, more precious than gold (Psalm 19), don't skimp on your purchase.

Rather than confuse and paralyze people by making choices seem complicated, I want to repeat my answer from the beginning, that "The best version is one that gets read and understood." Make your choice, whether it be by the suggestions I give or not. Then use that Bible, read it, make it a part of your life! The biggest, most beautiful and expensive Bible, if it just sits on a shelf, is useless.

—by Pete Unseth.

The author, son of Pastor and Mrs. Einar Unseth, London, Minnesota, and brother of Pastor Reuben Unseth, Roseau, Minnesota, is a missionary-translator in the African nation of Ethiopia.

A Brief Evaluation of the New Evangelical Translation New Testament or God's Word to the Nations

This translation strongly emphasizes the Bible to be the Inerrant Word of God. It takes a strong stand against evolution and liberalism.

However, in my opinion, it does have some serious weaknesses.

It boasts strict adherence to the original text but at the same time claims ease in reading and understanding. It claims to be more accurate than any previous translation. But it has been in the hands of the public only a very short time compared to the King James Version, which for centuries was the only English version available and which the Holy Spirit did use to bring many to Christ and to give soul nourishment to countless numbers. Time has not proven the NET New Testament as it has the King James Version.

NET strongly emphasizes the goodness of God but seems weak in stressing man's responsibility to God. In its footnotes on pages 531 to 540, it suggests replacing the word "covenant" with "promise."

Perhaps its most serious weakness is how it has dealt with those portions which foretell Jesus' return to earth. It is very evident that the translation holds to the amillennial view of prophecy.

For example, in Matthew 24:34 and Luke 2:32 (KJV) "this generation" has been changed to "this kind of people." This could change the meaning of this Scripture which the premillennialist relates to the Jews' return to Palestine as foretold in Scripture.

The entire book of Revelation has been rewritten in poetic form, which, in my opinion, does not make it easier to read or understand. It raises the question: Did John write Revelation in poetic form?

I truly believe the first purpose of this book of the Bible is to be a warning of a coming judgment by God to the ungodly on this earth. The main body of the book (chapters 6-18) describes the terribleness of this judgment. Poetry is not the most popular form of reading, especially in our age.

It seems to me that poetic form would minimize the urgent need to take the warnings of this book seriously and cause less people to read it.

In Appendix 13, page 565, we are reminded of how the word "and" (Kai) is used throughout the Book of Revelation to glue each event recorded together, making it appear as if Revelation is made up of many events loosely related and not necessarily recorded in a chronological order.

But what this appendix fails to mention is how the word "Kai" connects each event with the previous event, making the Book of Revelation (with some exception) one continuous event. The premillennialists believe the book of Revelation is chronological in relation to time.

This appendix also fails to mention that the title of this book of the Bible (Revelation) is singular and not plural, indicating one continuing event with many facets.

In Revelation 1:4 (KJV) we read, "which was, which is and which is to come," whereas the NET reads, "the one-who-is, the one-who-was, and the one-who-will be." NET has completely eradicated from this verse the thought of Jesus' returning to this earth. This is again repeated in verse 8.

The writer of Hebrews tells us that during the time Jesus walked on this earth and the time of the apostles or early church, new spiritual truths were

being revealed. However, when the Bereans checked out Paul's teaching (Acts 17:10-13) with that of the Scriptures they found that they did not differ. Paul only revealed more light to that which they already had.

We have not been promised additional canon to our present day Bible. However, as we draw closer to the time of Jesus's second coming, it is very probable that new light, new and deeper understanding, will be given to the prophetic word which we already have. However, this new light should not contradict the wording of Scripture which the Holy Spirit has used to enlighten us in the past.

Nevertheless, many of the newer translations, NET included, have changed the meaning in many portions of Scripture from that which we long have learned from the King James version.

Since the trend began to make new versions of the Bible, great liberty has been taken, especially in some cases, to change the wording of the text. We might ask: Has this trend increased or lessened man's faith in the Word of God? Jesus once told a parable of a man who tried to better his home but ended up making it seven times worse (Luke 11:24-26). Could this parable apply to what the present-day translator trends have done to God's Word?

—by Rev. Gerald F. Mundfrom
Osceola, Wisconsin

BUILDING UPDATE

The Administrative Building is coming along well thanks to all the volunteers who have come since January 13. We hope that the building and grounds will be finished approximately June 1, with dedication of the building on Conference Sunday, June 21.

We still need volunteers. There are needs for carpenters and carpenters' helpers. Another need will be to furnish the rooms and secretarial areas. We received a grant from AAL to furnish the Board Room. Much of the present furniture will be taken to the new building.

If you or an organization of your congregation would like to furnish or partially furnish an area or a room, please call Pastor Les Galland for more information. The telephone number is (612) 545-5631. Thanks to everyone who has sent in gifts of money. We thank you for your prayer support.

Timberland Ringebu Free Lutheran Church 1892 - 1992

In 1892 a congregation was formed among the Norwegian homesteaders of rural Barronett, Wisconsin. Since some of the settlers were from Ringebu, Norway, they decided to call the church, Ringebu Lutheran Church. That is still the official name of the congregation that is now commonly called Timberland Lutheran Church.

Pioneering days were difficult as the church members began their meetings in the local school house. By 1909 they had saved up enough money and materials to build their beautiful little white church. The steeple pointed high in the sky and the bell could be heard for miles around calling the pioneers to worship. The congregation joined the Lutheran Free Church and was served at times by pastors from Cumberland, Wisconsin. Eventually they formed a three-point parish with Heart Lake and Barronett Churches.

Over the years the congregation has had an active Ladies Aid Society and Sunday School. They also have conducted Vacation Bible School, youth meetings, Bible studies and many special events. The congregation celebrated the 75th anniversary of the church building in 1984.

Hard economic times and lack of pastors willing to serve this remote region caused the congregation members to lose heart on several occasions and to consider closing the doors for good. Yet they knew that losing their church would have a devastating affect on the spiritual life of the community, so they hung on with student pastors and semi-retired pastoral supply.

Timberland Church joined the American Lutheran Church when the Lutheran Free Church merged with it in the 1960s. However, congregation members began to be concerned about certain trends they saw in the ALC and began to question the advisability of joining the newly proposed ELCA. In 1988 they made the difficult decision to leave the ALC and sever their long-time two-point parish relationship with Barronett Lutheran Church, which chose to join the ELCA. The division

did not cause any animosity toward Barronett and the two churches still have a good working relationship.

Not knowing where they were going, they stepped out in faith. God provided the opportunity for Timberland Church to form a new two-point parish with Section Ten Free Lutheran Church and their newly called pastor, Tom Olson. After a trial period in the AFLC, the church agreed that being in the AFLC was like returning home to the Lutheran Free Church. There was a unanimous vote to join the AFLC. Through the whole process, Timberland lost only one family from its membership. In fact, since joining the AFLC, several new people have joined the church and the morning worship service is well attended.

The pastors that have served Timberland Church over the years include: A.J. Logeland, 1892-06; N.B. Olson; Hans Ostgulen, 1906-12; Carl Amundson, 1912-17, 1920-21; M.A. Erickson, 1917-20; Peder Fluvog, 1921-29; Homer Johnson, 1929-38; Manley Gjerde, 1937-40; Kenneth Anderson, 1940-45; Johan Dahlen, 1946-50; Karlis Ozolins, 1951-55; J. Nystuen, Sr. 1955-59; K. Rhoe, 196-62; A. Olson, 1963-67; I. Norum, 1969; C. Solberg, 1970; J. Wogslund, 1970-71; W. Hall, 1971-72; D. Bergeson, 1973-77; I. Sandberg, 1977-79; G. Muschinske, 1980-85; W. Aos, 1985-88; Thomas Olson, 1988-present. Missionary Oscar Brown and AFLC Pastor Brian Davidson have also helped with

the work in the past few years. Having such a turn over of pastors has been difficult for the congregation but on the positive side, it has forced them to develop strong lay leadership.

Timberland Church is located in the southern portion of the great northern Wisconsin forests. It is a sportsman's paradise with many great fishing fishing lakes and thousands of acres of woods filled with white-tailed deer and other game. Timberland was once a thriving community which even had its own post office. Today, the community center includes two farms, a tavern, a small home and the church. The area has many beautiful dairy farms nestled into the woodlands. Also, a number of people from Minneapolis and other cities have summer homes in the woods or along a lake.

Our continuing challenge is to reach out with the good news of Jesus Christ to this diverse area. To meet this challenge the church is holding home Bible studies and night-time Ladies Aid meetings. Signs have been erected along the roads inviting tourists to the church and a fellowship time following the service has been organized. Plans are being made to put in indoor facilities and add on to the church as well.

Our 100th anniversary celebration will be held on Sunday, June 7, at 11 a.m. We invite you to pray for us and to stop in for a visit some Sunday. May God be praised for sustaining the Timberland Ringebu Free Lutheran Church through these many years.



The parsonage shared by Timberland and Section Ten congregations.

Meet The AFLTS Seniors



Name: Jonathan Unverzagt
Address: Kasson, Minnesota

Son of: Marlene Unverzagt and the late Paul Unverzagt

Married to: Hope (Dyrud)

Children: Analaya, 2; Gretchen, 10 months

Home Congregation: Mt. Sion Lutheran, Kasson, Minnesota, Gordon Grage, pastor.

Graduate of: Association of Free Lutheran Bible School and Moorhead State University, Moorhead, Minnesota.

Special interests: Golf, all other sports, visiting, reading, hunting.

Personal testimony: I am thankful for the godly heritage my family gave me. As a young boy, the Holy Spirit convicted me of my sin and the need to be ready for Christ's return. The promise of the Gospel in I John 1:9 has been a great comfort and blessing to me in my walk with God. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Seminary Experience: While in seminary, I have grown deeper in my appreciation and love for God's Word. My year of internship in Ferndale, Washington, under the supervision of Pastor Fugelberg and Pastor Moland was a time of blessing and growth as the Lord showed me more of what it means to serve Him. Especially now during my senior year, Christ has impressed upon me what it means to walk by the Spirit and not in my flesh. His promise in Romans 8:14 is real to me. "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." It is my prayer that the spirit will continue to lead and guide all my steps. I desire to acknowledge Him in every way, knowing that He will direct my path. Hope and I rest in God's promise as we look to the future. "For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord, plans for good and not for evil; to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).



Mr. Jerry Nelson, new AFLBS Choir director, visiting with Rev. Vince Will, Springfield, Missouri, at the 1992 Pastor's Conference.

CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS

The theme of Christ's passion, then, must far outrank every other. His sufferings are like pure and precious gold, compared to which ours are as nothing. No one but Christ has suffered for the sins of another. No man has ever paid the price of his own sins, great or small. Even if man's suffering could avail aught for sin, the individual could not go beyond expiating for his own sins.

— Martin Luther

1992 AFLBS Choir and Choral Club Tour Schedule

CHOIR

- April 3 — Salem, Radcliffe, IA
- 4 — Christian Free, Wheatland, IA
- 5 — (A.M.) Grace, DeKalb, IL
- 5 — (P.M.) St. John's, Milford, IL
- 6 — Off
- 7 — Advent, Richboro, PA
- 8 — Trinity, Walden, NY
- 9 — Nanuet LB, Nanuet, NY
- 10 — Unity, Massapequa, NY
- 11 — Off
- 12 — (A.M.) Messiah, New Lisbon, NJ
- 12 — (P.M.) Grace, LaPlata, MD
- 13 — Off
- 14 — St. John's, Ambridge, PA
- 15 — St. Mark's, Chesterland, OH
- 16 — St. Petrie, Leland, IL
- 17 — Emmaus, Bloomington, MN

CHORAL CLUB

- Our Savior's, Argyle, MN
- Emmanuel, Williston, ND
- Faith, Brockton, MT
- Bethel, Frontier, SASK
- Bethlehem, Calgary, ALTA
- Faith, Kalispell, MT
- Living Word, Vernon, BC
- Triumph, Ferndale, WA
- Off
- Elim, Lake Stevens, WA
- 8:15 a.m. Lake Stevens,
- 11 a.m. Calvary, Everett, WA
- Our Redeemer, Kirkland, WA
- Off
- Our Savior's, Dickinson, ND
- Bethany, Abercrombie, ND
- Tabor, Webster, SD
- Solid Rock, Osseo, MN



DeKalb, Illinois — Grace Free Lutheran Church had a special weekend on February 8-9. On Saturday, Nathan Allen Devine was baptized at a family service at the church. On Sunday, his grandparents were received into membership of the church. That evening, the Hospitality Group sponsored a Family Valentine supper after which Keith Yates, Cokato, Minnesota, shared a concert of Gospel hymns.

Rev. Milo D. Gudim Passes Away

On February 18, 1992, Rev. Milo Guddim, 66, Mayville, North Dakota, passed away suddenly. He had retired from the parish ministry in September, 1991. The funeral service was held at Trinity Free Lutheran Church, Grand Forks, North Dakota, on February 21. An obituary will be included in the next issue.



Judge Dismisses Dasari Lawsuit

A Minnesota district court judge has dismissed a lawsuit brought by Rev. B. Rao Dasari against the AFLC, Rev. Eugene Enderlein, Rev. Einar Unseth, and Rev. Robert Lee. A full report of the court's decision will appear in the next issue.

Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

Thanks for the "faithful watchman" articles. We are blessed in the AFLC with many real, live Christian heroes. The world can mock what President Bush calls "points of light," but "who are these uncircumcised Philistines, that they should taunt the armies of the living God?" (Samuel 17:26).

*Craig M. Berger
Chillicothe, Illinois*

Thief River Falls, Minnesota

The annual Missions Conference at Our Saviour's Church is scheduled for March 15-18. Rev. David Molstre, home mission pastor at Palmdale, California, and Rev. Connely Dyrud, Brazil missionary, are the speakers.

Osseo, Minnesota

Solid Rock Church plans to purchase a copier and a computer in the near future, and desires information about any that might be for sale. Please contact Pastor Keith Quanbeck, 625 Central Avenue, Osseo, MN 55369; phone (612) 323-0714.

Ishpeming, Michigan

A sweetheart banquet was sponsored by Hope Church on February 16. Mr. Erling Langness, a teacher and coach at Ishpeming High School, was the speaker for the gathering, which was held at the Bonanza Restaurant in Marquette. Friends from other AFLC congregations in Upper Michigan were invited to attend.

The North Central Minnesota District

held its second annual winter youth retreat on February 15-17, at Sand Hill Lake Bible Camp, Fosston. Sessions on the theme, "Beginning with the End in Mind" were led by Anders Macy, Fertile, Minnesota. Music and a Coffee House Talent Program were led by Darrell Haugen, Binford, North Dakota. The weekend also included various recreational activities and the film, "The Pretender." Attendance of youth increased this year from 45 to 68 campers.

Correction

No, the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer does not: "... lead(s) us to despise others." Rather, it should have read: "This petition leads us away from excess pride and thinking of our own goodness that leads us to despise others. Our apologies to careful readers and to Rev. LeRoy Flickinger, author of the article.

The AFLBS Van Fund

AFLBS uses two vans to transport their teams to minister in congregations throughout the nation. One van has 175,000 miles on it and the other has 115,000 miles of service. One of our AFLC congregations has offered to donate a generous sum to begin a van fund. If you or your congregation have been blessed by the ministry of AFLBS, perhaps you would like to join in to meet this imminent need for our Bible School. Write to: AFLBS 3110 E. Medicine Lake Boulevard, Plymouth, MN 55441. Designate "Van Fund."

New Church Joins AFLC — Canada



The newest member of the AFLC-Canada is **Solid Rock Free Lutheran Church**, Camrose, Alberta, established by a group of concerned Lutherans who have been meeting for worship since August 18. Meeting in the music hall of a local college, the congregation is served by David Anderson, a lay pastor from Frontier, Saskatchewan, for two Sundays a month, assisted by Rev. James Winter, Calgary, and Rev. Arnold Hagen, a retired ELCIC pastor who lives in Camrose.

The AFLC recently accepted another congregation, **Abiding Word Lutheran Church**, Deshler, Nebraska, was organized in 1987 and is served together with the Fairbury congregation by Rev. Raymond Klug and Rev. Howard Franzen. Formerly affiliated with the AALC, it has been independent for the past year.

Plymouth, Minnesota — Medicine Lake Lutheran Church has shown John MacArthur's "Spiritual Discipling: Building the Family of God" film series on Sunday evenings during January and February. The "Seven Last Words" is the theme for the Lenten Exchange program that seven Minneapolis area congregations are participating in. Churches joining with the Medicine Lake congregation are: Hope, Wyoming; King of Glory, Eden Prairie; Living Word, Eagan; Morgan Avenue, Minneapolis; Sunnyside, Stacy; and Victory in Christ, St. Paul.

Winger, Minnesota — On February 9, the parents and Luther League of Dovre Free Lutheran Church held their Valentine Party. The congregation's pastor, Lloyd Bjornlie was the speaker. The Leaguers gave a carnation to each of their parents and to Pastor and Mrs. Bjornlie.

A FIRM FOUNDATION

Dr. Carl F. Wisloff, in his excellent book, "Do The Work of an Evangelist" (AFLC Seminary Press, 1990), indicates that the denial of Biblical inerrancy is at the root of the decline of Lutheran evangelism. He writes (pp. 12-13): "They don't believe the Bible to be the Word of God, given by inspiration through prophets and apostles. They don't believe that **men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God** (II Peter 2:21). They don't believe that **all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness** (II Timothy 3:16)." Nothing could be more necessary, he declares, than a deep commitment to the doctrine of the inerrancy and inspiration of the Bible, if genuine revival is to come to our congregations.

These fundamental truths are the foundation of our life and ministry as a church fellowship. Some have rightly stated, too, that a foundation usually does not require a great deal of attention once it is laid. We are not constantly checking the basements of our homes to be sure that they are sound; the fact is that our foundations are commonly taken for granted, and this is true for basic



Ottawa, Illinois — During its morning worship service on December 16, 1991, 16 new members were received into the fellowship of Faith Lutheran Church. Pictured from left to right are: Roy Reding, Diane and Kevin Duggan and their children, Daniel, Melanie, and Brittany; Mark and Darcy Varland with their daughters, Adrianna and Alyssa; Clarence and Mary Grant; Otto and Lillian Seidelman; Pastor Gary Jorgenson; Dennis Norby; and Julie Buehler. The congregation was formed in 1988 with a charter membership of 100 souls. Membership now stands at 131. Construction of a new building to house the congregation is underway at present. The congregation plans to occupy its new building in the early spring of 1992.

The new address for **Rev. Paul Abel** is: Caixa Postal 12125, 82401 Santa Felicidade, Parana, Brazil, South America; phone 011-55-41-392-1708.

Pastor Ken Thoreson has a new address (in spite of the fact that he hasn't moved) 6630 Plymouth Church Road, Beloit, WI 53511.

Roslyn, South Dakota — The Lake Region Parish sponsors a half-hour radio broadcast every Sunday on a local station. The 7 a.m. program includes a message by Pastor Lynn Wilson and a musical number. Most broadcasts are sponsored by individuals in honor of anniversaries or in memory of loved ones.

doctrines as well. Of course, we believe that the Bible is the Word of God, many will confidently confess, but it is surely not necessary for us to spend so much time talking about it. Let's get busy and proclaim it! To stick with the same analogy, let's get out of the basement and start building the house!

The other side of the coin, however, is the fact that our foundation has endured enormous pressures during the past few decades and continues to face powerful challenges. Lutheran pietism has been accused of creating a spiritual climate that is susceptible to liberal influences, by an emphasis on subjective experience at the expense of objective truth, and we do well to carefully consider the accuracy of this accusation. A foundation can be undermined and damaged by the indirect attacks of neglect and carelessness as well as by the direct assaults of unbelief and confusion. It is necessary, therefore, to preach and teach what the Bible is and what the Bible says. The possibility is always present that we can assume too much.

Our evangelical heritage proclaims as central the fact that a heart knowledge of Jesus Christ is more important than a head knowledge of Bible doctrine. But the alternative to dead orthodoxy cannot be allowed to become no orthodoxy. Heart knowledge will collapse completely or evolve into emotionalism without the firm foundation of solid Scriptural head knowledge.

Celebrate with certainty the truth of the old hymn:

*How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus hath fled?*

THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME

My congregation is observing Lent this year by participating in the 50-Day Spiritual Adventure program produced by The Chapel of the Air ministries. Prepared to complement the themes of a traditional Lenten perspective, the adventure centers around a ten-minute-per-day commitment to Bible study and prayer. Journals are available for adults, teens, and children to guide them as they read and consider the selected portions of Scripture. The theme for the series, which expects to involve a half-million people this year, is "The Family God Wants Us To Be."

I must confess that I proceed on this new Lenten journey with a certain degree of disappointment. The reason for this feeling is that a simple commitment to spend a few minutes each day in Bible study and prayer should really not be an "adventure" at all for God's people. But the reality is that most Christians are living on a restricted diet of spiritual food, often limited to the partially digested fare that their pastor serves them on Sunday mornings or during mid-week studies ... or even at Lenten services. We may stay alive, but will probably never thrive on such second hand nourishment. An often neglected facet of our Reformation heritage

was the concern of our forefathers to put the Scriptures in the hands of the people rather than confined to the pulpits.

So our adventure begins by recognizing the reality of a widespread failure to walk with the Lord daily in His Word. Our purpose is to see this tragic situation transformed, and our prayer is that the adventure might not end on Easter Sunday when the 50 days are finished.

What is the state of your spiritual walk? Do you consistently and persistently seek the Lord in Word and prayer? A regular program isn't necessary ... though it may be helpful ... but a commitment is required. You don't have to start during the Lenten season, either, but it could be the best time to begin. The main issue is not when or how or where, but why and who. The "why" ought to be obvious, but the "who" remains to be answered by each of our readers.

God invites you to commit yourself to the adventure of a lifetime! R.S.V.P.

AGAIN AND AGAIN

It happened a couple of weeks ago at a ladies meeting in a local church. It happened again today just as I was about to complete the preparations for this issue. Someone presented an alarming report of the efforts of Madelyn Murray O'Hair, the notorious atheistic activist, to remove the Gospel from our nation's airwaves. Write to the Federal Communications Commission, we are admonished, and protest Petition No. 2493. Again and again.

The truth is that Petition No. 2493, which was not presented by Mrs. O'Hair and had nothing to do with the issue of religious broadcasting in the first place, was rejected by the FCC on August 5, 1975. Yet gullible Christians continue to flood this government agency with millions of letters based on a lie. Again and again.

The Lutheran Ambassador warned about this deception in the October 4, 1988, issue. Our influence as informed citizens is seriously undermined, the article suggested (p. 14), by our participation in the signing of such petitions. Consider yourself warned again. And again.

*God's Word is our great heritage,
And shall be ours forever;
To spread its light from age to age
Shall be our chief endeavor;
Through life it guides our way,
In death it is our stay;
Lord grant, while worlds endure,
We keep its teachings pure,
Throughout all generations.*

— Nicolai F.S. Grundtvig

What a Way to Live

For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain (Philippians 1:21).

Christianity's greatest moments, beginning with Jesus Christ and the early church, have always been while going upstream against the currents of culture. So writes Charles Dunn in his excellent little book "Upstream Christian in a Downstream World." The apostle Paul is a prime example of an "Upstream Christian" in biblical times. He testifies convincingly of this in his letter to the Philippians (3:7-8) where he says, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but rubbish, that I may win Christ."

Today's Christian has become too comfortable in this world. It is as though this world's pleasures and benefits were our ultimate goal. There is an alarming gap between biblical faith and lifestyle, and contemporary Christianity. Somehow we manage to say the right things, use the right terms, sing the right songs, yet it fails to translate into a right way of life. Few seem willing to truly be an "Upstream Christian in a Downstream World." Paul, in his testimony above, is not lecturing on his political or religious philosophy. He is simply sharing the inner conviction of this heart. This is what Jesus Christ meant to him. There were no alternatives. "For me to live is **Christ!**" "Any old piece of deadwood can float downstream," says Charles Dunn. God has called us to be different. Certainly is this challenge very real in our day when the "downstream current" is moving ever faster, it behooves us to re-examine our convictions and our values. Can I truly say, "For me to live is **Christ** and to die is gain?"

There are many within the Christian ranks who desire one foot in the Kingdom, while keeping the other in the world. They have never burned their bridges. The apostle Paul speaks with



grief concerning such a one ... "For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world" (I Timothy 4:10). The world has numerous cunning devices to entice a believer and to destroy his commitment to Christ. Paul, however, marched to the beat of a different drummer. "**For me to live is Christ!**"

My friend, have you heard and responded to the "drum-beat" of Jesus Christ? Have you met Him at the Cross? Here is where true life begins. Here, and no where else can you receive inner power to begin the "Upstream journey." It is utter futility to attempt battling the stream without that inner power. But again, Paul assures us ... "I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). Even in our present society with its persistent trend away from God and from Christian values, it is possible to be an "Upstream Chris-

*We could be
just the place
for you.*

Check us out.

AFLBS Campus Days

March 27-29, 1992

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minn. 55441
(612) 544-9501

tian." Our world is waiting to see once again an up-to-the-minute example of New Testament Christianity. Will you be one?

*"Jesus, I my cross have taken, all
to leave and follow Thee;*

*Destitute, despised, forsaken, Thou
from hence my all shall be.*

*Perish every fond ambition. All
I've sought and hoped and known;*

*Yet how rich is my condition. God
and heav'n are still my own."*



—by Rev. Jay G.
Erickson