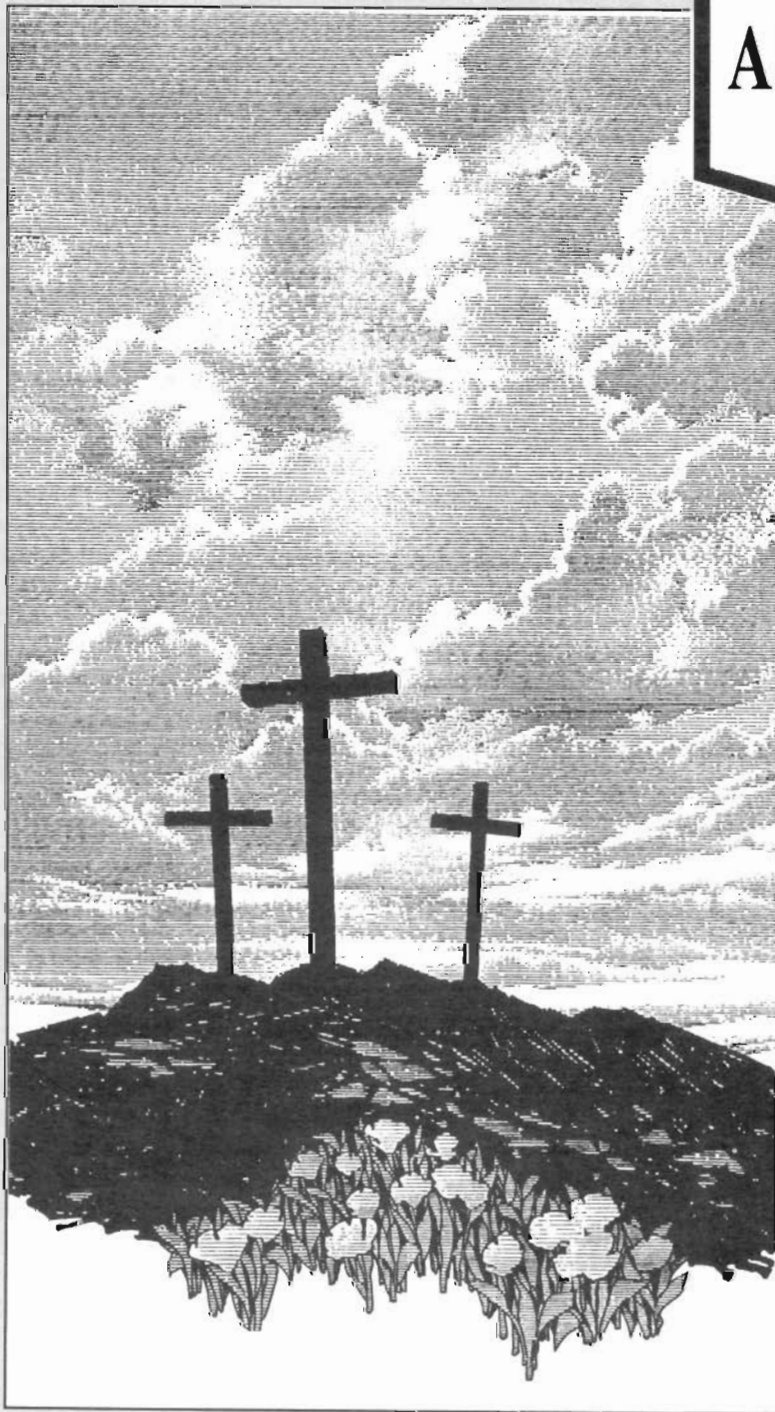




THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

March 2, 1993



*Jesus
Keep Me
Near the
Cross*

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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On Credit

Romans 4

Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness (Romans 4:3).

Over 20 years ago, Pastor Lars Stalsbroten and I were both pastoring in Eugene, Oregon. For a time we attended an all-Lutheran pastors' Bible study. We were startled one day to hear another pastor say: "You don't have to believe in Jesus to be saved!" When I protested, he replied: "Do you mean to tell me all the saints in the Old Testament went to hell?"

"No," I answered: "Didn't they teach you in seminary that the people of the Old Testament were saved by faith in the Messiah to come, even as we are saved by Him who came?"

"No," he replied: "I never heard that." Then Lars interjected: "I'll tell you brother; they were saved on credit." They were saved on credit, indeed!

Yes, you and I are saved by the timeless righteousness of Christ. God's solution to the impossible impasse we are in is by providing the perfect righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. Only perfect, sinless people are accepted into heaven.

Even the faith that secures this salvation is not something we create. Faith is not a "condition" that convinces God that we are worthy of His gift of righteousness. No, even faith is a gift of God enabling us to believe. Our yearning soul is through His prevenient grace that believes that He has done this for us!

Our Catechism says: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him, but the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel ..." Yet from our limited point of view, we either receive Him or reject Him. If we are saved, it is all of Christ. If we go lost, it is because of ourselves.

In Romans 4, Paul illustrates salvation (justification) by the example of Abraham. How was Abraham saved (justified)? By works? No, Paul says and adds that if anyone should have a right to boast, it would be

Light on the Way

Abraham. But Abraham believed God and that faith was credited to him for righteousness.

The problem we have is that we often confuse evidence of faith with the cause of faith. Works are not the cause of faith but rather the effect of faith in our lives. In Galatians Paul reminds us: "Don't get caught in this pious attempt to add to what Christ has done." We need to humbly acknowledge that our best efforts to earn salvation is an affront to God's gift. It's like receiving a sterling silver dish and wanting to improve it by soldering a piece of plastic along its edge!

Ott Funks, a 17th century preacher tells a story about two young boys who were playing in their neighbor's yard and accidentally broke their neighbor's window. Foolishly, in their fear, they ran away into the deep woods behind the house. The father, when he returned that night, realized what had happened, sent for the glaziers to replace the window and sent a servant out into the woods to find the boys before dark.

The servant called as loudly as he could: "Boys, come home! The window has been replaced, peace has been made with the neighbor — all is forgiven. Only come home!" No one came.

Finally, as the last glimmer of daylight was fading, one boy returned — trembling. He was loved, hugged and assured that all was well. The second boy, fearing the worst, stayed out in the woods. His frozen body was found the next morning.

Dear friends, this is what God is offering you. God, our father, has replaced the window that we have broken. He waits upon you to return in faith to His loving arms.



— by Rev.
C. Lloyd Bjornlie

WAITING

*Waiting! Yes, patiently waiting!
Till next steps made plain shall be;
To hear, with the inner hearing,
The voice that will call for me.*

We drew ourselves up to the head of the hospital bed, the old man and I, and stood across from one another. There, between us, lay his wife of many decades. He'd been waiting for quite a while ... waiting for death to come and claim his life partner. Her mind had been far away for some time and now her breathing was becoming more shallow. As the minutes ticked by it became obvious that she'd soon awaken in another, better place.

Waiting can be so difficult to do. Many of us have stood by the bed of a family member or friend who was in the process of leaving this world for the next. But waiting isn't only difficult for those who wait for death. Waiting can be hard to do in almost any circumstance.

For those planning their marriage it seems as if the wedding day is an eternity away. Remember how hard it was to wait for the afternoon school bell to ring? And if you ask any student in early spring, summer break seems as if it will never arrive.

No, waiting isn't an easy thing to do, and it can often be accompanied by a certain degree of unpleasantness.

In Matthew 27:35-36, we read of how the soldiers who had participated in Jesus' crucifixion sat down to wait for His appointment with death. It was their job; something they were required to do. To them Jesus was simply one more zealot who'd crossed the boundary of acceptability and was now paying the penalty, as were two others who hung nearby. The soldiers didn't understand that the One under whose dying form they waited, was the One who would die for their sins. They were unaware that in giving up His earthly life He was doing so for them and for all people. So they waited in ignorance as do so many today.

We pick up a news magazine or daily paper; we turn on the radio or watch the evening news and are immediately bombarded with suffering and the heinous crimes indicative of a people turned away from their Creator. Bosnia, Somalia, Iraq, Northern Ireland and many other places and nations continue to bear witness to the fact that "The god of this age (satan) has blinded the

Beneath The Cross Of Jesus



minds of unbelievers ..." (II Corinthians 1:4a, NIV). We react with horror as we hear of women in Bosnia, numbering into the tens of thousands, who have been brutally raped, tortured and sometimes murdered in an act of racial, religious and purely satanic inspired evil. We are dumbfounded at the massive starvation gripping many parts of Africa and wonder why so many of the world's civilized nations appear to be sitting back and waiting ... for what, many ask?

As believers waiting for the return of Christ, we sometimes do so with the cry, "How long, O Lord, how long?" Yet, it's not a signal of wavering faith but an acknowledgement of our desire for the Lord to return **now**, to put an end to the strife and heartache that encapsulates so many. How tragic that there are myriads who haven't made Christ their Savior; whose minds and hearts and spirits are still conformed to this world.

How precious, then, surrounded by chaos as we are, that waiting also contains an element of blessing. Isaiah 40:31 says, "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint," (KJV). Just as the eagle is able to soar high above the ground, so those who place themselves in the care of the Almighty are able to rise above the circumstances of life that would weigh them down and find a holy peace in the midst of tribulation.

In the season of Lent, we come to understand that waiting is an essential part of God's plan. For though we already know the final outcome, waiting becomes for us a spiritual discipline in which we are privileged to find growth and renewal.

Our congregations will, no doubt, find many ways in which to focus on the cross this Lenten-tide. Nevertheless, all of us will be united in this one endeavor; to gather at the cross and seek His will. For unlike those who once waited for Him to die so that they could go home, we come



— by Rev.
Dennis P. Brostrom
Bruce, South Dakota

MOCKING

Matthew 27:39-44

Christ suffered. He suffered indescribable physical anguish. The lash had been applied repeatedly to His bared back. A crown of thorns had been cruelly crushed down upon His weary brow. The crushing weight of the cross had forced Him to His exhausted knees as He was compelled to carry the instrument of His death to the place of His execution. On Golgotha Hill, spikes were pounded into His hands and feet, as His already bleeding back lay agonizingly against the rough-hewn lumber of the cross. The cross was then raised, only to be dropped brutally into its hole, causing the nails to torturously rip even more into His battered flesh. Indeed, Christ suffered.

Jesus suffered indescribable spiritual anguish. On that lonely hill, Christ knew the anguish of spiritual abandonment. His beloved Father had turned His back on His only begotten Son, while Jesus accepted the sin of the world upon His unsinning shoulders. Indeed, Christ suffered.

Christ suffered while we mocked. We ridiculed Christ, as did those who were passing by that day. Like many in the crowd, perhaps we were carried along in the swell of public opinion. Perhaps we knew some of the things that Jesus had said. Had Jesus not said that He would destroy the Temple only to rebuild it in three days? This Temple

had taken many years to build and this man, Jesus, claimed that He was going to destroy it and then rebuild it in mere days! Yes, it is true that we had not really listened to all that He was trying to tell us; but we thought that we had already heard enough and what we had heard made no human sense at all.

Had not Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, and were not our religious sensibilities offended? We mocked Jesus as did those who were passing by on that day because we rejected both the message of Christ as well as the Christ Himself.

We ridiculed Christ, as did the religious leaders who had conspired to bring Jesus to the Cross. Like some of the scribes and elders, perhaps we did so out of a sense of religious duty. We intended to honor God, but like the passers by we had not truly listened to what Jesus was saying. Because of our religious training we had become insensitive to the voice of God. Much of the world's population remains separated from God today because they

are intent on following what they have determined to be true religion.

We ridiculed Christ, as did the thieves who were hung along side Jesus. Out of our own pain and despair, and in the midst of suffering, we hurled abuse at the only One who could deliver us. Blinded by our own suffering, we took no notice of the supreme agony of Christ who knew all our pain and more.

Yes, we ridiculed and mocked the One who was dying for us. But like many of those who were there that day; common people, religious leaders and even one of the two thieves, we can come to know the overwhelming love of God through the suffering and sacrifice of His Son. Our mocking gives way to submission and praise. Then "from my smitten heart, with tears, Two wonders I confess: The wonder of His glorious love, And my own worthlessness."



— Rev.
Timothy Hurley
Salem, Alabama

"... Our mocking gives way to submission and praise."

WAITING

to the cross in joyful expectation of His glorious return. The cross in Lent is no place of mourning. It is, instead, our commissioning to go throughout the world, bearing witness to the "good news" that Christ has come and will gather to Himself all who believe.

And so we wait, not in silence or inactivity,

but with a clear goal in mind: to know the Savior and to make Him known, until He calls our name and we see Him face to face.

*Waiting! Yes waiting, Still waiting!
The Master will not be late;
He knoweth that I am waiting
For Him to unlatch the gate.*

— J.D. Smith

MOURNING

And many women were there looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, among whom was Mary Magdalene, along with Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee (Matthew 27:55, 56).

Here we have a picture not of mocking soldiers or gawking onlookers, but of women in mourning, openly weeping, though at a distance, the loss of a loved one. These women had followed Jesus from out of Galilee. They had devoted themselves to ministering to the needs of Jesus and His disciples. And now they were totally helpless to do anything for the One who had done so much for them. They stood beneath His cross, beholding His dying form, and their hearts were breaking at the sight of such a tragedy. Along with the loss of the One they loved, they mourned the loss of all the hopes and dreams they had in Him as their Messiah; The One who they believed in as Savior, who would usher in the Kingdom of God.

During the time of mourning our thoughts often go back in time to happier days as we reflect on the good times that were shared. In His ministry, Jesus had taught concerning the coming of the Kingdom of God. He had demonstrated His power over the physical universe with the many healings that He had done. Mary Magdalene, one of the women identified by name in the text, had experienced personally the healing power of Jesus as he had relieved her of demon possession, recorded in Luke 8:2. Now she was losing the very One who had given her a new lease on life.

And Salome, the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, had her own reason to mourn. Matthew 20:21, 22 records that she had requested of Jesus that her sons might sit on His right and left in His Kingdom. How it must have torn at her heart to see those dreams for her sons shattered.

The other Mary, the mother of James the lesser, one of Jesus' disciples and his brother, Joseph, is also identified. Though relatively unknown and seemingly of little significance, she too had been drawn to follow all the way to Calvary, perhaps because of her son's relationship with Jesus. And there were others who remain unnamed. They all had their memories of Jesus that had caused them to follow to Cal-



“It was sin that caused Jesus to suffer and die that horrible death upon the cross.”

vary. Their love and devotion for the Savior had caused them to follow even to the very end, bitter and heart wrenching as it must have been. Their hearts were “smitten with tears” as they viewed the death of Jesus. The death of a loved one does that to us too, as we mourn our loss. Our hearts are “smitten with tears” as we ponder death and sin. After all, sin is the cause of death, as the Apostle Paul reminds us. “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men; because all sinned,” (Romans 5:12).

It was sin that caused Jesus to suffer and die that horrible death upon a cross. Not because of his own sin, but it was our sins He bore in His body. I wonder, does it tear at our hearts to view the dying form of Jesus on the cross of Calvary. Place yourself “Beneath the Cross of Jesus” and view His dying form. Place yourself there along side Mary. Mary and Salome. Try to view the Savior as they did. Feel the love and the pain that they must have felt for their Lord. As you do so, picture the words of that second stanza, “My eyes at times can see the very dying form of One who suffered there for me.” For indeed, it was for each one of us that He suffered and died.

I don't know about you, but when I stop to think that even if I had been the only one who needed to be saved from sin that Jesus would still have gone to the cross, it causes me to tremble and weep at “the wonder of His glorious love, and my own worthlessness.”



—by Rev. Jon Benson Ortley, South Dakota

Beneath the Cross of Jesus

*Beneath the cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand,
The shadow of a mighty Rock Within a weary land;
A home within the wilderness. A rest upon the way.
From the burning of the noontide heat, And the burden of the day.*

*Upon that cross of Jesus Mine eye at times can see
The very dying form of One Who suffered there for me;
And from my smitten heart with tears Two wonders I confess,
The wonders of His glorious love, And my own worthlessness.*

*I take, O cross thy shadow For my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine than The sunshine of His face;
Content to let the world go by. To know no gain nor loss,
My sinful self my only shame, My glory all the cross.*

St. Christopher
Elizabeth Clephane, 1872
Frederick C. Maker, 1881

This hymn is a commentary on Isaiah's prophecy of a "Man" who should be "as the shade of a huge rock in a parched land," (Isaiah 32) coupled with the story of Calvary. It is appropriate for Good Friday or whenever evangelistic meetings are held. (How much better it is than the usual fare of tralalas and twinkles!)

The cross has always been a Christian symbol of the sacrificial life, challenging all mankind to walk in Jesus' footsteps. This hymn has inspired thousands to accept that challenge.

"... And sitting down, they began to keep watch over Him there," (Matthew 27:36).

Stanza 1) In the shadow of the cross we willingly and boldly accept His call, confident that the cross provides all that is necessary. The rich imagery is all Scriptural: "The mighty rock," Isaiah 32, "weary land," Isaiah 32 and Psalm 63:1; "home within the wilderness," (Jeremiah 9:2); "rest upon the way," (Isaiah 28:12); "noontide heat," (Isaiah 4:6); "burden of the day," (Matthew 11:30).

Stanza 2) We witness in our mind's eye the suffering of our Savior nailed to the cross. The realization that it was

for us He died breaks us and makes us see His unspeakable gift.

Stanza 3) The result of our vision is commitment and dedication to live in the light of the cross. His redeeming love, forsaking all that is ignoble and accepting His cause, (1 Peter 2:21-24).

The author, Elizabeth Cecilia Douglas Clephane, was a member of an impoverished Scottish family and always of delicate health. She was gentle and, despite her life long lack of wealth, generous beyond her meager means, donating all but cost-of-living to charity. This hymn was written just one year before her death (age 39), the only one (of eight) published in her lifetime.

The composer of the hymn's tune, Frederick Charles Maker, spent 75 of his 83 years of life as a singer or organist in Methodist and Congregational churches. Regarding this piece, Maker was invited to submit new tunes for a pending co-publication and St. Christopher was one of seven. It was submitted without words. How it was named St. Christopher is a total mystery.

— Donald Rodvold
The Concordia Companion

With anguish in his voice, the father of a young woman who is mentally ill said, "People with mental illness are the lepers of today. People with heart disease still are accepted and much love and compassion go out to them. But it is not so with mental illness."

Sometimes it seems that the general attitude of the public has changed very little since the Dark Ages. However, our attitude as parents certainly changed when our lovely and talented daughter, Cindy, was afflicted with bipolar disorder — manic depressive illness. Our attitude was learned the hard way. I can't begin to tell you the horror of mental illness, but Cindy and I have tried by writing a book, "I Made It Back."

The common beliefs that have been around for centuries (people with mental illness have weak character or are to blame for their illness; it is caused by abusive or over indulgent parents; they are violent and dangerous) are myths and misconceptions, false and ungrounded. Overcoming these myths can only come with understanding. According to the latest statistics, 90% of all that is known about the brain today has been learned in the last 12 years! Through research much is being learned about the brain and new and better medicines are available to help stabilize someone with a mental illness, (Lithium, Tegretol, Wellbutrin, Prozac, Anafranil — a few).

The cause of mental illness is a chemical imbalance in the brain. It is biological, not psychological, in origin. Because the neurotransmitters in the brain have a chemical deficiency, messages are garbled, producing sometimes strange and horrendous symptoms.

Cindy committed her life to the Lord when she was a senior in high school, and her greatest desire was to live a life pleasing to God. She planned to attend a Christian college to become a teacher and serve God in whatever way He led. Her plans came to a halt when she was diagnosed as manic depressive. She became immobilized

TODAY'S LEPERS

and tortured by hostility, anger, irritability and hate (especially for her family), guilt, hopelessness, and fear to the point of believing suicide was the only solution to her miserable life. While in this depressed state, she has none of the fruits of the Spirit that she so dearly valued.

Then, unexpectedly, she would be jerked up into terrifying manic highs that sent her on wild trips to New York, Nashville and Fort Worth. She was on the streets of New York until her brothers found her and brought her home. She hitch hiked to Fort Worth and ended on the streets there until God interceded and she came home against her will.

While manic, she experienced inner restlessness that wouldn't let her sleep, racing thoughts, loud, boisterous speech, irritability, disorganized, unable to focus all the energy, manic spending (the sky was the limit) and phone phobia (Cindy's bill was \$3,000 before she was cut off). What made it even more horrific was that her insight and judgment were gone so that she did not believe she needed medicine. At times she would say, "Mom, I don't know why God is making me suffer like this?" I would respond by saying that if she would take the medicine she would feel much better. She would retort, "There's nothing wrong with me, you're the one who is sick!" She was no longer our Cindy. She was someone else. She would lament, "My whole moral fiber is being ripped apart, and I'm afraid it can't be mended again!"

God heard our prayers for help. He did not miraculously heal Cindy, but He supplied the thread needed for mending — **medicine**. How thankful we are to God!



She is now stabilized. Because of these symptomatic behaviors, it can appear to be demon possession to some who don't understand the illness.

Bruce Winstock, the director of the State Advisory Council on Mental Health, is manic depressive. He is also a Jew and a true believer. This is what he had to say in one of his writings, "Charismatics told me I needed 'deliverance' and evangelicals told me I needed to be in the 'Word' more. I don't mean to be critical of these groups, but the church needs to be educated about mental illness. Unfortunately, sometimes the church has been the last place where I have received understanding of this condition. It's not a 'deliverance' or 'healing' which would be the proper word as manic depression is a disease ... I've been learning to accept myself as I am. (II Corinthians 12:7-10) I found that God didn't want me to live without the disease because He wanted me to live with it ... God has led me to many people whom I have helped from the benefit of my experiences, some of whom are comforted to know that their symptoms are not unique, and that it is possible to successfully live with the illness. This is in fulfillment of II Corinthians 1:3-5."

Mental illness in itself is extremely painful without all the stigma that goes along with it. Studies have shown that among people who have experienced both mental illness and cancer; most said that it was mental illness that caused them the greater pain.

The mentally ill need to be included in the petitions to God on behalf of the sick in church as well as at home. The families are suffering also, often walking alone faced with a stigma and isolation of sometimes overwhelming dimensions. Their numbers are great. Approximately 35 million Americans are suffering from some form of mental illness affecting one in every four families. I believe this is a conservative figure because so many do not go to psychiatrists for help. The mentally ill often end up on the streets, like Cindy, until someone who cares rescues them. Too often there is no one to care.

Cindy and I have been accepting opportunities in churches and clubs to help people better understand the illness and to give glory to God. If someone wishes to order our book, "I Made It Back," I would be happy to send it to you. The address is 1912 East Greenwood Street, #201, Thief River Falls, MN 56701; home phone 218-681-4924.

— LaVerne Nyflog

YOUTH

1993 National Luther League Convention

Estes Park, Colorado — June 28-July 3

The March 1, 1993 registration deadline is past. The cost is now \$250. Registration closes June 1, 1993. Send \$25 pre-registration fee to Earl Korhonen, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441. Make checks payable to National Luther League Federation.

There will be room for visitors at the convention site. Pastors are encouraged to be counselors. If you wish to be a counselor, please write to the Youth Office at the AFLC Headquarters. Male and female counselors are needed.

Note: visitors must pre-register according to the deadlines for all convention registrants.

Costs are higher because of an additional night at Estes Park. If you need more registration blanks, write to the Youth Office at 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441.

If you have questions, call Rev. Terry Wold, 909-696-9526; Rev. Dennis Gray, 218-782-2249; or Mr. Bob Halvorsen, 612-884-4751.



Salem, Alabama — Jennifer Detwiler (center) is pictured with her mother and sister along with Pastor Timothy Hurley. Two weeks earlier, Jennifer received Christ as her Savior in confirmation class at Salem Lutheran Church.

Fertile, Minnesota — Twenty-one leaguers from Maple Bay Free Lutheran Church conducted its annual worship service last fall. They led the congregation on a journey through the regular order of worship. Each member of the group took one aspect of the service, explained the history behind that part of the service, shared related Scripture verses and led the congregation in the confession, reading or music.



Maple Bay Leaguers



Cloquet, Minnesota — St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church has added Marshall Nessa, Radcliffe, Iowa, to its staff. The recent AFLBS graduate helps with visitation, the St. Paul's Academy and assists the junior and senior leaguers. "Working with Marshall has been a pleasure," stat-



ed Phil Johnson, one of the league advisors. "Marshall is not afraid of hard work and has fit right into our church family. He is a committed Christian and we're praising God that Marshall is here!" Pictured above are the two leaguers during a program they recently put on for the congregation.

An Open Letter to Members and Friends of the AFLC

OWNED AND OPERATED BY ASSOCIATION OF FREE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS



AFLC RETREAT CENTER - Rt. 1, Box 92, Osceola, WI 54020

Phone 294-2877

ARC PURCHASES 15 HOMES

During the past year the ARC has been negotiating for the 15 houses that originally were part of the U. S. Air Force Radar base, that we now know as the ARC. We have always thought they would make an ideal retirement place for our pastors and laymen. That's one of the reasons we have managed them as rental units for the past eight years.

On October 30, 1992, the sale was finalized and the ARC Board is making the houses available at reasonable rates.

Some of the houses are three bedroom bungalows with attached garages and all are at ground level and on one floor. They are nestled in a horseshoe drive (cul-de-sac) with individual fenced in back yards, carved out of a wooded area with large hardwood trees. Other houses are two and three bedroom ranch style with separate garages, adjacent to the ARC fence. They are all in good condition, all occupied and make up a community known as Country Village.

We have figures on current taxes, copies of certified appraisals, insurance rates, rental income, bank interest rates, amount of down payments, management fees, etc. We have pictures of the houses, room layouts, blueprints of lot sizes, plus a VHS video of houses - inside and out, street scenes of Country Village and the business section of Osceola.

If you are interested we'd be glad to discuss prices and arrangements.

We are continually amazed at the grace of God in supplying our ongoing needs at the ARC, providing the ARC in the first place and now the houses, partially through gift and the balance through purchase.

We invite you to join us in this endeavor through prayer, becoming an ARC supporter or purchasing a home in the ARC-Country Village. Would you indicate your response by returning one or more of the forms on the last page of our information. Thank you.

Yours in His Service,

R. L. "Bob" Dietsche, Director of the ARC

Mark 6:31 "Come away . . . and rest a while."

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~~15~~ ~~14~~ 13 AVAILABLE NOW

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y Village Homes

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- Use the proceeds to make payments or supplement your income.
- ARC will manage and maintain for you (eight years experience).

OR

Buy a House Now

FOR FUTURE

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Two miles from Quickstop
— gas and groceries.

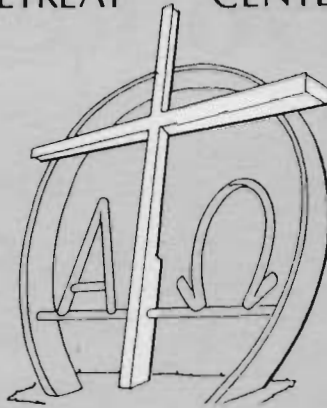
Seven miles from the city of Osceola

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- Laundromat and dry cleaners
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**All this, PLUS the very good possibility
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ASSOCIATION
RETREAT CENTER



ARC SUPPORTERS

MISSION

To reach people with the Gospel through:

- Retreats
- Seminars
- Music
- Personal Testimony

MINISTRY

To provide preparatory funds for:

- Bible Conferences
- Family Camps
- Youth Camps
- Retreats

MAINTENANCE

To provide funds for:

- Maintenance of grounds and facilities
- Replacement of the above when needed

My Faith Commitment

In response to the Word, I joyfully make a FAITH COMMITMENT for one of the following to the "ARC SUPPORTERS."

___ \$100.00 or MORE for the next calendar year

___ \$15.00 per month for five (5) years — the "900 Club"

Date _____ Signature _____

Address _____ ZIP _____

Please return to: The ARC, 30th Avenue and Kings Way, Osceola, WI 54020

My Prayer Commitment

I will pray for the ongoing ministry of the ARC — for the Staff, Guests, Speakers, Bookings and Reservations and the sale of homes. Our hearts desire is that lives will be touched and souls saved for Jesus through the ministry of the ARC.

Date _____ Signature _____

House Information

Please send me more information regarding:

___ ARC Country Village Homes ___ Apartment Rental ___ Lifetime Apartment Leases

Name _____

Address _____ ZIP _____

Please return to: The ARC, 30th Avenue and Kings Way, Osceola, WI 54020

Baby Busters Stressed

If you were born between 1965 and 1983, you are a "Baby Buster," a group that accounts for 27 percent of the population. According to the Barna Research Group, 38 percent of all Busters admit to being "stressed out."

The Busters are the first generation raided from birth in the new society of nontraditional values, working mothers, single parent homes and liberalized cultural standards and expectations.

AFLC Youth Ministries Introduces Youth INSIGHT Quarterly

The Youth Ministries office sent out their first quarterly bulletin insert in February. The purpose of the publication is to inform and encourage AFLC youth and congregations.

North Central Minnesota District

— The Third Annual Mid-Winter Youth Outing for the district was held on February 13-15 at the Sand Hill Lake Bible Camp, Fosston, Minnesota. The weekend featured studies on "Having a Faith that Works," with Rev. Mark Molstre, Larrimore, North Dakota as the guest speaker. Pastors Tom Tuura, Jim Johnson and Lynn Kinneberg were the local district leaders. Mr. Darrell Haugen led the singspiration times.

Pipestone, Minnesota

— On February 12, Christ the King youth enjoyed a daylong ski trip to Mt. Kato in Mankato, Minnesota. Mr. Brian Remme is the youth director at Christ the King Lutheran Church.

Northwestern Minnesota District

— The C'Mon Inn in Thief River Falls was the site for the district Luther League Mid-Winter Retreat on Feb. 14-15. The theme was "Filling for Serving," with Intern Dan Klug and Rev. Dennis Gray as the speakers.

Knowing God And Worshipping Go Together

Man was created with the capacity of enjoying the very presence of God.

What man lost when he fell into sin was the capacity to enjoy the presence of God. (Genesis 3:8-10)

In the Psalms, David expressed his yearning (16:11; 27:4, 8) to enjoy the presence of God.

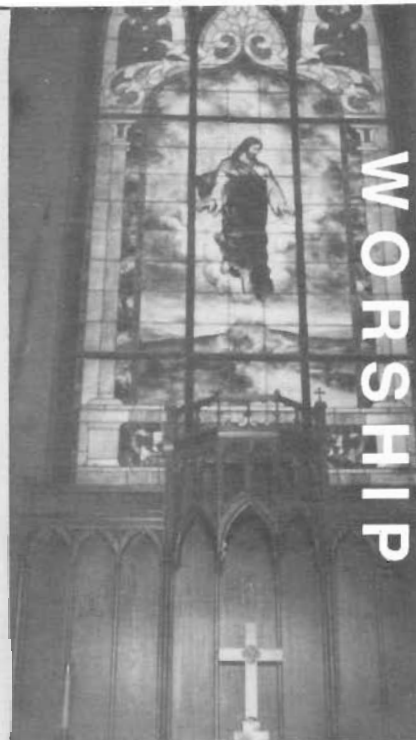
At the cross, the privilege of enjoying the presence of God is restored to us.

The presence of God is that which was lost, has been restored, is overwhelming, is a place of safety for the believer, and a place of terror for the unbeliever. Let us be careful to have our doctrine and theology in place at this point. But let us not use His glory as a rationale for missing the enjoyment of His presence! Let us not "learn to tolerate his presence" by diminishing the greatness of it.

If we are ever to worship as He desires us to, **we must know Him as He is.** Any scaled down version of God in our lives that is reduced for the sake of maintaining our personal comfort is neither productive nor Scriptural.

If we are always comfortable with God, always articulate in His presence, always able to describe Him and His dealings with us, not particularly impacted by contact with Him — it seems obvious we have somehow reduced Him and changed Him.

The Word became flesh, our



Savior, constantly caused discomfort, left people stammering and startled — either sputtering and undone or totally surrendered — quite unable to describe Him and His dealings. People touched by Him were always changed.

That reputation and effect also followed His disciples, as they became known as "the men who turned the world upside down," (Acts 17:6)

We can "expect" Psalm 27:4: I, too, ask one thing of the Lord. This is the thing I seek: I want to dwell in His house all the days of my life. Just gaze on His beauty and keep on seeking His face.

—Sharon Torgerson
Mojave, California
(Last in the series.)

1993 Cornerstone Gospel Team

The 1993 Cornerstone Gospel Team has been selected. Members are Stacy Thorson, Stacy McCarlson, Jeremy Holm and Todd Rice.

This team is sent out each summer to encourage our AFLC youth in their walk with Jesus. They can come to your camp, district or your congregation.

Other youth are available to serve as camp counselors.

Call Rev. Dennis Gray, AFLC Youth Director at 218-782-2246 or 782-2249 for information.

CAMPUS

On January 31 - February 3, the schools campus hosted the annual missions conference. Rev. David Abel, AFLC missionary to Brazil, was the featured speaker. Sessions were held during both the mornings and evenings. AFLBS senior Eddie Britz designed and made the banner on the theme, "Ready, Willing and Able."



Wesley Dahl, Felton, Minnesota, at one of the mission displays.

High School Students, Don't Miss It!

Experience a free weekend at the Bible School in Minneapolis. Call for more information: (612) 544-9501.

CAMPUS DAYS

March 12-14, 1993

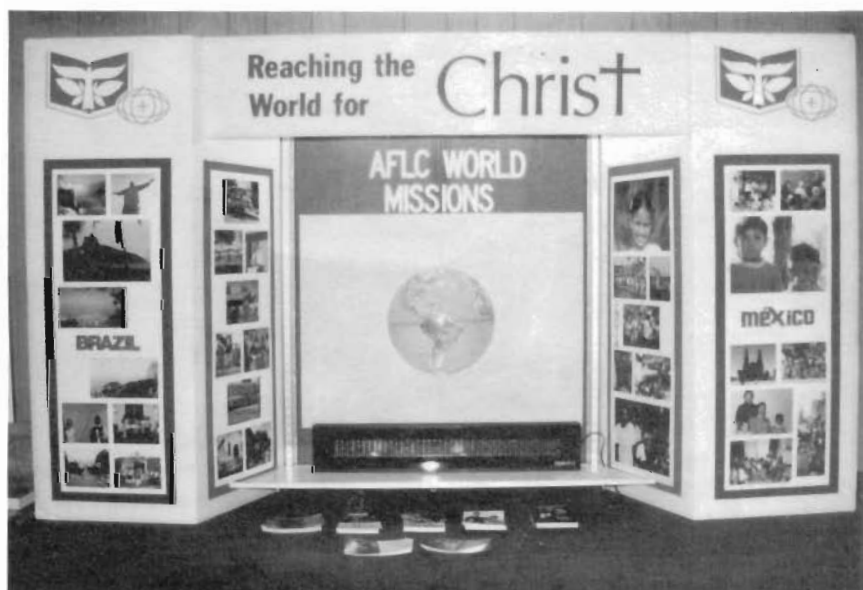
1993 AFLC Mission Conference



Photos by James Molstre



A girl's octet at the conference: (L. to R.) Sarah Modean, Sheena Dahl, Mailee Selen, Holly Vachel, Jennifer Mohagen, Kristin Schierkolk, Beth Jackson and Delise Soderholm.





Lord Teach Us To Pray

Prayer:

A Cry For Help

Key Verses:

"And as Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord," (Exodus 14:10).

"But seeing the wind, he (Peter) became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, 'Lord, save me.'" (Matthew 14:30).

Imagine the fear and terror which filled the individuals in the situations in the key verses above. Looking at the circumstances can certainly cause such feelings of fear in our hearts, too. We have had our times of desperation when all we knew to pray was, "Oh God, help me~" When our own resources fail, when danger comes near, when we are faced with great sorrow, we, too, can turn to the Almighty, because He has proven Himself able for every circumstance. This is the record of Scripture. Thank God, we know whom to call to!

1. What does II Corinthians 4:17, 18 declare our focus should be in times of trouble?

2. Copy Romans 8:31b here:

In times of distress we long for the assurance that God is "for us." People can bear many difficult things when they know they are not alone. The life of the people of Israel and also the ministry of Jesus make a great file of evidence for God's personal love and saving power on behalf of those who seek Him in their trails.

Hallesby has written, "Helplessness united with faith produces prayer." If we feel no need of help we do not pray. Without faith, however small our cry of distress would have no direction. Our sense of helplessness keeps us in a right position to receive God's help.

9. What does John 15:5 say about self-sufficiency?

Sometimes our burdens in prayer come to occupy a greater portion of our time and attention. What does the Bible teach us about prayer and fasting?

10. What is fasting?

11. What are some of the reasons a person might fast? (Consult a concordance if possible.)

12. Copy Psalm 46:1 here:

Write your own prayer for help using thoughts from Scriptures in this lesson.

*"I must tell Jesus all of my trials;
I cannot bear these burdens alone;
In my distress He kindly will help me;
He ever loves and cares for His own.*

*I must tell Jesus, I must tell Jesus!
Jesus can help me, Jesus alone."*

— Elisabeth A. Hoffman

God's people in the Old Testament often cried out for deliverance from their enemies. Varied events forced them into corners where they reached out to receive yet another revelation of God's rescuing grace. "O Lord, they sought Thee in distress; They could only whisper a prayer, Your chastening was upon them," (Isaiah 26:16). See the record in Psalm 107 — The Lord Delivers Men From Manifold Troubles.

3. What words of testimony did the writer of the following psalms rejoice with for God's answer to prayers for help?

a. Psalm 34:4-7

b. Psalm 86:7, 8

c. Psalm 68:19, 20

4. Read Isaiah 45:22. Whom has God invited to turn to Him for Help?

5. Look up Psalm 91:14, 15.

a. Why will God respond to our prayer for help?

b. What are His promises?

"I will

"I will

"I will

"I will

"I will

6. Let's look at two prayers for help in the Bible. In II Chronicles 20, we have the record of Jehoshaphat's (King of Judah) prayer as he is faced with a large invading army.

a. Verse 12, What does he recognize about Judah themselves.

b. Verses 14, 15, 17, What reasons are given not to fear?

c. Verse 18, 19, What is all the people's response to these words even before God's deliverance has come to pass?

(Read through verse 30 for the rest of the story.)

7. Also in II Chronicles 32, we see the account of King Hezekiah's struggle with Sennacherib, king of Assyria.

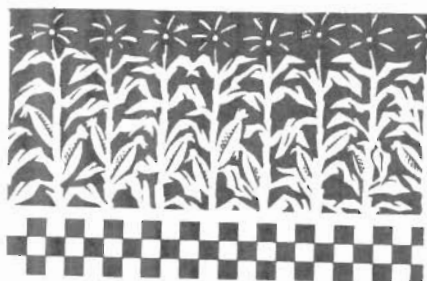
a. What is Hezekiah's encouragement to the people in verses 7 and 8?

b. What was the leaders' response to the enemies taunts and threats? Verse 20.

c. How did God answer this prayer? Verse 21.

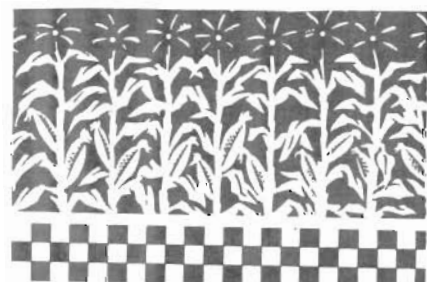
In the New Testament we turn to Peter's experience in Matthew 14. One minute he was confident to walk on the water and the next minute feared for his life; the disciple's short prayer is, "Lord, save me."

8. What was Jesus' response to Peter in Matthew 14:31?



PARTNERS IN PLANTING

A New Home Missions Program



The 1992 Annual Conference of the AFLC resolved to encourage the **Partners in Planting** program as proposed by the Home Missions Committee.

The purpose of this new program is to raise funding for calling pastors to new Home Mission projects. The question may be asked, "Isn't such funding provided for in our regular budgeting?" The answer is "no." This year's budget is \$141,000 less than last year's budget, and doesn't include anything for new work. **Partners in Planting** provides the opportunity for individuals and congregations to contribute above and beyond their regular giving so that new starts can become a reality even though funds have not been budgeted.

The Home Missions Committee, at their last meeting, approved two new congregations for **Partners in Planting**. They are Redeemer Lutheran Church at Cambridge, Minnesota and Lamb of God Lutheran Church at Topeka, Kansas. Both congregations began this past fall with weekend pulpit supply from our Bible School and Seminary. Pastor Don Greven has served the Topeka group and Pastor Phil Haugen has been serving at Cambridge. These congregations have not yet received any financial help from the Home Missions Department. Both congregations feel it is now time to call a full-time pastor and, in order to do that, the money needed for the first year of a call must be raised in gifts and pledges before the calling process can begin. Thus, the members at Redeemer and Lamb of God, together with the Home Missions Committee, invite individuals and congregations to become **Partners in Planting** by either giving a one-time gift or making a monthly pledge for the first year of a call. Each congregation will need commitments totalling \$1,700 per month. Gifts and pledges of any size will be gladly received.

In addition to sharing in this work with monetary gifts and pledges, you are invited and encouraged to make a commitment to pray for these congregations as they prepare to call their first full-time pastor. Please clip and use the attached form when making your commitment.

The Home Missions Department will keep participants in the program informed as to the progress of calling and other developments within those two congregations.

Partners in Planting

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

___ My one-time gift. \$ _____

___ My monthly pledge for a
12-month period beginning
when a pastor arrives. \$ _____

___ My prayer support.

For:

___ Lamb of God Lutheran Church, Topeka, Kansas

and/or

___ Redeemer Lutheran Church, Cambridge, Minnesota

Return to: AFLC Home Missions

3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd.

Minneapolis, MN 55541.

PEOPLE and PLACES

Bloomington, Minnesota — Emmaus Lutheran Church held a Valentine Banquet on Feb. 12 with Rev. Curt and Jane Emerson, St. Cloud, Minnesota, singing and speaking. The Emmaus youth served the dinner as part of their fundraising for the Luther League Convention in June.

Rev. Harold Reitz, Norcross, Georgia, is serving as the interim pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Boscobel, Wisconsin.

Pastor Paul Pillman, Zumbrota, Minnesota, has submitted his resignation to Our Saviour's Church, where he has served since 1991, effective April 19. Future plans are not finalized at this time.

Pastor David Hesje, Porcupine Plains, Saskatchewan, accepted a call from Bethel Lutheran Church, Frontier, Saskatchewan, where he will begin to serve in July.

Cambridge, Minnesota and Topeka, Kansas — Redeemer Lutheran Church, Cambridge, and Lamb of God Lutheran Church, Topeka, were accepted on the congregational roster of the AFLC by the Co-ordinating Committee at their January meeting. The two Home Mission churches were organized last fall, and have been served on weekends by AFLC Schools faculty and students.

Rev. John Rieth, Amery, Wisconsin, has been appointed by the Co-ordinating Committee to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Rev. David Barnhart, until the annual conference.

Pleasanton, Texas — Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, an independent congregation, unanimously adopted a resolution at its January annual meeting for affiliation with the AFLC, subject to a second and final vote in June. Served by Rev. Don Voorhees, Good Shepherd Church is the fifth Texas church to take this action.

Wallace, South Dakota — At its 79th Annual Meeting on January 17, Calvary Church voted to remodel the chancel part of the sanctuary. The congregation will host special meetings during March 7-10, with Rev. John Mundfrom, Bismarck, North Dakota, as the guest speaker.

Everett, Washington — Calvary Lutheran Church and Monroe Free Lutheran Church hosted an Evangelism Conference during Feb. 14-18, with Evangelist John Abel. Their six Lenten services will be included in a pulpit exchange with Pastors Dick Gunderson and Intern Doug Wagley, Lake Stevens; Richard Long, Arlington; Kenneth Moland, Kirkland; and Joel Lohafer, Ferndale, along with Dave Hinrichs, Everett.

Topeka, Kansas — Lamb of God Lutheran Church is discovering the benefits from their monthly Family

Fellowship events. The young congregation has families coming from a variety of backgrounds, many meeting for the first time at the church service. The congregation is already getting a reputation as the church where the family is very important. Most events include the entire family, from babies to retired persons. Rev. Don Greven, AFLBS Dean, is the interim pastor.

Eastern South Dakota — AFLC congregations and their pastors are participating in a Lenten exchange program. Pastors include Brian Pearson, Arlington; Dennis Brostrom, Bruce; Jon Benson, Ortleigh; Lynn Wilson, Roslyn; Alvin Magnuson, Aberdeen; and Ted Berkas, Wallace.

Beltrami, Minnesota — Resurrection Free Lutheran Church has moved into their new building. It is hoped that the interior will be completed later this summer. The construction has been primarily done with volunteers under the supervision of Dennis Briesse, Warroad, Minnesota. The congregation is served by Rev. Rolf Heng.

Newark, Illinois — Helmar Lutheran Church midweek Bible studies have focused on the attributes of God and how they affect the Christian's relationship with God. Study sheets were included in each Sunday's bulletin. Rev. Jeff Swanson is the pastor.

Corrections from the February 2, 1993, issue: Chaplain Tim Skramstad has been assigned to **Fort Sam Houston**, not Fort Hood, Texas (p. 14). **Spruce Lutheran Church** should be included with Rose Lutheran Church, Roseau, Minnesota (p. 7), as served by Pastor Larry Severson. **Pleasanton, Good Shepherd Church**, served by Pastor Don Voorhees, should be included in the list of Texas congregations (p. 8). **Stanley, Scandia Valley** (p. 8), is served by Lay Pastor Arley Hartsoch, and is not presently a part of the Stanley, North Dakota, parish. The name of the pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Fall River, Massachusetts, should be **Gerard Blais**. Our apologies for these errors and omissions.

BOOK FUND

Ambassador Sunday School Series

Now being developed:

36 Kindergarten New Testament lessons
"Tell Me The Story Of Jesus"

36 First Grade Old Testament lessons
"Teach Me God's Word"

Estimated total needed: \$60,000

JACOB'S LADDER AND LENTEN JOY

We are climbing Jacob's ladder, soldiers of the cross.

The words of the old spiritual are not usually sung during the Lenten season, yet a search of the Scriptures makes it obvious that this application is the appropriate one.

And he came to a certain place and spent the night there because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head, and lay down in that place. And he had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

The dramatic account of Jacob's dream in Genesis 28:10ff centers on God's declaration to the frightened fugitive that he was the heir of His promise to Abraham and Isaac. *How awesome is this place!* announced the fearful young man. *This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.*

There are many interpretations of this text, with some suggesting that the ladder is one the Christian climbs on his way home to heaven. But the human effort implied by such a challenge can only result in a hopeless and joyless endeavor. Besides, the Word reads that it is the angels not the saints of God who are ascending and descending.

Jesus said to him, *Truly, truly, I say to you, you shall see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.*

The New Testament light that shines from this passage of Scripture (John 1:51) points us to the true interpretation of Jacob's ladder. Jesus Christ Himself is the fulfillment of the Old Testament type. He is the way home to heaven. The ladder also is a symbol of the cross, on which the Lamb of God was lifted up to suffer and die for the sins of the world.

May true Lenten joy be yours this season as you look from the self-centered struggles of spiritual ladder climbing to our all sufficient Saviour!

WEEPING WITH THOSE WHO WEEP

An ocean of hurts and heartaches can often be found beneath the deceptively calm surface of faces within an average congregation. Disease and depression, sadness and suffering, anger and anxiety, poverty and persecution, loneliness and lovelessness, fear and frustration ... these and many more are the burdens that people in the

pews must bear from week to week.

God has called His children to weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15) and to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). Connected inseparably to this command is the need to share our burdens with one another so that the Body can function as God intended.

There are mourners in our midst. Sometimes their tears fall for all to see, providing us with an opportunity to walk with them in their sorrow. The widows, widowers, and children of the departed bear a burden of grief which we have learned by personal experience to expect and respect.

Others mourn due to the death of a marriage. No funerals will be scheduled to give divorced men and women ... and the children ... a channel for their sorrow in the comforting fellowship of friends and family, and so their tears are often shed in private pain. Some believe that death would have been a less difficult burden to bear. God's children are also called to weep with those who carry the guilt and grief of broken hearts and homes.

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, the psalmist writes (34:18). Let us be ready to respond as He leads us along this same path of service in His strength and love.

THE OMISSION OF ONE WORD

The editorial entitled "The Right Form of the Kingdom," in the February 2, 1993, issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* (p. 15) accidentally omitted one important little word. The first sentence of the fourth paragraph should read: *The negative side of this principle is the fact that synods or associations are not divinely instituted in the same sense as the congregation is ...*

I trust that this correction will take the wind out of the sails of those who were planning to charge me with heresy. What a difference a "not" can make!

Orlando, Florida — Rev. Robert Lee and Rev. Elden Nelson attended the Church Membership Initiative Conference on February 4-7, as guests of Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL), sponsors of the inter-Lutheran gathering. Representatives of approximately 60 growing congregations attempted to analyze their outreach and ministry, with denominational officials and other observers as resource personnel.

Bismarck, North Dakota — Calvary Free Lutheran Church sponsored their first annual Winter Banquet on Feb. 21 at a local restaurant. Rev. Terry Olson, Valley City, North Dakota, was the guest speaker.

Salem, Alabama — The correct address for Salem Lutheran Church is 2130 Lee Road 250, Salem, AL 36874. The address is incomplete in the 30th Anniversary Book.

Minneapolis, Minnesota — The telephone number for both the AFLC Bible School and Seminary offices is 612-544-9501.

Notice: A limited number of the new pastors' income tax preparation guides by B.J. Worth are available from the AFLC Headquarters for \$8.20 plus postage.

Portland, Oregon (EP) — An Oregon jury ruled January 13 that Oregon State Prison officials wrongfully fired a corrections officer for asserting her right to engage in religious activities.

"This case demonstrates that some religiously motivated activity by public employees in the work place is protected, even in the highly structured environment of a maximum security prison," said Mark Lawrence, the Rutherford Institute attorney, who along with Kelly Ford, handled the case.

According to Ford, Patricia Whitman-McCoy had been working as a corrections officer for four months when a terminally ill inmate asked her for the name of an outside pastor who could visit him in prison. Whitman-McCoy had been involved in the prison's ministry program, and referred the inmate's request to a pastor at her church who she knew was also a volunteer in the program.

She was fired within a few days after her supervisor learned of the referral and her prior association with the prison's ministry.

In finding that the prison retaliated against her because of her religious activities, the jury rejected the testimony of ten witnesses employed by the prison, who all testified that Whitman-McCoy was fired because she repeatedly left cell doors unlocked and was overly friendly with inmates, said Ford.

"The case is especially significant because it demonstrates that one Christian who is willing to stand up for the truth can be believed by a jury in the face of overwhelming odds and a massive effort to discredit her," said Ford.

Grand Rapids, Michigan (EP) — A judge took under advisement January 11 whether to grant a preliminary injunction requiring school officials to remove a portrait of Jesus Christ hanging in a Michigan school's hallway.

The plaintiff in the case wanted the picture to be removed immediately, but the judge decided that he would need additional briefing and time to deliberate before making such a decision.

Bloomington, Michigan, high

school senior Eric Pensinger and the ACLU asked U.S. District Judge Gibson to grant the injunction and have the picture removed while the lawsuit against the school is in litigation.

"The old standby for religion in school, 'When in doubt, throw it out,' doesn't work anymore. The judge affirmed that these are complex problems which require careful deliberation," said David Melton, The Rutherford Institute attorney representing the school in the case.

The Rutherford Institute is arguing that the removal of one picture out of many in the school sends a government message of hostility rather than neutrality against religion.

Mogadishu, Somalia (EP) — A radical social regeneration is the only hope for Somalia, said David Loudon, Africa director of World Relief, the relief and development agency of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). Loudon was on a fact-finding trip to the famine ravaged country in late December and early January.

At least 24 non-government organizations are present in Somalia, doing everything from running small hospitals to resettling the displaced to helping Somalis plant grain.

While Loudon was impressed with the role of the relief agencies, and was in the country to survey areas of possible involvement, he still says that international organizations are not the best answer to Somalia's problems.

"Their prime objective addressed the symptom, not the cause, and their

focus is media driven and fund limited, and their term is oriented to the 'quick fix,'" he said.

A radical social transformation of society is needed to reverse factionalism and fragmentation, and to bring about forgiveness and reconciliation. But such concepts are alien in this country where Islam is virtually the only religion.

There is no organized Christian church group in Somalia, which is a heavily Moslem nation. Christian relief workers estimate that there could be about 100 Christian believers, but such believers are afraid to make a public confession of their faith.

Jerusalem, Israel (EP) — Israel's "law of return," Aliyah, which provides the right for any Jew to immigrate to Israel and receive citizenship, was the issue of debate on January 6, as Gary Beresford and Arye Kendall appeared before a Human Rights subcommittee of Knesset in Jerusalem. The two men and their families had been denied Aliyah in a September, 1992, Supreme Court decision because of their belief that Jesus (Yeshua) is the Messiah. Both families assert that they continue to live as Jews.

The Beresfords, who are from Zimbabwe, face possible deportation from Israel on January 19. In an interview appearing in an Israeli Hebrew language paper, Beresford said that he would rather go to prison than be deported, as deportation would separate his family. Beresford's mother-in-law and two sons are Israeli citizens.