



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

March 30, 1993



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Seeing Christ

Romans 6

Wasn't that great news we heard from chapter 5 of Romans? Our sins are forgiven!

Now then, if we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ's life and death, are we free to continue to sin since they all have been forgiven? Paul says in verse 1: "By no means!" Why not?

First of all, sin is not just an enjoyable (though self-centered) behavior. It is sin because it is damaging to the body and soul of one of God's creations. Jesus rescues us from this misbehavior because He loves us. He knows our sin is ruining that wonderful, beautiful potential He created in us.

God's anger against sin is like that of a man who has restored an antique car with 16 glistening coats of enamel, only to see his thoughtless (self-centered) son scrape his car keys across the length of the hood; leaving an ugly, damaging and senseless scar to an otherwise impeccable car. The tragedy is that this son does not know that the car was restored for him as a gift! Had he respected his father, he would have learned, in due time, that the right use of the key in the ignition would give him much more satisfaction behind the wheel of the car rather than scratching its hood. This is the central characteristic of sin: it is the misuse of God's intended gifts.

Second, when the Lord comes into our lives, He changes our way of thinking. Our attitude changes away from indiscriminate sinning, to a seeking to live as God would have us to live. That is to revel in the blessing and joy of obedience.

Now that our eyes are opened to the damage sin does in our lives and in having received Christ, we have His indwelling presence, influence and power. Now our desire is to seek to live subjectively as we have been declared objectively. Isn't it interesting that the more we see our helplessness and the wonder of salvation, the more we want to live a life separated from sin? Luther says: "Be what you are!" You are justified in God's eyes, righteous in God's eyes, holy in God's

Light on the Way

sight; therefore, "be that in your life."

How does this come about? First of all, now that God has revealed the awfulness of sin; so awful that He would send His only Begotten Son to live in human humiliation, to die in sinful degradation in order to spare us from sin's consequences, then for our own sakes, we should flee from sin!

Also, when we receive God's forgiveness, we receive God's Holy Spirit. It is by His power, enlightenment, presence and influence that Philippians 2:12-13 becomes a reality in our lives. "My friends," Paul says in these verses: "Continue to work for your salvation with fear and trembling — for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose." This is an act of sanctification responding to justification. Surely we can only work out that which God has first worked out in us.

It was Hallesby who said: "God must love us out of sinning!" Many a wife and mother has said (or thought): "You could not pay me enough for the hours of work I put in caring for my husband and children. yet, I do it gladly and freely because I love them!" When it comes down to it, that is where we are as God's children. "We love Him because He first loved us ... and gave Himself for us."

The secret of growth in Christ (sanctification) is not to devise a new set of laws; "To be a good Christian, I must do this and/or that." It's not, primarily, to preach guilt over broken behavior. Rather, it is to get a glimpse anew of Jesus and what He has done for you today. It is to see the perfection of Christ who loved us as we were. Then we love Him because ...



—by Rev.
Lloyd Bjornlie

Seeing Is Believing

John 20:24-29

As a young boy, I can recall visiting the Midway of the Minnesota State Fair and hearing that familiar pitch for a carnival sideshow, "Ladies and gentlemen, step right up and see the incredible, two-headed woman. You have to see it to believe it." Naturally as a curious 12-year-old, I wanted to see this unbelievable sight. I couldn't believe it was true without seeing it with my own eyes!

People are often skeptical of things they can't see, especially if they're unusual or unexpected. We usually need some sort of proof. And most of the time, "seeing is believing."

That was also true for Thomas when he was faced with the reports of Jesus' resurrection. Jesus had appeared visibly to the disciples on that first Easter night, but Thomas was not with them. When he heard their reports, he couldn't believe it. It was too incredible; too good to be true.

Thomas is usually criticized for his doubts: "He should have believed like the others," we think. In fact, he carries a "bad" name to this day. If someone tends to be skeptical of commonly accepted facts, they carry the label of being a "doubting Thomas." But, I wonder, is that fair to Thomas?

He was really no different than the others, was he? They had heard several reports that Jesus was alive, but did not really believe it until He appeared to them personally. "Seeing is believing." It was after these disciples saw evidence (nail prints and wounds) that they believed. Thomas only wanted the same proof they had received. I believe his doubts were not unusual or different than the others. They were the product of an honest struggle in his soul to believe something that was absolutely unbelievable!

And because Jesus was fully aware of Thomas' doubts, He made a second appearance. Notice his words in verse 26. While they were spoken to the whole group, I believe they were meant especially for Thomas. Jesus did not rebuke him for doubting, but offered him peace

The Resurrection Witness of Thomas



instead — not merely peace of mind, but the true peace of God. This peace is a gift, not an achievement. Peace of mind is something a person can find if he tries hard enough, but you can't find the peace of God. No, it finds you! The cross brings God's peace. "You have been brought near to God in the blood of Christ ... for He is our peace," (Ephesians 2:13-14). The peace of God that "passes understanding" rests on the forgiveness of sins. Thomas had this forgiveness because of what Jesus had accomplished. He only had to believe and receive it for himself. It was as though Jesus were saying, "See, Thomas, I **am** really alive. Put your finger here and believe." Seeing is believing.

You and I are no different than Thomas. We, too, need proof in order to believe. And the empty tomb is our proof. But we, who live hundreds of years later, can't see this evidence with our own eyes. Jesus knew that would be the case. "Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed," (v. 29). For us, it is not "seeing is believing," but "**believing is seeing.**" Those who believe, have seen Jesus. First of all, we have seen Him in God's Word, and Peter says that Word is more sure than physical proof (II Peter 1:16-19). The testimony of the apostles and prophets is our "seeing." Second, we see Jesus in the Sacraments — visible, tangible evidence that God has provided for us to strengthen our faith that His Word is true, and that His Grace is real. The testimony of these visible "means of grace" is also our "seeing."

Seeing is believing. It was for Thomas. It can be for you, too.



—Rev. John Mundt from
Bismarck, North Dakota

"And these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in His Name," (John 20:31).

Mary Magdalene and her story is recorded in all four Gospels. She seems to have been well known by those surrounding Jesus, and rightly so, for she had some very interesting “events” happen in her life that are impossible to over look. Mary Magdalene’s eyes saw miracles and each time it was at the feet of Jesus. Because of what she saw, she became a

witness of healing, sorrow and new life.

Mary is distinguished from the other Marys of the Bible by the addition of Magdalene to her name. She came from the village of Magdala, a short distance from Capernaum.

One “event” in Mary’s life was the fact that she was possessed by seven demons. Her quality of life at this point is not recorded for us, but

Mary Magdalene—Three Times a Witness



we can imagine (maybe only in part) what she must have experienced each day.

Our first meeting with her is in Luke 8:1-3, where it tells us what took place when she met Jesus. He cast out the demons that possessed her. More than likely, the disciples stood by and watched his miracle, as they did with so many others. It is the same for us, when Jesus' power is at work, we can "stand by, see the salvation of the Lord," (Exodus 14, 13). Our mouths may drop open but our faith is lifted in praises toward heaven!

Mary was the best witness to her own life change. Released from Satan, she wanted to follow her Savior. She, along with other women who were healed of evil spirits and sicknesses, worked together to help in the support of Jesus and the 12. Her desire was to serve the one who freed her. This financial support meant Jesus could concentrate on the ministry of healing and spreading the good news.

I don't think it ever occurred to me before that Jesus needed financial support during His earthly ministry. I've just slid over those little incidentals. But it is important to note Mary's giving is a witness of her spiritual growth and perhaps her desire to have others meet Jesus. Jesus' primary concern was not in accumulating material possessions, (Matthew 4:4 and other passages) but He did have basic needs. Mary and these other women were aware of the needs and took from their means to help. (Perhaps our earliest example of a good WMF — see the need and meet it.)

One verse, John 19:25, records Mary Magdalene as one of the witnesses to the death of Jesus at the foot of the cross. It's so easy to pass over one verse quickly and only note who gathered there. But, the reality was there for those at that cross. A reading of the medical explanation of the suffering and physical agony on the cross makes me shudder. When Mary and the others witnessed the death of the one whom they built their faith and hope upon; they heard Christ call out to his father, "Why have you forsaken me?" They were pierced by the helpless feeling as they watched Him take His last breath and die.

Perhaps they felt like their hearts were being ripped out. Surely, they had seen many unlikely miracles happen when they followed Jesus and maybe they would see another now. But no miracle happened and they left Jesus there, dead. Others came to claim the body for a quick burial before the sabbath.

Nothing is said of the days in between the crucifixion and resurrection morning. Anyone who has experienced the death of a loved one,

knows that those days are mixed with grief, questions and recalling memories. I imagine nothing less with those close to Jesus.

John 20 records for us the events of resurrection morning. Mary, again with others, was headed for the tomb with burial spices. When they got close, they saw the stone rolled away! Near panic, she turned and ran to tell Peter and John that someone must have taken the body. Peter and John took off in a sprint and Mary must not have been far behind; for after the men looked inside the tomb, they left and Mary was there, weeping. She decided to look for herself — and saw the angels. But she was only concerned with one thing, "Where is my Lord?" Her sorrow was deep. She could not see the miracle yet. When she turned from the tomb, she came face to face with her risen Lord. She didn't recognize Him, but when He spoke her name, then she knew. When sorrow is close, it sometimes blinds our eyes to the miracle Jesus is doing in our lives. We need to still seek our Lord and perhaps wait until we see Jesus face to face in eternity for our eyes to be opened to all He has done.

We women love to hug when we are filled with joy and that's just what Mary did. She grabbed the feet of Jesus and held on! Jesus commands her to let go and she knows she must. Mary does the next thing that women are good at, she runs to spread the news! (I hope I'm always ready to spread good news) Mary has a mission. She must share this glorious news! "I have seen the Lord."

Many times I think it's hard to be a witness for my Lord. There are times when I am fearful of witnessing. Mary gives me a good example of what a witness is. It is first, someone who Jesus heals, whether it is sin, sickness or demons and the life changes from then on. They themselves can see the change. Second, we should let others see what Christ has done in our lives. Witness is best received when it's kept simple. What you see and know in your own life, share with others.

Mary Magdalene was a witness to incredible events in her life. She took that witness to others who needed to hear. Mary's life changed every time she came in contact with Christ. A lesson for me, too, as I need close contact with Jesus each day of my life. He will change me. He will heal me. I need to say, "I have seen the Lord."

—Charlotte Qualley

The author is the wife of Gary Qualley, rural Brockton, Montana. They have one daughter, Wendy, and attend Faith Free Lutheran Church of rural Brockton.

PETER

Simon Peter is one of the most unique characters who lived close to Jesus. A brief overview of his biography is encouraging to the human soul. If ever a character was portrayed as being a real human being it is Peter. He is a graphic picture of what the natural man is like — wavering, inconsistent and an utter failure. On the other hand he is a perfect example of what God can do with a mere human being.

Before the Resurrection

Peter is the kind of person many of us would like to have in our church because when he did things he did them with enthusiasm. But this very thing was also Peter's weakness. Such impulsiveness made him do things without the leading of the Spirit of God.

Bold assertions were made by Simon; confessing Jesus as Lord. When some people stopped following Jesus because He said some things that did not square with human reason, He asked the disciples if they too were going to stop following Him. Peter piped up with an emphatic "No!" then he further declared: "you alone have the words of eternal life, to whom shall we go?"

The Knowledge of Sin

Later when Jesus was being tried by the high priest, Peter seemed to shift positions. When asked if he was a disciple of Jesus, without even stammering, he said: "I do not know what you are talking about." And with oaths, cursing and swearing he insisted: "I do not know the man."

Without one defender, Jesus was condemned to death, crucified and buried. Those hours following His death were dark ones for those who knew and followed Jesus Christ. When Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body with spices, they found an empty tomb. There was no corpse there. But instead the place of burial was filled with the glistening appearance of an angel. The angel was a messenger of good news. When one is mourning the death of a loved one, it seems no news is encouraging enough to lift one out of the pit of sorrow. But the angel's words were enough to make the spirit soar again. "He is Risen!"

The angel instructed them to go and break

A Resurrection Witness Saved By Grace Alone

this news to the disciples and Peter. Peter was singled out. Had they already begun to exclude Peter from apostleship? Had the other followers of Christ decided that Peter's blatant denial and unacceptable conduct disqualified him. Some things are mere speculation. What we know for sure is that Peter had a special need and the Lord was concerned about him. In order to bring assurance to him the angel said: "Tell Peter."

Sing Hosanna

*Life breaks forth, God's love enfolds us;
Christ has risen from the grave.
All his people sing Hosanna;
Praise the Lord of life and love.
Sing Hosanna, Sing Hosanna,
Christ has broken death with love.
Loud Hosannas fill our hearts.*

*Day by day from pain and sorrow
Christ releases those in need;
All you weary sing Hosanna;
Praise the Lord of life and love.
Sing Hosanna, Sing Hosanna,
Christ releases weary hearts.
Loud Hosannas fill our days.*

*While the world seeks fame and glory,
Christ gives us his glorious life.
To the world we sing Hosanna;
Praise the Lord of life and love.
Sing Hosanna, Sing Hosanna,
Christ has given glorious life.
Loud Hosanna fill the world.*

Tune: Cwm Rhonda #115

Text: Copyright Roger Lauren Tappert 1989

Peter's selfish nature had controlled him at the point of his denial. But during the trial, when the eyes of the Master met his, they told him about his sin. Peter realized how vile he really was; that it was **his** sin that sent Jesus to the cross, because he did not understand the words of Jesus (John 20:9) concerning the crucifixion and resurrection. Peter was left only with the feeling of utter sinfulness. He very likely blamed himself for the crucifixion. He had not been shy about speaking up before. Glowing words seemed so easy to come by when there was no crisis, but when it mattered the most, the "great" Peter blew it! Peter was under a huge burden. He wept and confessed his sin but assurance that it was all going to turn out well was completely lacking.

The words of the angel, "tell Peter," were intended to meet this special need. The Lord wanted Peter to know he was still numbered among the circle of disciples. Jesus would not rub

"Peter became a fearless and faithful witness to the salvation accomplished by the risen Christ."



the salt deeper into the wound; therefore we must conclude that the words, "tell Peter," were ones of absolution, a declaration of forgiveness. Being so haunted by his sin and guilt, this special word of assurance was important to the unworthy one.

The Knowledge of Grace

Peter rushed to the empty tomb to see for himself if Jesus was actually risen. With his own eyes he beheld the empty tomb. The Lord Himself appeared to him and at some point unknown to humans, God calmed the raging storm within Peter's soul and gave him peace.

A peasant once traded a bag of nuts for some books he wanted. But the bookseller got the worst of the bargain, because later when he cracked the shells he found they were empty. What good is a nut that contains no meat? That is what Peter's life would have been without the resurrection. As a witness to the resurrection of Christ and as one who had Christ's victory over sin transferred to his life, Peter became a spokesman once again. Whereas sin had silenced him grace revived him.

So wondrous a thing is the grace of God that it gives one the ability to speak confidently even in areas where one has offended most flagrantly. For example, after the ascension, Peter chided his own countrymen saying: "But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you." How could he possibly make such a rebuke when he himself had committed the same type of sin? *The big difference* was that Peter was forgiven. God had given him a heart of repentance and the assurance that he was a part of His family. Peter was an eye witness of the resurrection, but more importantly, he was a recipient of God's undeserved grace.

Peter was obviously a sinful man and he knew it. But being justified (declared not guilty) by faith He had peace with God through Jesus Christ. In that standing with his God, Peter became a fearless and faithful witness to the salvation accomplished by the risen Christ. Even after being warned by the Jewish council not to speak the name of Jesus, he was constrained to preach to the ignorant, to the desperate and to the self-satisfied: Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is the satisfaction for sin.



—by Rev. Larry Haagenson
Buxton, North Dakota

A Story for Children

Mom walked into the family room and her face just dropped.

"Who dumped this popcorn all over the floor?" she questioned.

"It must have been Aaron," answered five-year-old Abigail, accusing her two-year-old brother who wasn't even old enough to defend himself.

"Did you see him do it?" Mom asked.

"Well, no," Abigail responded.

"Unless you saw him do it," continued Mom, "it's really not fair to blame him, is it?"

"No!" sighed Abigail.

Dad joined in on the conversation.

"What you and Mom need, Abigail, is an eyewitness. Someone who saw what happened. Then 'The Mystery of the Great Popcorn Disaster' would be solved.

Six-year-old, Joshua, bounded into the room.

"Joshua, do you know who dumped this bowl of popcorn?" Mom asked.

"No one," said Joshua, "it just slid off the arm of the chair all by itself. I saw it happen. No one touched it."

"Finally, the mystery is solved!" said Mom. "And it's wonderful to know that someone really saw it happen and can tell us the truth about what actually happened."

"You know," said Dad, "This reminds me of an important reason why we can trust the Bible when it tells us that Jesus rose from the dead that first Easter morning. The Bible tells us that many people saw and touched and talked with Jesus after He rose from the dead — Mary Magdalene; Mary, the mother of James; the disciples; two men on the road to Emmaus, and Thomas — just to name a few. Eyewitness accounts can be found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They actually saw what happened and they wrote it down for us so we would know the truth."

Dad went to get his Bible.

"Here in Luke 1:1-4," Dad said, "Doctor Luke writes, 'Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order ... so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.'"

Did you know?

1. Did you know the Gospels are full of testimonies (stories) from eyewitnesses about what happened on that first Easter morning when Jesus rose from the dead?

2. Did you know Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24 and John 20 are reports of Jesus' resurrection (rising from the dead)? Read these passages from the Bible and make a list of all the people (eyewitnesses) who saw Jesus after He rose from the dead.

3. Did you know God had these eyewitness accounts recorded so that "you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name"? So, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved," (John 21:30-31 and Acts 16:31a).

—Candice Johnson
Stanley, North Dakota

The author is married to Pastor Rodney Johnson, and is the mother of three small children.

I SAW IT!



STIRRINGS

The world is aroused by whispers of spring.

*You cause a great stirring, Father,
as gusty winds release tough husks
that new, tender buds may appear.*

*Cause a great stirring in my heart,
as You bear down with winds of Your
Spirit, to release tough coverings
that keep new growth from sprouting.*

*You cause a great stirring, Father,
as gentle sun melts rivers of ice
and frozen earth.*

*Cause a great stirring in my heart,
as Your warmth melts coldness
and reserve, that the Water of Life
may freely course through and satisfy.*

*You cause a great stirring, Father,
as barren, gray days unfold into
spring's profusion of color and life.*

*Cause a great stirring in my heart,
with Your song of new life that makes
me beautiful in the Spirit — ready for
summer's growth and fullness.*

— Barb Skeie
New Hope, Minnesota



The BIBLE The Word of God

We live in a day when everything is being questioned. Many are critical of the Bible and question it as God's Word. This has a strange and bad effect upon our society. When the Word of God is no longer allowed to speak to the conscience of man, sin and evil have free course.

Few question that there is much amiss in our society today. And there are many voices that are crying out for reform. However, with the Bible losing its authority we are left without any authority to set things right. Some people claim they believe the Bible to be God's Word, but seldom read or study it. They do not know what they claim to believe in and their lives would reveal the same. It is impossible to believe in something you know nothing about.

We can dare to believe the Bible to be the Word of God. The Bible itself makes this claim (I Timothy 3:16). It may be difficult to prove this in a way that you would prove a mathematical problem. But the person who approaches the Bible in a spirit of prayer, willing that God impart His wisdom to him, will sense God speaking through the Bible to him. The Holy Spirit will convince him of its truth. Therein lies the answer and key to man's every problem, and to the problems of our land.

Our need today is not more laws or social reform programs; at best we will all pull in different directions if we think only of reforms. Our need is a back-to-the-Bible reading and study movement. That will unite us as only God can unite us.

The reforms that are needed will come if we but turn to the Word of God.

— Rev. Gerald F. Mundfrom
Osceola, Wisconsin

WOMEN



Ray, North Dakota — Beaver Creek WMF recently honored Verdi Halverson, Evelyn Hove and Florence Ferguson for 50 years of faithful service.



Roseau, Minnesota — The newest members of the Rose Cradle Roll are Luke Holland, Anthony Baker and Kadie Ziska (pictured also are parents: Carol Holland, John Baker and Maribeth Ziska). Samantha Fuller and Angela Broten are not pictured.

*Blessed are
those who die
in the Lord*



Gladys V. Hansen, Everett, Washington
Vita Flotre, Ferndale, Washington
Ida Benson, Williston, North Dakota
Martha Sheldon, Tioga, North Dakota
Violet Nystuen, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Irene Marmon, Ross, North Dakota
Norah Dullum, Colfax, North Dakota
Hugh Hill, Ottawa, Illinois
Mrs. Ella Bueide, Dawson, Minnesota
Nels Odegaard, Tioga, North Dakota
Beatrice Rasmussen, Mc Henry, North Dakota
Elsie Bass, North Port, Florida
Olga Monseth, Fergus Falls, Minnesota
Morris Gustum, New Auburn, Wisconsin
Harriet Norgaard, Ferndale, Washington
Ole C. Brufat, Wallace, South Dakota
Myrtle Ronning, Valley City, North Dakota
Donald Sigdestad, Rapid City, South Dakota
Nellie Bredeson, Everett, Washington
Josie Nelson, Everett, Washington
Ginger Waterland, Howes, South Dakota
Mildred Helland, Sartell, Minnesota

**Women's Missionary
Federation**
In memoriam gifts

AFLC Women's Retreat

The AFLC Women's Retreat will be held on April 30th to May 2nd at the ARC. The cost is \$55.00 for the weekend and registration fees are \$10.00 for the weekend or \$15.00 for a single day. Speaker and teacher for the weekend will be Joyce Harley, Christian radio personality with KTIS radio in the Twin Cities. For further information or registration forms please contact: The Association Retreat Center, 2372 30th Ave. and Kings Way, Osceola, Wisconsin 54020. Phone (715) 293-2877.

Spring Rally Dates

Northeastern South Dakota — Grace Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, will host the WMF rally on May 8.

Western South Dakota — Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Eagle Butte, will host the West River area rally on May 1, with the theme, "Be Ye Ready."

Illinois District — Faith Lutheran Church, Ottawa, will host their district's rally on April 24.

Southwest Central Minnesota — Zion-Sarpsborg Lutheran Church of Dalton, will host the district rally on May 4.

Eastern North Dakota — Living Word Free Lutheran Church, Edmore, will host the district rally on April 24.

Western North Dakota — Norman Lutheran Church of rural Tioga, will host their district rally on April 17.

**The 31st Annual Conference
of the
Association of
Free Lutheran Congregations
will be held on the campus of
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois
June 16-20, 1993
"Times of Refreshing"
Acts 3:19**



Young people from Park River, North Dakota, outside the campus chapel building.

Bible School Hosts Large Campus Days Crowd On March 12-14

The unseasonably cold temperatures did not prevent one of the largest Campus Days crowds ever to visit 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd. in Minneapolis. One hundred thirty-five high schoolers spent the weekend getting a taste of life at AFLBS.



Mr. Jerry Nelson, music instructor.



The Campus Days choir.



At the Friday evening Gospel Team program.



Victoria Dyrud, Brazil.

CAMPUS continued



Joshua Johnson, Reva, South Dakota, was fascinated by the Agape Puppet Team's presentation.

1993 AFLBS Choir Tour Itinerary

- March 26 — St. Paul's Lutheran
Jewell Iowa
- March 28, a.m. — Faith Lutheran
Fairbury, Nebraska
- March 28, p.m. — Lamb of God
Lutheran, Topeka, Kansas
- March 29 — First Lutheran
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- March 30 — Christ Ev. Lutheran
Tulsa, Texas
- March 31 — Christ Lutheran
Wichita Falls, Texas
- April 1 — Faith Lutheran
El Campo, Texas
- April 2 — Good Shepherd Lutheran
Pleasanton, Texas
- April 3 — Bibleville
Alamo, Texas
- April 4, a.m. — Tip-O-Texas
Pharr, Texas
- April 4, p.m. — St. Paul's Lutheran
Harlingen, Texas
- April 6 — Living Word
Joshua, Texas
- April 7 — St. Paul's Lutheran
Branson, Missouri
- April 8 — Immanuel Lutheran
Springfield, Missouri
- April 9 — Faith Lutheran
Glenville, Minnesota



Wheatland, Iowa, youth enjoyed AFLBS hospitality in the school cafeteria.



The AFLBS women's basketball team ran a practice during the weekend with interested high school students. The AFLBS Conqueror team left on March 16th for the NBCCA national tourney in Oklahoma City, where they competed for the national title. Wanda Jacobson is the coach.

Choral Club Tour

- | | |
|--|---|
| March 26 — Zion Free Lutheran
Wadena, Minnesota | April 1 — Grace Lutheran
DeKalb, Illinois |
| March 27 — Mt. Carmel Lutheran
McIntosh, Minnesota | April 2 — Helmar Lutheran
Newark, Illinois |
| March 28, a.m. — Our Saviour's
Thief River Falls, Minn. | April 4, a.m. — Bethlehem Lutheran
Morris, Illinois |
| March 28, p.m. — St. Paul's Lutheran
Cloquet, Minnesota | April 4, p.m. — St. John's Lutheran
Milford, Illinois |
| March 29 — Our Savior's Lutheran
Mason, Wisconsin | April 6 — Grace Lutheran
Bruce, South Dakota |
| March 30 — Section Ten Lutheran
Cumberland, Wisconsin | April 7 — Redeemer Free Lutheran
Canton, South Dakota |
| March 31 — Hope Ev. Free Lutheran
Ishpeming, Michigan | April 8 — Calvary Free Lutheran
Wallace, South Dakota |
| | April 9 — King of Glory Lutheran
Eden Prairie, Minnesota |

AFLTS Announces 1993-94 Internships

Dr. Francis Monseth recently announced where the 1993-94 Association Free Lutheran Seminary interns will be placed. **Mr. Earl Korhonen** will serve at Elim Lutheran Church, Lake Stevens, Washington, with Rev. Richard Gunderson. **Mr. Randy Nelson** will work with Rev. Raymond Klug in Fairbury and Deshler, Nebraska. **Mr. Kevin Olson** goes to First Lutheran, Camarillo, California, in June to serve with Rev. Walter Johnson. **Mr. Michael Peterson** will minister with Rev. Del Palmer in Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

While evangelicals reject "antibiblical Narcissism," there is little remorse today for the sinful self; prime concern centers, rather, on self-potential, self-fulfillment, and even self-veneration. No clear line is drawn between self-indulgence and self-affirmation.

— Carl F. H. Henry in *Twilight of a Great Civilization*

Portrait of Jesus Illegal in High School?

Grand Rapids, Michigan (EP) — A portrait of Jesus in a Michigan high school hallway can remain hanging but must be covered while an appeal is filed, a judge ruled February 19.

"Like liquor or pornography, a portrait of Jesus must now be wrapped in a plain brown wrapper. I guess the portrait is now considered shameful or wrong," said David Melton, the Rutherford Institute attorney handling the case.

District Judge Benjamin F. Gibson in Grand Rapids, Michigan, reaffirmed his February 3 ruling that the portrait be removed from Bloomingdale High School but amended his judgment to give school officials the option of removing the print or completely covering the picture with an opaque material.

The Rutherford Institute filed an appeal on February 19 with the U.S. Court of Appeals.

Attention Pastors and Chaperones Going to Colorado

Due to the number of requests for rooms at the Youth Convention this summer, chaperones and pastors now have the opportunity to stay at the YMCA Camp. The cost of these rooms during the convention will be the same as those of the youth (luxury suites are also available at an extra cost). If we don't hear from you by April 15, we'll have to let these extra rooms go.

Please send the "Guard Your Heart" registration form to Earl Korhonen at 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441.

Meet at City Hall

On Thursday, May 6, America will observe the annual National Day of Prayer. Concerned individuals are urged to participate in Meet At City Hall on that day. Concerned Americans are asked to gather at their local city halls from 12:20 p.m. to 12:40 p.m. on the National Day of Prayer and pray for a moral rebirth of America, as part of a promotion by the American Family Association.

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Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences - February 1 - February 28, 1993

FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	REC'D IN FEBRUARY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$261,657.00	\$23,417.83	\$23,417.83	9
Schools - (AFLTS) . .	148,620.00	8,338.05	8,338.05	6
(AFLBS) . .	214,230.00	16,843.02	16,843.02	8
Home Missions	292,593.00	27,638.62	27,638.62	9
World Missions	310,000.00	32,561.92	32,561.92	11
Capital Investment . .	50,300.00	1,916.05	1,916.05	4
Parish Education . . .	53,147.00	6,105.85	6,105.85	11
ARC	13,200.00	765.63	765.63	6
Chrism. Acad. Ed. Bd.	4,000.00	155.28	155.28	4
TOTALS	\$1,347,747.00	\$117,742.25	\$117,742.25	9
1992 - 1993	\$1,631,326.00	\$58,963.92	\$58,963.94	4
Goal 8%				

PEOPLE and PLACES

Rev. Dale Mellgren, Tioga, North Dakota, who has been the pastor of Zion Lutheran Church since 1986, accepted a call from Bethany Lutheran Church, Spokane, Washington, beginning in mid-June.

Rev. Vincent Will, Springfield, Missouri, was featured in a CBS television special on February 20 which positively investigated the evidence for Noah's Ark.

Belleville, Kansas — A Bible study fellowship met for the first time on Thursday, March 11, in the local VFW hall, as the result of a community survey by Abiding Savior Church, Deshler, Nebraska, and Intern Tim Hinrichs. The Bible study is the second step in an outreach mission project of the Deshler congregation that hopes to see a new church planted in the neighboring town.

Bloomington, Minnesota — Emmaus Lutheran Church hosted "A Children's Mission Conference" on March 20 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Children in grades 1-6 brought their sack lunch and a wallet-sized photo for their "passport." **Carol Mudschenk**, a member of Emmaus, left on February 28 to begin a tent-making ministry in the Middle East. She was sent by the World Mission Prayer League.

Two New AFLC Churches Accepted

Applications from Lamb of God Lutheran Church, Topeka, Kansas, and Monroe Free Lutheran Church, Monroe, Washington, for membership in the AFLC were approved by the Co-ordinating Committee at their March meeting. The Kansas congregation, which is temporarily served on weekends from Minneapolis, held its first worship services last fall as a result of contacts with AFLC churches in Fairbury and Deshler, Nebraska, while the new West Coast congregation, which is served by Rev. David Hinrichs, Everett, is the result of a district church planting project.

Eagle Butte, South Dakota — The National Indian Education Association has selected Betty Kost, a kindergarten teacher at Eagle Butte, to receive their 1992-93 Teacher of the Year Award. The 42-year veteran teacher was given her award at a ceremony in Seattle, Washington, on March 13. Mrs. Kost is a longtime member of Emmanuel Lutheran Church.

Webster, South Dakota — Tabor Lutheran Church Choir presented four concerts to area churches earlier this winter. The free will offerings from the concerts were sent to the AFLC Administration Building Fund.

Roseau, Minnesota — Rose Lutheran Church voted on February 7 to go ahead with a proposed building program. The 38' x 76' addition will enlarge the sanctuary, provide a fellowship hall, bathrooms, kitchen and additional Sunday school space.

Wichita Falls, Texas — Christ Lutheran Church hosted a Valentine's banquet with Rev. Gerald Peterson, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, as the guest speaker.

Western North Dakota District Men's Retreat will be held April 16-17 at the Upper Missouri Bible Camp. District pastors will lead the sessions. The district youth rally will be April 24, at Zion Lutheran Church in Tioga.



The new members at Maranatha Free Lutheran Church, Glyndon, Minnesota.



Glyndon, Minnesota — Maranatha Free Lutheran Church had a special service on January 24. The five-year-old congregation burned their church mortgage and received three new families as members. During the summer of 1987, a small group met in a garage, coming with their Bibles, lawn chairs and a yearning spirit. A few months later, they purchased a garage-storage building on six acres of property. After great labor, the building was transformed into a beautiful house of worship. The congregation has grown to approximately 45 families and is served by Pastor Dale Finstrom.

EASTER HOLIDAY HERESIES

Heresy, a doctrine or practice contrary to the truth, is not too strong of a term to characterize some of the symbols of this holy season. The most charitable construction that might be suggested is that our Easter holiday illustrations are seriously and sadly inadequate in their efforts to express the meaning of Christ's resurrection.

Consider the Easter lilies, for example. How miraculous that a dried up old bulb can produce such life and beauty! But the truth is that the flower bulb only appears to be dead, and its dormant condition can be easily changed with the application of soil, water and sunlight.

Then there is the Easter egg. How marvelous that a little bundle of fluff and feathers can emerge from the lifeless shell! But once again the truth is that this is no miracle at all, for the outer appearance of the egg is not an accurate indication of its inner contents.

The death of Jesus Christ on the cross was frighteningly real; it had to be so because of the fearful reality of our sinfulness. The empty tomb announces not the mere awakening of an apparent corpse, but a genuine and glorious resurrection from death to life. No holiday symbol can ever completely capture the miracle of the first Easter morning.

"And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins," (I Corinthians 15:17). The resurrection of Jesus Christ is central to our faith, and there is no room for even a hint of heresy. Enjoy the lilies and eat the eggs, if you like, but do not miss the heart of the Easter holiday. He who once was dead is alive again! Hallelujah!

CHURCH PUBLICATIONS AND CHANGING TIMES

A recent news item in *Christianity Today* reported the demise of two religious magazines, including a Baptist denominational publication. Circulation of *American Baptist* had been declining three to five percent a year, a "sign of the times" that John Stapert, executive director of Associated Church Press (ACP), interprets to mean that many church members are more interested in their local congregations than in their denominations.

The Lutheran Ambassador serves a growing and diverse denomination, and yet our circulation of almost five thousand still represents a close fellowship of family and friends. One criticism that has been expressed describes our publication as more like a district

newsletter than a national magazine, but I am not entirely sure that this is altogether negative. In our efforts to avoid trivia, however, we must always be aware of the need to include as many news items from our congregations as possible.

This goal cannot be accomplished without your help. *The Lutheran Ambassador* is essentially a volunteer ministry, dependent of the efforts of many able and available Christians from all corners of the AFLC. Correspondents are always needed, from local congregations as well as districts, and articles (and photos) about area activities are always encouraged. Many churches send their monthly newsletters, and news items can sometimes be gleaned from them, but special interest articles are still appreciated.

A recent announcement informed our readers of a price increase, from \$12 to \$15 for an annual subscription. It is often expressed that denominational publications are never expected to become paying propositions, and yet the subsidies from the various departments have not been enough to prevent the growth of a greater than forty thousand dollar deficit. Responsible stewardship requires that this shortfall be eliminated.

Another possible solution for *The Lutheran Ambassador* deficit is a plan to publish the magazine once a month with twice the number of pages. This step could save between nine and ten thousand dollars each year, but has been rejected in the past because of a concern to be as current as possible with church news and announcements. Our financial status, however, suggests that it is time for the annual conference to consider this alternative again.

The best solution, of course, is to increase the number of subscriptions. Some congregations include every member family on their subscription list, and the church (or WMF) treasurer pays for all of them as a group, collecting from all who can afford it. One pastor told me that his congregation finances their subscriptions with a free will offering, and he reported that these donations easily cover the cost for everyone.

It is without apology that you are invited to promote the ministry of *The Lutheran Ambassador*. The role of a church magazine in the life of a growing fellowship like ours is a vital one, and every reader is encouraged to share in the effort to make it more so.

WORLD WATCH

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Second-Class

Washington, D.C. (EP) — Followers of evangelical leaders such as Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell are "largely poor, uneducated and easy to command," according to a recent story in the *Washington Post*.

The characterization came in a February 1 front-page story about increased citizen participation in government, as evidenced by the large volume of calls to Congress on such issues as Zoe Baird and President Clinton's plan to drop the military's ban on gays.

Suggesting that the uproar over gays in the military was the result of a vocal minority organized by televangelists, reporter Michael Weisskopf said, "Corporations pay public relations firms millions of dollars to contrive the kind of grass-roots response that Falwell or Pat Robertson can galvanize in a televised sermon. Their followers are largely poor, uneducated and easy to command."

In response to outraged readers, the *Post* ran a correction the following day, which said, "An article yesterday characterized followers of television evangelists Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson as 'largely poor, uneducated and easy to command.' There is no factual basis for that statement."

Reader protests continued. In a February 6 story on the outrage generated by the story, Weisskopf insisted that it was "an honest mistake, not born of any prejudice or malice for the religious right." Weisskopf said he should have said that evangelicals are "relatively" poor and uneducated. Weisskopf said that he based his description of evangelicals on interviews with several "experts" but didn't attribute it because it "appears to be universally accepted."

In a letter to the editor published in the *Post* on February 6, Timothy Crater of the National Association of Evangelicals note, "If such generalizations had been made of blacks, Jews or any other favored minority, one can easily imagine the journalistic hell into which Weisskopf's career would slide."

In the February 7 *Post*, ombudsman Joann Byrd suggested that widespread

agreement with Weisskopf within the paper's editorial department was to blame for his prejudicial characterization of evangelicals. "The most embarrassing mistakes in newspapers are invariably the ones the paper had abundant opportunity to catch. And this was one of those. As the story moved through the editing process, several able editors read it, and still the sentence, sitting out there with no support, did not jump out."

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (EP) — The number of Christian believers in Mongolia has shot up to 1,000 at the end of 1992, from an estimated 15 in 1991. The former communist country of 2 million reportedly has 2,000 people attending Christian church services on Sundays.

David Howard, senior vice-president of the David C. Cook Foundation and former international director of World Evangelical Fellowship, says that at least six churches exist in the city of Ulaanbaatar. Howard visited the country in January.

Most of the major churches are in the city, said a report from World Evangelical Fellowship, but groups are said to be meeting in at least ten of the country's 18 provinces. The churches are growing despite an economy that is, according to Howard, "in shambles."

Since Mongolia abandoned communism in 1991, mission agencies have been able to enter Mongolia from a number of different countries. There is a small language school for incoming missionaries, and a school for missionary kids which goes up to fourth grade is now functioning in the country.

Laguna Niguel, California (EP) — The "Jesus" film continues to receive wide circulation in the former republics of the Soviet Union, according to a recent report from Paul Eshleman, director of The Jesus Film Project for Campus Crusade for Christ.

The film has now been translated into 26 Eastern European languages and has premiered in the capital cities of 20 countries and republics, including Albania and Mongolia and all of the Muslim regions of Russia. In each country, the Minister of Education attended the premier showings of the film, opening the doors for the movie to be shown in schools and classrooms.

"One of our great legacies is the 13,000,000 copies of the Gospel of Luke we have placed in homes — given free of charge to people who have never had access to the Bible since the days of the Bolshevik revolution over 70 years ago," Eshleman said.

Eshleman, who began organizing conferences of public school teachers in the waning days of the Soviet Union, says more than 21 conferences of educators have been held, attended by 8,000 educators, each of whom received a copy of the "Jesus" film. Additionally, 1,500,000 pieces of teaching and follow-up literature have been distributed to the educators.

"We have trained 557 film teams, spread across the 11 time zones of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and have shipped more than 600 sets of equipment. We expect the churches themselves to show the film to more than 30,000,000 people during the next two years," Eshleman said.