



# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

March 31, 1992



Therefore, if  
anyone is in  
Christ, he is  
a new  
creation;  
the old  
has gone,  
the new  
has come!

II Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)





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## THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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## Our Confession Of Faith

**W**e are all certainly aware that there is a great variety of worship services being used in different churches. They range from very structured to very free. Often in conversation, one hears comments like: "I don't know how people can stand that church. Everything is so formal and so stuffy. Each week they recite the same old things over and over again. Nothing is spontaneous. You would think they get tired of it." Or conversely: "Wow, is that church service wild! You never know what was going to happen next. Voices calling from one side and then from the other and everybody always raising their hands or swaying; I felt so uncomfortable."

While there are people who defend each extreme and every position in the middle, it seems that our focus is too often on the structure rather than on the content of a service. When our focus is on the structure, whether formal or free, all aspects of the service become recitation rather than worship. Indeed, as much as we may like our structure of service in the AFLC, to ask ourselves how often we have recited the service and planned our week through the sermon might bring us under conviction. Two parts of our service that are the same each week, and so often said without thought, can come back to life for us if we are willing to take hold again of the help Luther gives us in his Small Catechism. I am speaking, of course, of our confession of faith (the Apostles Creed) and the Lord's Prayer.

The first article of the Creed is so very brief yet so full of content. By remembering Luther's meaning to the articles, we find the content of those articles filling our minds and the Scriptures that speak of these truths flooding in on our minds and hearts. The Creed can become, for us, a confession from our whole being and a vital part of worshiping in spirit and in truth. **Confessing** our faith together before God erases so many of those little irritations that exist between us and keep us from the unity we are to have in Christ. It

## Light on the Way

leads us to corporate thanksgiving and praise. "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen! Amen!"

The first article brings two very important thoughts to mind. First, all we have is an undeserved gift given by our gracious Heavenly Father. No one is ever shorted by what he *doesn't* have or by what is taken away. What we have while we have it is a gift from God. Job's words, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised," (Job 1:21) are full of wisdom. In confessing the first article, we join Paul in singing forth the doxology found in Romans 11:33-36, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen."

Second, we learn that such grace leaves us with an obligation of love. We certainly are, "... in duty bound to thank, praise, serve and obey Him." Confessing the first article leaves us in need even while we acknowledge God's great provision. How ready this makes us to confess the second and third articles! Then true worship wells up in our hearts as we see God's grace upon grace.

Praise and thanks be to you, gracious Lord!



— by Rev.  
Jon Wellumson

# JUDGING OURSELVES

— by H. A. Ironside

When I hear people say, "Lord, send a revival, and let it begin in me," I wonder what they really mean! Do they mean, "Lord, strike me down in some strange sort of way; give me some very vivid emotional experience in order that I may feel wonderfully exalted and wrought up, and I shall consider I am being revived"? I think that is why wild-fire emotionalism of the most unscriptural character prevails in many places today, and people call it the reviving work of the Spirit of God.

If revival is going to begin in me, if it is going to begin in you, it is going to lead us to self-judgment in the presence of God; it is going to lead us to look back over our lives, to examine ourselves, and honestly to answer the questions in the presence of God, "Have I really been living a yielded life? Have I truly been holding all that I possess as that which belongs to the One who has redeemed me? And have I been so speaking and so acting from day to day that my words and my life have been a testimony for Christ?"

And wherein conscience convicts me of failure, wherein the Spirit of God shows me that I have not been manifesting the Spirit of Christ as I should, it will lead to contrition, to repentance, to confession, and to humiliation.

As long as the people of God can sit calmly and sing, "O Lord, send a revival," and nobody gets down before the Lord to confess his failure and put things right that have been wrong, revival will never begin in them.

If there is going to be a revival now or anytime, we must judge ourselves in His presence. I am afraid that our consciences are terribly dull; we have become used to so many things that we take for granted they are all right, and never stop to think how they look in the sight of our blessed Lord.

Glance back over one week of your life, you who are Christians. Just imagine as you do so that at any hour of that week the Lord had sud-

denly come upon you, had beheld what you were engaged in, had heard what you were saying, and had given you to know that He was taking notes of all that you were doing. Are you quite sure you would have been well satisfied with yourself and your life, even for one week?

Then let me ask another question. Have you been definitely to God during this past week and have you been facing these things from day to day? You say, "Well, I kneel in prayer at night." What do you pray for? To ask the Lord to take care of you in the dark? Before you ask Him to take care of you in the dark, do you talk to Him about what you did in the light? Do you go over your life in His presence? Do you bring out everything before Him? Do you let the full, clear light of the sanctuary shine upon your words and your behavior?

And then, as He shows you things that are opposed to His infinite holiness, to His tenderness; to His compassion for men; as He shows you things that are contrary to the Spirit of an unworldly Christ, do you make frank, honest confession before Him and seek His grace to turn from these things once and forever, henceforth to be devoted alone to Him? If you do, you are on the way to revival, for that is how God works.

*From "The Lamp of Prophecy," Copyright 1940, 1968, by Zondervan Publishing. Reprinted with permission.*



# REVIVAL

An address to the  
1895 "Friends of  
Augsburg"  
Convention

**T**his topic is presented to the convention for deliberation and discussion with the spiritual condition of our congregations in mind.

All spiritually enlightened and living Christians will generally admit that the spiritual condition within the majority of congregations is pitiful and pathetic. Even if our spiritual eyes are weak, no serious and sober Christian can miss this most obvious fact.

As one travels around in the congregations and speaks with the believers, he is impressed that they are now beginning to recognize and regard this condition with greater earnestness and

seriousness than in the past. And many of God's people — pastors and lay people — feel, with great pain, the oppressiveness of this spiritual sickness and ask what they can do so that revival might come upon the many spiritually sleeping and dead church members.

Through my travels and visits among the congregations, I have personally had plenty of opportunity to observe this spiritual condition close at hand. And my observations have convinced me that only a sweeping revival can introduce a real change for the better. How frequently and freely have I not heard from earnest Christians remarks such as these: "Our Lord does have some people here whom He knows as His own, but the majority of the membership in our congregation is, I'm sorry to say, worldly-minded and unconverted."

"Churchianity," or formal Christianity, is commonplace in the congregations, and this does not improve conditions at all. On the contrary, it makes the situation more dangerous and doubtful, for the emphasis is placed on the whole congregation's edification instead of the individual's salvation. Churchianity is bound by its very nature to create a total resistance to the Holy Spirit's calling in individual hearts and in the congregation.

The followers of churchianity are the absolute enemies of true and living Christianity in every way. They freely cry: "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, this is the temple of the Lord." They claim to be orthodox members of congregations where God's Word is proclaimed in truth and purity, and the sacraments administered, according to the Lord's own command and institution, by a regularly called and ordained clergyman and pastor.

A follower of churchianity uses the Lord's means of grace only to rest securely in his impenitence and sin, in a sleep that can never be blessed. ... While at the same time he seeks in his vain and carnal imagination to be able

to hope safely and securely that he will be saved and eternally blessed when he dies. As an older woman on her deathbed once said to me: "As long as I was home in the old country, I really liked to go and hear the pastor preach, and so I tried to live as good as I could." There is, I am sorry to say, very good reason to fear that in our congregations are many who, like this woman, are trusting in their outward religion and expecting to gain grace, yet unwilling to wake up from their sin-sleep and be converted to the Lord and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet many of us who have been converted to a living faith in Jesus are convinced through our own personal experience as well as by God's Word that the followers of churchianity, spiritually sleeping or dead church members, are in the most dreadful danger of going eternally lost if they should die in this condition. If we believe that it is true of so many, many within our congregations, then we might well acknowledge that the topic before us is both timely and extremely serious.

Let us pray to God that He, by His Spirit, might be permitted among us during this service. We who are here certainly need to be revived, vitalized, and spiritually strengthened — primarily for the sake of our own souls. When we return to our congregations from these meetings, we could bring rich spiritual blessings back home with us. We, together with a few or more believing men and women in our congregations, unite in prayer. Then God could appropriate and accomplish a powerful work for revival and spiritual life.

Considering the dreadful and dangerous spiritual condition among us, we might well ask: What can we do to work for revival and spiritual life within our congregations?

It must be clear to us that there is a need for the proclamation of God's Word in our congregations to correspond with the spiritual condition. A proclamation of God's Word that instructs and edifies ... as helpful and





necessary as it is for God's children ... is still not the proper way to produce revival. In congregations where spiritual sleep and death prevail, there is even greater danger, for such a proclamation of the truth works like a sedative on already sleeping sinners. When we consider that there are congregations where this sort of preaching has sounded over many years, and where spiritual death generally rules within them, then our experience proves without a doubt that there needs to be a very different sort of proclamation of the truth if revival shall result as a product of the message.

**"Considering the dreadful and dangerous spiritual condition among us, ... What can we do to work for revival and spiritual life within our congregations?"**

To put it plainly, there must be a reviving proclamation of God's Word if we reasonably shall be able to expect revival. The preaching must aim at the individual conscience with an unmistakable cry: "You are the man!" When this declaration, which means, "you are sinners, who by your transgressions have called down upon yourselves the wrath of God and the judgment of the Law," receives by God's Spirit convicting and crushing power to penetrate the conscience, then there can be hope that sinners will awaken from their sin-sleep, but not before.

With God's Word as light and law for discerning the spiritual condition, we must get all believing men and women to work together for the salvation of sinners. We must totally turn away from the old traditional ways of thinking, and (I am sorry that this

needs to be said even among God's children) stop promoting the notion that it is enough when the pastor regularly preaches God's Word during the congregation's public worship services. For then sinners will not be converted, because there is no cry in it; then they will remain lost.

It is useless to keep on excusing the pastors from blame, claiming that this way of thinking is so popular and powerful that even God's children have succumbed to it. Pastors must be judged according to the attitude they have chosen to take in the congregations, for one gets the unmistakable impression from many concerned men that they stand alone in any spiritual work. Certainly the price of suffering must be paid in order to encourage the exercise of spiritual gifts in the congregation (by the laity). But the result of the long neglect has been that even true believers remain idle in the marketplace, for if they do not suffer then nothing will be accomplished for revival and spiritual life in the congregation. They have become accustomed to regarding the pastor as the one who alone should carry out all spiritual work. Yet this is obviously in direct conflict with the Word of God, which teaches that the believers are a spiritual priesthood called to proclaim His merits, Who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light.

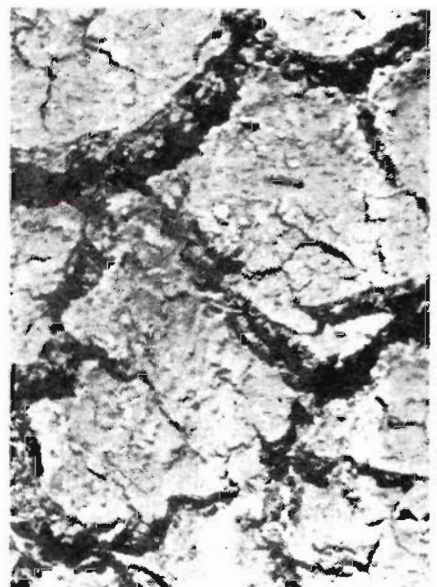
It is not only for your own personal salvation that the Lord has let the warmth of His loving heart come upon you, but so that you should be His servants, serving Him unto the salvation of others.

— by Pastor Peter Nilsen  
(Free and abridged translation from Norwegian by the editor.)

*Pastor Peter Nilsen (1852-1926) has been called a revivalist in the truest sense of the term. Immigrating to America from Norway, he trained for the ministry at Augsburg Seminary and served parishes in LaCrosse, Wisconsin; Duluth, Minnesota; and Minneapolis (St. Luke's), Minnesota. In*

"... serving Him unto the salvation of others."

*1894, Nilsen was called to be Augsburg's traveling fundraiser, but the spiritual dimension soon overshadowed the financial as he was propelled into a position of leadership during the years when powerful waves of revival swept over Norwegian Lutheranism in America. His special gift was the awakening of sleeping Christians, as is evident in this message which was the opening address at the 1895 "Friends of Augsburg," (the original name for the Lutheran Free Church) convention in Willmar, Minnesota.*



# The Scriptures Became My Life

*... man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord (Deuteronomy 8:36 NIV).*

**W**hen Adam and Eve rebelled against God and were sent from the garden, mankind and the earth itself were cursed. Death and decay have been constant reminders of our need for a Savior ever since. They are often contributing factors used by God to soften man's heart and turn man back, to his Creator.

I grew up in northern Wisconsin, graduating from high school in 1974, just after the Vietnam War turbulence of the 1960s and early 1970s. This war and certainly other factors as well, contributed to a great unrest in our nation. Certainly our adversary the devil brought about great evil: further liberalizing of the mainline denominations, widespread use of drugs, a decline of morality (especially in sexual immorality) and increase in violence, to list only a few. But God and His Word were not idle. A revival came to Barron County in the early 1970s that resulted in the salvation of many young people.

I remember passing the lunch room before school in the morning during my junior year in high school, hearing singing from the Christians who had gathered to study the Scriptures. They had two teachers for advisors. Over the next year I seemed to be drawn to these Christians. I know now God was calling to me through the Word and the love of these Christians. I came to learn later that a preacher had come to five little towns in the county and almost entire congregations would gather at the altar at the hearing of God's Word. Almaena and Shell Lake are the only two I can remember for sure. At one of these services a young man (on drugs at the time) received the Lord and returned to my high school after having been out of school for a year. I was not happy to see him. He had been one of my tormentors in previous years, putting me through all sorts of persecution after school each day. But now I could see he was different. He spoke of Jesus' love, was kind to me and was always singing Christian chorus songs. I started to go wherever he went and one night while at a youth rally in Ladysmith, I realized that I was sinful and that Jesus died for me. After confessing my sin, God's love and Gospel message became my rock of salvation. I wasn't alone. I heard of Bible studies in Rice Lake, Cameron, Chetek, Dallas, Almaena, Cumberland, Shell Lake, Spooner, etc.

Every Saturday night I traveled to Cumberland, to a Bible study called YAC (Youth Alive for Christ). It was mostly led by the young people themselves, a fact that still marvels me today. A typical meeting involved almost an hour of singing, Bible study, small group discussion and then prayer. It seemed everyone participated or quickly learned to do so. We would pray sometimes until after midnight. We even met one Saturday night when it was 30 degrees below zero. This had to be the work of the Lord for I know of few Christian youth who behave this way.

I believe the thirst of not knowing God's Word, the unrest and evil in the world and people's need for Christ because of sin was all met by God's Word itself. Probably the most significant thing about this awakening that I remember is the love for God's Word. It seems we studied the Word all the time. Everybody had a Bible and were not afraid to carry them wherever we went. I had one of those Bibles we joke about today, a great big family Bible that required a good physical fitness program to use. One day I set it on the roof of my car and drove seven miles from Barron to Cumberland. I couldn't find my Bible until I got out of the car and saw it sitting right where I had left it!

The Scriptures became my life. I was so thirsty and it seemed the same with my Christian friends. This same love for the Word is what eventually led me to the AFLC. Our seminary holds God's Word up as the standard for life and doctrine and served to deepen my love for the Word.

As quickly as it had come, it left. These young Christians numbered in the hundreds but so many were graduating from high school that we were quickly spread out over the country. Many are still my very closest friends and I thank my God that I was in Barron County at the time. I know today that there must have been older saints in the Lord who had been praying for revival. Ever since and now as a pastor, I pray for revival and I know that God is faithful. He has given His Word to a people who dwell in a dry and weary land. That Word is life itself! Let us in the AFLC preach it, stand by it and never forsake it.



— by Rev. Tim Carlson  
Wheatland, Iowa

**“He had been one of my tormentors in previous years, ... But now I could see he was different.”**



*When going to church is like going to the grocery store ...*

—by Pastor Dave Stevens  
Tucson, Arizona

For a number of years I traveled as an evangelist across the country. Often I would drive up to a church with a sign out front that read "Revival," listing the dates and times of the services.

But the revival we need so desperately today is not a series of meetings with great preaching and singing. Rather, we need a Biblical revival that will continually shake, break, melt and mold the lives of people — a revival that more than displays what Christianity **should be** but demonstrates the power of God and what Christianity **really is**.

There is something **wrong** when going to church results in no inward difference of the heart — when going to church is like going to the grocery store or gas station. There needs to be a difference!

**What will a Biblical revival do? It will expose the sins that are in the camp of God's own people.**

When you build a skyscraper, it's necessary to build part of the structure underground. It's a simple principle: the higher you go, the deeper you must go as well.

The very same principle holds true for revival. Before we go higher in the power, might and wisdom of God we must allow the Holy Spirit to go deeper in us.

This is not happening with a lot of people because of a lack of conviction. At one time, we might have been shocked by the secular sights and sounds that are broadcast daily on television. Now, those sights and sounds barely affect us, if at all. This attitude has not developed overnight. Slowly but surely, the Church has bought into the philosophy of the world which states that "everything is relative — there are no absolutes."

# WE NEED REVIVAL



Who can judge right from wrong now days? So what if Madonna lives in rebellion to the Word of God? She prays before her concerts and wears a cross, right? Who cares if Amy Grant has crossed over to secular music and is making the late night talk show circuit with her pop single "Baby, Baby?" Who knows, maybe God wants us to do a comedy act on HBO and leave the preaching of the Word in the background!

"Come on, pastor," I can hear you say, "Don't call folks sinners and stop judging!"

That kind of outcry is not new. I must speak out, though, for the Bible says there has been and will be counterfeit Christians, teachers and doctrines that will soothe the consciousness of the lukewarm and indifferent.

In I Kings, chapter 22, you'll read about Ahab, a man who hated a prophet simply because he did not tell him what he wanted to hear. Read on and you'll discover that not only could Ahab turn a deaf ear to this prophet, he even put him in prison. But guess what

Revival does not start out in the world. Somewhere in your home or car, is a mirror. Look into it — that's where revival starts!

— Ahab's actions did not change the truth! What the prophet had said came to pass!

When you think of a New Testament revival, you think of the early Church. We think of that Church as being one of miracles, joy, love and power. Still, we must never forget that in one service a husband and wife both dropped dead because they had lied! God wants us to know that there is no sin hidden from Him. Hidden sin will stop revival!

The goal of revival must not be to fill a church building or to encourage the pastor. It must exalt Christ and His love. The price of revival is simple — God must become first in your life! You must be found faithful.

(Submitted by Elva Auestad, Tucson, Arizona)

## Partners In Prayer



"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).

Praise God for the resolution of the India lawsuit.

Praise God for twelve students accepted for the FLY Team to Brazil. They will be leaving the first week of June and returning mid-July.

Pray for the healing of our AFLC president and his wife, Rev. Richard and Leone Snipstead.

Pray for the financial concerns facing the World Missions Department. They are currently funding everything at 90% with the exception of fixed costs.

Pray for the Home Mission congregations at Spokane, Washington; Warroad, Minnesota; Chillicothe, Illinois; and Bismarck, North Dakota, as they seek to call a pastor and for three congregations who are making plans to build a church —

Detroit Lakes, Duluth and Ortonville, Minnesota.

Praise God for the Home Mission monthly reports which indicate new people being reached for Christ as well as being brought into congregations for membership.

Praise God for the safe arrival of April Joy Abel on February 19, 1992. She and her parents, Jonathan and Tamba, are making plans to leave for their first term in Brazil on April 24.

Praise God for the largest student body ever at the Brazilian AFLC Bible School and Seminary. On March 9, 1992, four seminarians and twelve Bible School students began their year of classes at the Campo Mourao campus.

Pray for the Home Missions Committee as they meet on April 2-3 in Duluth, Minnesota.

from Mexico

## The Search

Today, as in all ages, there is a search going on. We see it in Genesis when our ancestors, Adam and Eve, disobeyed and hid themselves from the presence of God. He in His great love searched for them and asked, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9). And so began the search for men that has continued through the ages.

Thus it was that Christ Jesus, the beloved Son of God, entered into our history, His purpose: "To seek and to save that which was lost," (Luke 19:10).

Through the generations, the Savior of the world has deigned to come to the northern part of Mexico, to a corner of the Yaqui Valley, where we saw that there were sheep without a shepherd. He came and brought salvation to a group of souls in the farming community known as Ejido Agrarista de Obregon.

Among these were Martha Estrella and Maria del Rosario Barreto, who, after accepting Christ, studied the Catechism and were confirmed, and thus became members of the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd.

Thank you, my Lord, for your great love. Thank you that you never give up the search.

—Pastor Gabriel Mercado  
and Virginia

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
Ciudad Obregon, Sonora, Mexico



My name is Martha Estrella (on the right). I am 15 years old. My mother, Teresa de Estrella, was converted to the Lord, and I used to accompany her to church when I was 12 years old. That is when I started to hear that God sent His Son Jesus to save humanity. I give thanks to God because I came to know Christ and now I am saved by faith in Him. When I was 14, I started to study the Catechism of Martin Luther and I was confirmed by Pastor Mercado. Now I am happy for the privilege of taking part in the Holy Sacrament which is the Lord's Supper.

My name is Maria del Rosario Barreto (on the left). I am a young girl, 15 years old. My testimony is a little different from Martha's as I started to attend the services before we had the chapel. When Pastor Mercado started the work here, the services were held on the porch of Sr. Antonio Robles' house, which he lent us. There we gathered to praise God, but I didn't understand about salvation yet. Now I know it, thanks to the love of God. Like Martha, I, too, studied the Catechism and now rejoice in the Sacraments.



# Judge Dismisses Dasari Lawsuit Against AFLC

A Minnesota court has dismissed a lawsuit brought by Rev. Bhushana Rao Dasari against the AFLC. Claims against Rev. Eugene Enderlein, Rev. Einar Unseth, and Rev. Robert Lee were also dismissed. The complete dismissal on the merits of Dasari's claims was granted on March 2, without a trial, at the request of defendants' attorneys. In a 28-page decision, the court said that Dasari did not present sufficient evidence to allow the claims to be submitted to a jury.

Rev. Dasari, who was employed by the AFLC until 1986, had claimed that he was libeled by an article entitled "A New Door to India?" published in *The Lutheran Ambassador* on April 4, 1989. The article, which was written by Rev. Lee, reported the reasons that leaders of the Bible Faith Lutheran Church in India had renounced the authority of Rev. Dasari as director.

Minnesota District Court Judge William R. Howard ruled that Dasari's claims based upon the article were barred by an earlier decision in a related federal court case. The case in the United States District Court was brought in the name of Dasari's Indian organization, Bible Faith Lutheran Church. Federal Judge Harry H. MacLaughlin ruled last year that the BFLC had not shown that the statements about Rev. Dasari were published with actual malice. Judge MacLaughlin did not determine whether the statements were false. Instead, Judge MacLaughlin said that Dasari's BFLC could not prove that the statements about Dasari were published with knowledge of falsity or in reckless disregard of their truth or falsity.

In the recent decision, Judge Howard said that Dasari's leadership role in the BFLC made the dismissal of the BFLC's federal claims applicable to Dasari's personal claims. The judge also said that the claims against defen-

dants were without merit and should be dismissed regardless of the earlier decision.

Dasari also alleged that he was slandered by statements made about him during a visit to India in 1989 by Rev. Enderlien and Rev. Unseth. He also asserted that unspecified defendants tried to have him dropped from the clergy roster of the Association of American Lutheran Churches. In dismissing all of those claims, Judge Howard said that the statements were protected by the First Amendment when considered in their context. Again adopting Judge MacLaughlin's analysis, Judge Howard concluded that "determining the truth or falsity of these statements would embroil the court in a religious firestorm ... (R)esolution of this controversy would involve impermissible intrusion into internal ecclesiastical matters."

In declining to allow Dasari's claims to proceed to trial, the court stated that there was "insufficient evidence" to support Dasari's "mere averments." The court said that Dasari's evidence was "speculation" and "too tenuous."

## Pending Lawsuits

Last month, the treasurer of the Bible Faith Lutheran Church of India started a lawsuit in India asking the Indian court to declare that the society's constitution was properly amended in 1989 to eliminate the position of director. Dasari has contended that he remains the director and that he controls all church properties. In addition, the suit asks the court to restrain Dasari from interfering with the treasurer's duties.

In the meantime, several claims in the federal court case involving the AFLC remain for trial. Rev. Dasari's group contends that the AFLC has infringed its trade name. The AFLC's counter claim says that Rev. Dasari fraudulently misrepresented the ownership of church properties. The AFLC provided over \$61,000 to establish the Moriah Children's Home and to register the property. The AFLC claims that

Dasari misrepresented the ownership by concealing the BFLC's by-laws. The AFLC requests a declaration of its right to tell potential contributors that the Moriah Children's Home is affiliated with the AFLC.

As requested earlier by the AFLC's counsel, the court has referred these issues to a mediator, who would assist the parties in seeking a resolution. Pending mediation, a trial date has not yet been set.

The AFLC and the individually named pastors have been represented in the state and federal lawsuits by Mary M. O'Brien and Victoria L. Wagner, of Minneapolis, and by Morley Friedman, of St. Paul.

## ARC Auxiliary Being Considered

**Osceola, Wisconsin** — Plans are progressing for the formation of an AFLC ARC Auxiliary to be considered at the Ladies Retreat on May 2. The ARC Board is encouraging the establishment of such an organization, convinced that it is time for the women of the AFLC to be more involved in the "responsibilities and fun" of operating such a ministry as the ARC, according to a recent letter from Cliff Seldal, chairman of the board.

The honorary chairwoman of the proposed auxiliary is Jan Rieth, Amery, Wisconsin. Velma Clark, also of Amery, will serve as the organizational chairwoman, and the secretary will be Mary Pollestad, Coon Rapids, Minnesota.

Women of the AFLC are encouraged to pray about the possibility of this new organization, and to watch for further announcements.



## Basketball At AFLBS Matures

AFLBS basketball has changed over the years. The men's team started out competing in a YMCA league and in 1986 moved to competing in a structured league for small Bible colleges called the National Bible College Athletic Association. In 1987, a women's team was formed and competes in the NBCCA also. The men's team competed in the National Tournament for the first time in 1987, finishing third. The women played in the national tournament for the first time last year, finishing second.

The one thing that has not changed about AFLBS basketball is the focus. AFLBS basketball does not emphasize winning games but to use basketball as a ministry and an opportunity to witness for Christ. We continually stress giving all the glory to God and to let our light shine for Him on and off the basketball court.

This year we have been blessed with a permanent practice site. King

## Going Into NBCCA Tourney

## AFLBS Women Ranked First In Nation

When AFLBS put together a women's basketball team for the first time five years ago, it was easy to make excuses.

The team practiced twice a week. Then seminarian Keith Quanbeck had never coached a team before. The team's next coach, Wanda Jacobson, secretary to Dean Greven, was also a rookie coach. The Bible School has no gym. Usually AFLBS could gather only seven or eight players a year.

AFLBS could usually win a few games against the region colleges they

of Glory Lutheran Church in Eden Prairie has graciously allowed us the use of their facility for practice and home games. This has cut down on travel time and expenses.

This year both teams have earned births to the NBCCA National Tournament in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, March 18-20, and are looking forward to traveling to and participating in that tournament.

—Wanda Jacobson

played. But the word "Bible college power" was not an expression used in connection to AFLBS' women's team.

"No respect," remembered Jacobson, now in her fourth year of coaching. "We were competing against schools that have anywhere from 400 to 1,000 students, teams that practice every day, play 20 games a season, with nice big gyms to work with. And we're 100 students with no gym, and we're practicing twice a week."

Jacobson smiled: "When you walked into the gym, you had the sense that the other team was thinking they could walk all over us. We were nothing."

The tables have turned.

AFLBS has a Bible college women's basketball power. Going into the National Bible College Athletic Association championship tournament in Oklahoma City, March 18-20, AFLBS is ranked No. 1. Already this season, the women have beaten the defending national champion St. Paul Bible College (now called Crown College). AFLBS has amassed a 10-2 record, losing by four to SPBC early in the season and to Northwestern College, which plays in a division for large four-years schools.

Why the change?

Well, the team still practices twice a week in a small gym. But the level of talent is formidable:

\* Kirstin Schierkolk, a junior from Prairie Farm, Wisconsin, averages 26 points and 10 rebounds at guard. She scored 40 points in a 73-42 win over Faith Bible of Ankeny, Iowa. She also scored 40 in a 100-26 win over Trinity Bible College of Ellendale, North Dakota.

\* Opponents only imagine that Kristin is all over the floor during games because her twin sister, Katrina, an inch taller than Kristin at 5'9" is averaging 12 points a game and eight rebounds.

\* Christine Swanson, a 6-foot senior from Canton, South Dakota, averages 18 rebounds a game. Against SPBC last December, Christine pulled

## Administration Building Help Needed

We praise God for all the congregations represented through volunteers working on the Administration Building. Much has been accomplished in the last two months. We are praying that it might all be finished by the first of June. If we can get volunteers it will save a good amount of money.

If we could make a special emphasis in the month of April with volunteers coming to work on the building, we know we would see completion of the building by June 1.

The following work needs to be done:

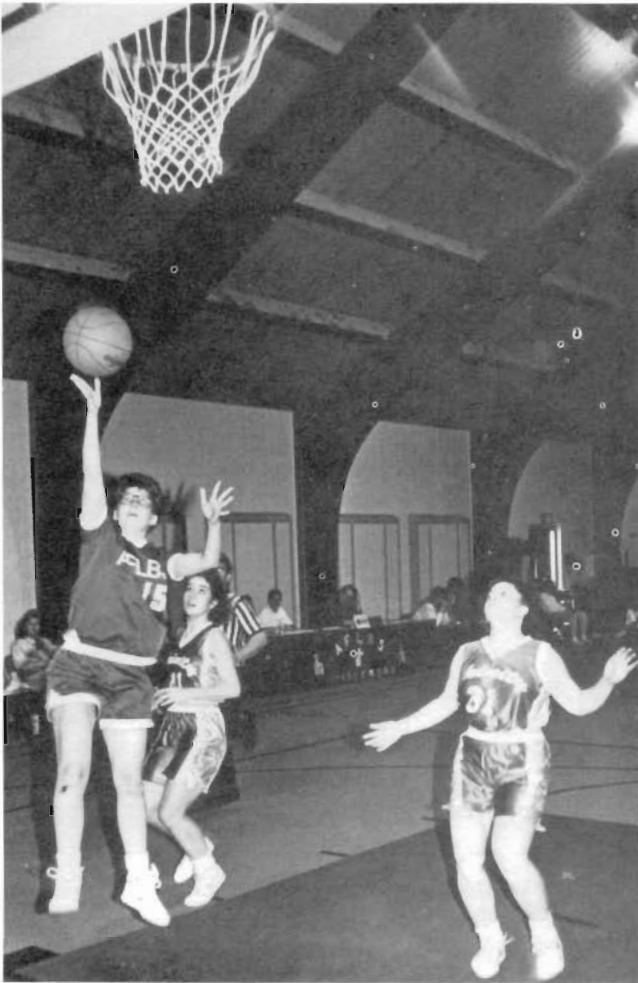
1. Sheetrocking.
2. Grid for the drop-ceiling.
3. Painting.
4. Carpentry skills.

I would like to ask each council to see if you could send a delegation or even a man or two to come and volunteer for a few days. We will find lodging and meals are served at the headquarters.

Painting could also be accomplished by women volunteers. Maybe a group of ladies from your WMF group could come for a day. It would help so much.

Call Pastor Les Galland at (612) 545-5631 if you can help. He will make arrangements for your coming.





Beth Jackson drives in for a layup.



John Greven shoots for two points.

down 36 rebounds. She averages 12 points a game (with a high of 27 against Bethel College's JV).

\* And then the combination of Wendy Qualley, Froid, Montana, 11 points a game; Kellie Olson, Culbertson, Montana, 5 steals, 4 assists a game; Beth Jackson, Ishpeming, Michigan, AFLBS' most proficient three-point shooter; and Ruth Gunderson, a versatile all-around substitute from Lake Stevens, Washington, has made AFLBS one of the most prominent teams in small Bible college basketball — even though AFLBS is one of the few two-year schools in the league, and also one of the smallest in enrollment.

It's just that the team doesn't have to make excuses anymore. By March 20, AFLBS could have its first national champion.

—James L. Johnson

## Men's Team

The AFLBS Men's Basketball Team is being coached by a local alumnus Joel Unverzagt this year and is having a very good season. With a record of 7-7, they go into the NBCCA National Tournament ranked fourth. This is the highest ranking the men's team has ever had going into the National's. Unverzagt comments about the team saying, "We stress team play which is evident by the fact that we have six gentlemen scoring in double figures."

\* Kermit Nash a junior from Colfax, North Dakota, scored 26 points against Trinity Bible College.

\* John Greven a senior from Plymouth, Minnesota, scored 26 points against Vernard Bible College.

\* Jon Dryburgh a junior from Fordville, North Dakota, pulled down 21 rebounds against Faith Bible Baptist.

\* Ryan Behne a junior from Wheatland, Iowa, and Justin Jones a senior from Wyndmere, North Dakota, have both gone 8-10 from the free throw line this year.

Coach Unverzagt stated that, "It has been a pleasant year with a blend of junior and senior players. We have relied on the consistent play of seniors John Greven, Justin Jones and Todd Bjorgaard, along with an infusion of junior talent Ryan Behne, Jon Dryburgh, Kermit Nash and Brian Hagen, Dickinson, North Dakota. The way players have supported each other, at times with limited playing time has really been a witness." Other team members are seniors Peter Tjelta, Blaine, Minnesota, and Mark and Marshall Nessa, Garden City, Iowa.

—Wanda Jacobson

## Gifts Of Love

Last fall, the Bethel Lutheran Church WMF, Culbertson, Montana, began thinking about what they could do to help make Christmas special for missionary families. When the end of November arrived, 25 bunnies had been shipped overseas. The blessings received were only beginning for both the Montana women and the missionary families.

The bunnies were an affordable project. One member of the WMF had purchased large amounts of fabric at a going-out-of-business sale months earlier, wondering how the Lord would guide in the use of that great buy. Bunnies are also lightweight, so airmail packages were used.

Making bunnies was something all women of the church could be involved in. Four or five evenings from 6-10 p.m. allowed the ladies to consider it as a short-term project. The variety of work provided something for everyone and not just seamstresses.

The evenings of young and old working together amidst lots of laughter and delightful fellowship ended too quickly as the last package was wrapped. Then came the waiting. Would a certain child think he was too big to receive such a gift? Would the package arrive intact and in time?

Letters from around the world began arriving in Culbertson. The thank-you letters were copied for all the women to enjoy and to be encouraged. Some were cute and bring a smile every time they are read. Others brought tears.

"Thank you so much for the gifts that you made for our children. They came at just the right time. We had gotten your letter and decided to wait until Christmas to give the rabbits to the kids. The week before they arrived (in great shape) our daughter, Gretchen, had a grand mal seizure at home. It was on a Saturday and all of us were home. She had never had a seizure before and this really scared us. From



her symptoms it looked as though she was going to die. I called for an ambulance. All we could do was hold onto her and keep her from choking. After the medical people arrived, we realized that she was going to be OK. She spent the night in the hospital.

"When your bunnies arrived I knew right away that our kids could use them immediately. I was right. To quell the anxiety of seeing their sister so ill, the bunnies became an ever-present reminder that people are thinking about us and praying for us ... We are so thankful for people like you who

remind us that we are not alone ... Just wanted to thank you all for these precious gifts of love. We see them as caring reminders that our church and our Savior know just what we need.

"Sincerely yours in Christ,  
Chaplain Mark Antal family"

Bethel WMF recently met to brainstorm for the next Christmas project. The evening of fellowship also included a recipe swap with each lady bringing her favorite coffee or tea and mug. The blessings from making those gifts of love continue.

— Solveig Hjermstad

The 1992 WMF District Winter Retreat took place February 7-8 in Marquette, Michigan, with ladies from area churches attending. Highlights included a "Singspiration," discussion of "Woman to Woman" tapes provided by "Focus on the Family" and a basket weaving demonstration. A time of Christian fellowship and rest was enjoyed by all.

The 1992 Spring Rally for the SW Central Minnesota District WMF will be May 5, at Calvary Free Lutheran Church, Fergus Falls. The church is located on the corner of Highway 111 and County Road 1. The Connely Dyruds will be the speakers for the day.



WMF Honorary Membership pins were presented to these ladies at First English Free Lutheran Church, Lostwood, North Dakota: (L. to R.) Bertina Thorvig, Agnes Eliason, Susan Enns, Helen Afseth, Alma Lumley, Myrtle Hanson and Gladys Erickson.



## In Memoriam

Funeral services for Rev. Milo D. Gudim were held on February 21, in Trinity Free Lutheran Church, Grand Forks, North Dakota, with Pastors Larry Haagenson and Bruce Dalager officiating.

A resident of Mayville, North Dakota, since his retirement from parish ministry last September, he passed away suddenly as the result of a heart attack.

Pastor Gudim was born on September 7, 1926, at Aneta, North Dakota, the son of Clarence and Inga (Quanebeck) Gudim, and grew up in the McVile, North Dakota, and Newfolden, Minnesota, areas. After graduation from McVile High School, he served in the Army Air Force during World War II, and following his discharge attended the Lutheran Bible Institute, Minneapolis. He later attended Augsburg

College and Seminary, Minneapolis, graduating in 1954.

Married to Edith Sorem on September 6, 1952, he served with his wife as missionaries to Madagascar from 1954 to 1967, first with the Lutheran Free Church and then with the American Lutheran Church. Returning to the U.S. in 1967, he pastored congregations at Rollag, Minnesota, Reynolds, North Dakota, and Argyle, Minnesota, affiliating with the AFLC together with the latter parish in 1988.

He is survived by his wife; three sons, Duane and Dwight, both of Grand Forks, and Ken of Minneapolis; three daughters, Cheryl (Mrs. Leif) Aakre, Stephen, Minnesota, Gloria of East Grand Forks, Minnesota, and Dawn (Mrs. Dennis) Haugen, Ypsilanti, Michigan; thirteen grandchildren; and one sister, Fern (Mrs. Don) Miller, Georgetown, Minnesota.

He was preceded in death by his parents, one son, one grandson, and one daughter-in-law.

Blessed be his memory!

## Offering Envelopes For 1993

The last two years the AFLC has given you the opportunity to order offering envelopes for your congregation. Included in these boxes of envelopes were 12 envelopes for a special offering for the emphasis for the month. This year the special envelopes for each month are as follows:

January - World Missions  
February - Parish Education  
March - Church Extension  
April - Home Missions  
May - Bible School  
June - ARC  
July - Youth  
August - General Fund  
September - World Missions  
October - Help In Service  
November - Seminary  
December - Home Missions

In the next couple of weeks each pastor and chairman of the congregation will receive a letter concerning your order for envelopes for 1993. Included in this letter will be a sample of the envelopes. We trust every congregation will use this service offered to you. We will need your order by April 30, 1992, to receive a discount.

—Pastor Les Galland  
Business Administrator

## letter to the editor

To the Editor:

I really appreciated the January 21 *The Lutheran Ambassador* with its articles on abortion.

In the March 3 issue I read John O. Pearson's letter to the editor suggesting a "pro-choice" or "pro-life" ballot in the next national election with the provision that only women be permitted to vote on the issue. I feel the abortion issue is very much a man's issue as well as a woman's. Both men and women are involved in the procreation of children, and both the father and

mother are involved (or need to be) involved in the decision to preserve life.

It concerns me to think of taking away the right to voice that opinion from men. We are talking about murder, which is a moral issue. We, as Christians, need to voice our opinions strongly to the lawmakers. We, as women, need to encourage our men to be strong in their convictions and to speak out for the unborn.

Josie Pittman  
Zumbrota, Minnesota

The Association Retreat Center warmly welcomes you to the **Tenth Annual Women's Retreat** to be held May 1-3 at the ARC, Osceola, Wisconsin. We are pleased to announce that Edna Blake, Christian radio personality of KDNW-FM, Duluth, Minnesota, will be our guest speaker again this year. Our theme for the weekend is "Increasing in Fruitfulness," (II Peter 1:3-9).

Included in the weekend are a vocal concert, a craft sale, and plentiful refreshment. Brochures are on the way to your church now. We encourage you to send your registration to the ARC early. Direct any questions about the retreat to the ARC, (715) 294-2877, or to Jeannie Brandt, (605) 335-0371. We will be looking for you in May.

**Reva, South Dakota** — Slim Buttes Lutheran Church will host the annual South Dakota-Nebraska Spring Youth Rally on April 11-12. The theme, "Right Relationships," is based on Romans 12:9-10.

**Dickinson, North Dakota** — Our Saviour's Church is in need for 24 Concordia hymnals. Please contact the congregation at 614 11th Street East, Dickinson, ND 58601, or phone (701) 227-1652.

The new address for **Rev. Jon Benson** is Box 6, Ortle, SD 57256. The Bensons, who became parents of a new son, Caleb Jon, on March 6, moved to Ortle in February, and he will be installed as pastor of the congregation on April 12, by AFLC President Richard Snipstead.

## PASTOR MILO D. GUDIM

**M**ilo Gudim was one of our pastors who shared a ministry on two continents, in two cultures, in his case, Madagascar and the United States. No doubt the 13-year period of foreign mission work profoundly affected the next quarter of a century in which he ministered as a pastor in the home country.

I have always felt that a meeting, which I also attended, at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, where he also found his wife, by the way, was pivotal in his call to world missions. I could tell he was deeply moved at the challenge given that particular night. In the providence of God, he and Edith weren't given a long time in Madagascar, but memories remain of his one deputation visit to my parish in New Effington, South Dakota. He showed slides and shared experiences in bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a people he loved very much.

As a parish pastor, and it was only during his years at

nearby Argyle, Minnesota, that I had a chance to observe him as such, he did steady work, preached the Word sincerely and showed great interest in his people. He was a home-going pastor and especially took care of the sick and aged in his visitation. Because of a health problem he felt he had to retire upon reaching age 65 and less than six months later was called to his heavenly home.

Milo and I shared an aunt and uncle. His father's brother was married to my mother's sister. In 1941 he came to live with his aunt and uncle so that he could go to school in our town and so began our long friendship. He only stayed a year, but later we met again at Augsburg and were in seminary together for two years. Milo was easy to be around, not meddlesome. He was a common man who mingled well with common people, not a bad way for a pastor to be.

Milo Gudim has entered into the joy of his Lord. Well done good and faithful servant.

—Raynard Huglen

## Bagley, Minnesota

—“Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers” (III John 5). This passage is engraved on a plaque that was presented to Ed and Mildred Mathison on Sunday, November 24, 1991, as members and friends of Rice Free Lutheran congregation gathered to honor this very special couple for their dedicated devotion to church and community during the 57 years that they have lived in the area.

The program, emceed by Bob A. Bilden, featured a “This is Your Life” skit, which reminisced, in word and song, the Mathison's life and activities during these years. Greetings from former pastors were read, and one was delivered in person by Rev. Mauritz Lundeen, who also presented a vocal selection, together with Mrs. Lundeen. Other music was provided by Clarice Austinson and Helen Johnson.

Memories were shared by Norman Nelson, Lorraine Gabrud, and Norma



Mildred and Ed Mathison with Pastors Lyle Twite, Richard Snipstead, and Mauritz Lundeen.

Shegrud. The Rice Sunday School members past and present, shared some of the choruses which the Mathisons had taught them over the years. Their three children, Clarice Austinson, Oral, and Earl also spoke and sang.

Norman Chase, chairman of the congregation, expressed gratitude to Ed and Mildred for their faithfulness to God and His Church, and presented the couple with a framed color portrait and inscribed plaque to be eventually placed in the church. A “Just Say Thanks!” certificate, together with a

check from Aid Association for Lutherans, was presented to them.

Rev. Richard Snipstead, president of the AFLC, was present for the celebration, and brought a message from God's Word to the afternoon gathering. Scripture reading and closing prayer were offered by Pastor Lyle Twite, who presently serves the parish.

*Editor's note: I first got acquainted with Ed and Mildred when serving the Bagley parish as student pastor during the summer of 1965, and several years later we spent a winter together in Tioga, North Dakota, while he served as the parish lay assistant. The clergy in his area used to say, with a smile, that their congregations were not too saddened by pastoral resignations, because then they knew that Ed would be serving them for a while. He had a shepherd's heart, and was a gifted Bible teacher and preacher, as much as any ordained pastor I have ever met. Mildred always complemented his ministry with her special gifts of hospitality and service. I remember, too, the memories that he shared of revival in his home church at Sinai, South Dakota, and how he encouraged me as a young pastor to pray and work for awakening.*

*Congratulations and best wishes to two dear friends!*



## THE WONDER OF IT ALL

**O** the wonder of it all! ... just to think that God loves me, writes a contemporary composer, putting into words the sense of awe and amazement that should mark every child of God.

Rodney ("Gipsy") Smith, a celebrated lay evangelist of last century, was 87 years old when he died. It has been stated that he didn't know any more about theology than a rabbit knows about ping-pong, yet he was known for a special freshness that characterized his preaching even during declining years. "How do you do it?" someone asked, and his answer deserves to be remembered: "I have never lost the wonder."

The wonder that God loves me!

The wonder that God sent His Son to pay the price for my sins with His holy and precious blood!

The wonder that God has welcomed me into His family by grace alone!

Christian, does your heart still sing with the wonder of it all? Are you still surprised that He calls you His child? Or have you grown cold and careless concerning so great a salvation? If so, God wants to renew within you the heart of a child. This new sense of wonder can be called awakening or revival.

When you read these words, the Lord willing, I will be returning from the country of Estonia, on an unexpected journey made possible through the generosity of my congregation and other AFLC friends. Some who have visited there in recent months return with reports of revival in the land, which I hope to witness firsthand. Decades of Communist oppression have caused their newfound freedom to be doubly precious to the Estonian people, who are filling the churches to hear the good news of freedom in Jesus Christ.

"Don't go there for what you can give," cautioned a man who also visited the Baltic republics recently, "go prepared to receive. God is doing a great work in Estonia, and you will not return unchanged." Pray for the four AFLC pastors in our delegation, that the Lord would create a new sense of wonder in our hearts as we see what He is doing in a land that has so little materially and is so open spiritually.

## LOST!

**T**wo young men took a day off from work to go skiing. The date was February 11, 1992, and the place was Mt. Baldy, in the San Bernadino Mountains near Los Angeles, California. Tim Pines and Charlie Prior were friends from a young adult fellowship at their church, and they shared a love for Christ and an enthusiasm for winter sports that led to plans for a special day together on the mountain.

Tim and Charlie did not return from their skiing trip by the end of the day. Their vehicle was soon located in the parking lot by the lodge, but no sign has been found of the two men as of this writing. Tim is the husband of Becky, daughter of Odell and Margaret Kittelson, former mission-

aries to Bolivia, and the young couple recently became the parents of a baby boy.

Lost! It's a terrifying word when it refers to someone near and dear to us. Hundreds of men have been engaged in the search on Mt. Baldy, and even helicopters have been enlisted to comb the slopes for any sign of the missing men. Volunteers continue the quest, even though it has officially been abandoned. God's people across the country and around the world have joined with the family in prayer. Those who seek and those who pray are united by one common cause: that the lost might be found.

But the family and friends of Tim and Charlie have a special source of comfort and hope. If these two young men are not living, then they are at home with the Lord, which is far better. They may be lost from us for a time, but not lost from their heavenly Father.

Lost! All who do not know the Lord are lost in sin, and the first priority for the people of God is that the lost might be found. It will require a mobilization more extensive than needed to search a mountain for two missing skiers, beginning with fervent prayer and then claiming time and energy beyond our expectations. Some are lost far away from home; others are lost in the midst of church and family life. God calls us to reach out to them, no matter where they are, with the confidence that He still welcomes lost sinners to come home.

"For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

## THE END OF THE TUNNEL?

**I**s it possible that the end of the tunnel is finally in sight? The last issue included a brief notice concerning the dismissal of charges against the AFLC regarding the India lawsuits by a Minnesota district judge. The announcement is followed up in this issue by a more complete statement prepared by our attorneys. Many of our readers who have followed these painful developments over the past three years join us in rejoicing that a heavy burden has been lifted from the hearts and minds of our officials, including your editor. You will learn from the article, however, that some questions remain unresolved, and that there is always the possibility of an appeal by Rev. Dasari and his associates.

Regardless of legal issues, however, we will not reach the end of the tunnel until there has been reconciliation. Let us praise and thank God together, but continue to pray that wounded spirits might be healed and unforgiving hearts humbled ... on both sides. Pray, too, that the unresolved differences might be settled through mediation, without ever going to court, to the glory of God and the furtherance of His work in India.

**Washington, D.C. (EP)** — Shopping malls, movie theaters, and other public buildings across the nation are erecting ramps and otherwise remodeling their facilities to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities. The changes are made necessary by the 1990 Americans With Disabilities Act, which went into effect on January 26.

However, churches and other religious organizations are unaffected by the law. Constitutional concerns raised by experts in church-state relations resulted in a broad exemption for church bodies. The fear was that by including religious organizations under the definition of places of "public accommodation," Congress would be opening the door to intrusive federal regulation of church groups.

Language included in the bill makes it clear that churches are exempt from making their facilities physically accessible to the disabled. For instance, the rules make it clear that a church does not become a place of public accommodation if it runs public ministries, such as a food bank or a day care center. Church buses and shuttles are also exempt from the regulations.

Larger churches are required to comply with the employment section of the law, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. However, the law still recognizes the rights of churches and religious organizations to use religious criteria in hiring decisions.

**Reading, England (EP)** — During 1991 the number of languages in which at least one book of the Bible has been translated rose to 1,978, according to the United Bible Societies (UBS).

Thirty-two new languages received at least one book of the Bible during 1991, the largest annual increase since 1987. The number of languages with complete Bibles increased to 322, with the addition of two languages from Zaire, one from Guatemala, and one from Yugoslavia.

More than 80% of the world's population has access to at least a portion of the Bible in a language they can understand. But illiteracy, geographical isolation, political and social problems and the difficulty of grasping meaning in a language other than one's mother

tongue makes this figure misleading.

There are between 3,000 and 6,000 languages in the world, and UBS currently is involved in 608 language projects, 412 of which are first-time translations for that language. Yet sheer numbers are not the most important thing, said Dr. John D. Erickson, UBS General Secretary.

"What is it that keeps a translator working day and night to produce a translation of the Bible?" Erickson asked. "Certainly not statistics! It is his or her desire to have God's Word available for people to read in the language of their heart, their mother tongue. Then, people can know that 'God speaks my language.'"

**Altoona, Pennsylvania** — The pastor, the entire church council and a majority of the active members of First Lutheran Church have resigned and formed a new congregation after the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) synod bishop suspended the pastor contrary to a vote of the congregation. Allegheny Synod Bishop Gerald Miller, citing amendments to ELCA's constitution at the last convention which he claims increase his powers over congregations, imposed a temporary pastor over the church council's objections, who began directing expenditures of church funds without council or congregational approval.

Bishop Miller's apparently unprecedented action was the latest in a dis-

pute in which he has sided with a dissident minority within the congregation, who have never been able to muster more than a fourth or less of the votes on any issue.

In defense of his decision, Miller cited language in the ELCA's constitution (Chapter 20, 21, 23, as amended September 2, 1991) which authorizes a bishop to suspend a pastor if "it should become apparent to the bishop that the pastoral office cannot be conducted effectively in the congregation *or that local conditions may be adversely affected by the continued service by the ordained minister ...*" (italicized words added at the September convention). His interpretation of the new language gives a bishop authority to remove a pastor at will and with no procedural safeguards whenever the bishop, in his sole discretion, concludes that "local conditions may be adversely affected."

ELCA Secretary Lowell Almen appears to disagree, stating that the new language cited by Miller applies only to the context of the disciplinary procedures which that chapter of the constitution addresses, and would be subject to the same procedural safeguards. The points in this case will not be tested, however, due to the fact that the pastor and council have withdrawn from the ELCA, rejecting any legal recourse. (Based on information from articles in the March, 1992 issue of *Evangel.*)