

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

May 24, 1983

***"That
these
honored
dead"***

A young woman pays homage to the war dead with a visit and a prayer during a light drizzle at the Veterans Administration Cemetery at Wood, Wisconsin.

Religious News Service Photo



AT THE MASTER'S FEET



Pastor Emerson Anderson

Strength for the storm ahead

Private worship is important. Scripture teaches us we can't survive without it. We read of this in Luke 21. Jesus teaches His disciples about being prepared for the difficult days which will precede His second coming. What does He say? First, "possess your soul" (verse 19). By this He means "have control over your soul" or "be in command over your life decisions." Many, obviously, have lost such control. In others it's not so obvious. Only the spiritual Christian has control over his soul. The carnal Christian lives under the control of sinful flesh. This is important for us to remember, lest we lose out in the end. In the coming

evil days, when survival in the physical life may depend on denying the Lord, the carnal Christian will not stand. The temptation to turn from the Lord for short-range well-being will overcome him. That's what happened to Peter when he denied Christ. Be sure you always "possess your soul."

Secondly, Jesus deals with the heart (verse 34). The heart is that inner chamber in which the activity of the soul takes place. Obviously, the heart will not be right if the soul is not right. Jesus speaks of two conditions which He calls a "burdened heart." Both come from selfish interest born of carnality. They are at opposite extremes of human response to difficult times. One is worry and the other is escapism through dissipation and drunkenness. In a sense, Jesus is saying preparedness for the difficult days preceding His return includes a light heart. A heart burdened with depression is in no condition to deal with life's difficulties. It will never endure to the end. In Matthew 11:28-30, we read of Jesus' "easy yoke" and "light burden." Surely He faced as dark a future as any man, yet He had an "easy yoke" and a "light burden." His heart was not burdened with worry or the guilt of escapism. He walked in the reality of His world with a full assurance that all would turn out well because He was always about the business of God Almighty. He invited His disciples to join Him and promised them the same "easy yoke" and "light burden." No doubt, that invitation still stands; so walk with God, keep a light heart, and be prepared.

Last, Jesus speaks of something

that is the foundation for preparedness for the days preceding His coming (verse 36). Out of this comes the "light heart" and "possession of the soul." If we fail here, we fail in everything. Jesus says, "Be alert and pray all the time." Hallesby has likened prayer to the Lord coming into our hearts, and as our response to His call to come and be with Him. If this is true, then prayer is communion with God. Prayer is vital to private worship.

We have been emphasizing private communion with the Lord, its necessity and value. Now we wish to underline that Jesus taught it to be absolutely essential for survival in the evil days at the end of the age. Those days are upon us. We are seeing more and more spiritual shipwrecks. We stand on dangerous ground if we neglect private worship. We say a man is fully prepared if he is "in Christ." Evidently Luke 21 gives a true description of what it means to be "in Christ." This seems to square with Paul's explanation of it in Philippians 3 also. Should we not sound the alarm against the "easy-believism" of our day? Will such Christianity get us through the difficult times ahead?

We are Lutherans committed to the concept of godly piety as the evidence of true Christianity. Let us be careful to keep that concept. Let us faithfully teach it and warn of the dangers of "shallow Christianity." Let us exhort to daily, private worship "at the Master's feet," that everyone may be fully prepared for the storm ahead and finish the course with joy. God help us to that end. Amen.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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by Pastor Gerald D. Blais, Jr.
Fall River, Massachusetts

All human beings are subject to physical death. The unsaved often dread the fact, but the Christian is more often overwhelmed by this passage to spiritual reunion with God and the joys of heaven. The Christian's ultimate encounter with his Lord is well summarized by St. Paul in I Corinthians 15. Nonetheless, even for believers, heaven's gain is the personal loss of family and friends, even if only for a season until the believers' reunion in Christ. Paul correctly distinguishes between the weeping of believers for personal loss (Romans 12:15) and the weeping of the unbelievers, who are without hope (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). The believer may be close to the Lord, diligent in the use of the Means of Grace, constant in prayer and reading of the Word, yet probably has made no physical preparations for death. The same is also true for most Christians who have responsibility for others in their care—the young

disabled, ill or elderly. Christians may be called to Glory after an accident, effects of birth defects, a chronic illness terminated suddenly, any of a host of contagious diseases, or the frailty of great age. We have been warned—this hour comes unexpectedly (Luke 12:16-21) and the cares of this life may leave us unprepared. All Christians ought to be involved in the pre-planning of a funeral which is Christ-honoring, emphasizes the victory of life over death in Him, and reassures those who yet remain and wait for the same homecoming. How this will find expression and focus is a complicated matter that ought to be settled *before* that hour comes. In the time of grief, it is normal that emotion clouds our thinking and our logic and obliterates many plans which had been considered but never formalized.

Funeral planning on a pre-need basis is good Christian stewardship. It identifies spiritual priorities for the service, personal needs, wants and desires for the funeral and service,

"All Christians ought to be involved in the pre-planning of a funeral which is Christ-honoring. . . ."

and matches these goals against resources available. Where pre-payment of funeral service charges is accomplished, pre-need planning can allow for costs to be met at present-day charges, or nearly so.

Pre-death planning of a funeral and service also supports a Christian testimony and witness. In the choice of pastors, especially the selection of a preacher, and the choice of Scripture lessons and hymns, there is a statement of belief and trust in the Lord of Eternal Life which can be made by every believer. In every Christian family there are unsaved relatives, and in life the Christian may have unbelieving friends and co-workers to whom the task of funeral arrangements may be designated at the time of death. Even in Christian institutions with custodial care of patients, the Gospel emphasis may be present in such services, but the personal statement of faith absent without pre-established plans for funerals. The death of a Christian represents his or her last personal witness to the world expressed through the funeral service.

It is important to emphasize that pre-need funeral planning is a partnership between the Christian, his or her pastor, and a funeral director who ought to be a believing and confessing Christian as well. The parish pastor should be able to direct his parishioners to these professionals in the local community. Together you can work for the goal of funeral arrangements that give witness to the believer's witness of eternal life.

It is important to note that there are many variations in funeral forms and in the ultimate disposition of the body and conduct of the service. There may be visitation (calling hours) at the home or funeral home with viewing of the body; visitation with the family and a closed casket; calling hours without the presence of the body; or no calling hours at all.

♠



"Lord, make
me to know
my end,
and the measure
of my days,
what it is;
That I may
know how
frail I am."
Psalm 39:4

THE CHRISTIAN and FUNERAL PLANNING

FUNERAL . . .

The disposition of the body may be by earth (or sea) burial, entombment in a mausoleum crypt; or cremation with entombment in a columbarium, earth burial or scattering of the cremated remains. Some individuals may elect to donate their bodies for anatomical studies in medical colleges, in which case the remains may be returned to the survivors at a later date upon request for disposition.

In the same way, the funeral service and content may vary. It may occur in the funeral home, at church, in a cemetery or institution chapel, or even in a fitting outdoor location. If the body of the deceased is not present for the order of worship, the term memorial service is usually preferred to funeral. The latter frequently occurs when interment or entombment takes place immediately after death, or when the deceased resided at some distance from a home town. Occasionally, a special memorial service may be held by a church or institution remembering some particular pastor, missionary or church worker who served or came from that congregation, college, etc.

Prudence, reality and honesty must be foremost in making these decisions in funeral arrangements. One scientific fact must also be considered at this point—at death, our bodies return to the basic compounds and elements from which they arose (Genesis 2:7). No preservation techniques, no special caskets or vaults

*"O death, where
is thy sting?
O grave, where
is thy
victory? . . .
But thanks
be to God,
which giveth us
the victory through
our Lord Jesus Christ."*

I Cor. 15:55, 57



HOW, WHEN, and WHERE to PRAY

Our Lord Jesus taught us *how* to pray by giving us the Lord's Prayer as a guide. He told us to forgive others and to glorify His name above all else. Our Savior didn't specify any exact time to pray, but He did tell us to be humble *when* we pray through the parable of the Pharisees and the tax collector. However, Jesus did teach us *where* to pray when He said, "Go to your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen" (Matthew 6:6, TEV).

This room could be a mud hut in a strange foreign country half way around the world *or* it could be a maximum security jail cell in a large state or federal prison. Our

God still
answers prayer
today!

by Allen D. Hanson

can halt this process. In earth burial or crypt entombment, this decomposition may take years, in the crematory, but a few hours. While the family of the deceased may obtain some psychological comfort from viewing a cosmetically restored body in an attitude of repose (particularly after a debilitating illness or maiming accident), this is a temporary halt in a natural process. The glorified body which shall be ours at the resurrection is far superior to the weak bodies we sow to the earth or place in the tomb (cf. I Corinthians 15). The only "eternal preservation" is with the Lord and in the spirit. These matters should be considered when deciding on choice of casket, liner/vault, crypt, urns or niche, and the professional services for the bodily care of the deceased. Christians must strike a balance here—this frail shell was "the temple of the Lord" (I Corinthians 3:16,17) in life, but in death it shall return to the dust of the earth.

In pre-need funeral planning, the issue of pastoral relations arises and

can sometimes cause uncomfortable feelings for some individuals. If it is desired that someone other than the incumbent pastor of your congregation preach, then consider his participation as liturgist or to deliver the Scripture readings. Should this not be desired for personal reasons, the pastor of the congregation where the deceased held membership should at least be asked to bring the greetings and condolences of the church at the funeral service. Pastors normally acknowledge that good pastoral relationships often mature into strong friendships and by this mechanism a preference for a clergyman at a funeral may have been indicated some years prior to the incumbent's arrival at a congregation. Pastors normally accept and understand that participation in the funeral service is typically at the request of the family directly, or sometimes at the request of the parish pastor when there was some previous contact or relation with the deceased. (I was once invited to read a lesson at the service of a friend's grandmother, only to arrive at the

Lord specifies no definite place where that room must be located. As Paul writes, in his first letter to Timothy, "I desire then that in every place the men should pray" (I Timothy 2:8, RSV).

Christians have prayed in earnest throughout the ages in private homes or churches on a fairly regular basis. Frequently they respond to personal tragedy or danger with special prayers in special places. They cry out for help in times of sickness and distress with fervent prayers for personal safety and then soon forget God's answer almost as quickly as the crisis has passed. Never before in Christian history has God responded more to the prayers of His people than He is doing today and never before have so many of God's people forgotten the answers to prayer almost as fast as they were received.

When my father returned from the mission field in South Madagascar in 1926 with his body full of malaria and other tropical diseases, he was not discouraged by his medical condition. In spite of his ill health, Dad continued to pray and to thank the Lord for the miracles and positive answers to prayer that he had personally experienced on the island of Madagascar. While he still lived, Dad told many true stories of the work of the Holy Spirit as a direct answer to prayer in that primitive country.

During the dry years in the south part of Madagascar, Dad prayed for rain for the starving natives and God repeatedly answered his prayers with the needed moisture. Many of

"As the years passed by, he (Dad) became saddened because many of his listeners simply could not understand that God really did answer his prayers."

the Malagasy people were brought to faith in the Lord Jesus because of this miracle.

As Dad traveled to primitive tribes in remote areas, his life was spared on several occasions by direct answers to personal prayer.

Missionaries today still share the same excitement for the positive results that come from prayer, but often the people back home do not care to listen and they do not believe what they are told.

Dad spoke frequently about prayer and the missionary work in Madagascar. As the years passed by, he became saddened because many of his listeners simply could not understand that God really did answer his prayers. He could not comprehend this unbelief because he had seen the results of prayer with his own eyes. He very much wanted others to share his great love for the Savior through this means of grace. Even I began to doubt the truths that my own father was telling me during the last years of his life before the Lord called him home.

I really never understood Dad's dilemma until 1978 when I was sent to prison for a few months for an illegal business deal during the Watergate era. The trauma of my arrest and conviction shook me to the very roots of the deep Christian

faith of my childhood.

As I sat alone in my prison cell, I prayed with fervent zeal as never before in my life. Inside the 20-foot walls of a Midwest maximum security prison God answered my prayers then as He still does today. More than that, I began to understand for the first time in my life what my dad had told me as a very young boy. Through those solid cement walls I could actually feel the individual prayers of my wife and my family as they prayed for me. I was witnessing a real miracle happening in my life just as Dad had on that far-off mission field as a direct result of personal prayer.

I'm now doing just exactly what my dad did more than 50 years ago by earnestly telling others about the miracles that result from prayer and I'm getting the same response that he did in those days gone by. Some people still don't believe! It is just like Dad said it would be, but I still praise the Lord for letting me see a positive response to prayer in a very difficult situation. I will always be thankful for this blessing from God.

The old truths of the Scriptures still ring out today, "Go to your room, close the door, and pray. . . ." Those words are just as real now as they were 50 years ago for my dad or 1900 years ago for the early Christians. They still represent the very best way we have to communicate with our Lord and Savior. We can go to our bedroom, office, basement or car and "close the door" to outside disturbances. We can be alone with God to pray and we will indeed get the answers that He has promised us in His Word.

church and be asked to preach because the incumbent had not known the woman.) In these matters conferral and the exercise of Christian charity promote good relations between all participants.

Much the same care should be used with the church's musicians. Relatives and friends may be asked or volunteer their services, but in the congregational setting for funerals the regular ministers of music should not be disregarded. Often their cooperation is required even when they do

not participate, for access to the church and organ, etc., for practice.

A related and potentially serious problem is the matter of honoraria and fixed charges for funerals. Some congregations may have established a base charge for use of the chapel or sanctuary for a funeral or marriage. This is not as mercenary as it might first seem, as the mid-week heating of the building and provision of custodial care at this time represents a drain on material resources. Most

(Ed. Note: Rev. Albert M. Hanson, Augsburg Seminary 1918, served on the Lutheran mission field in South Madagascar from 1919 to 1926, when he was forced to return home due to severe tropical disease. His son, Allen D. Hanson (author of this article), resides with his wife at Ottertail, Minnesota. In 1978 Allan Hanson served a nine-month sentence in a Minnesota state prison for an illegal business deal.)

Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord

Abide in Me;
Abide in My Word;
Abide in My love.

Love one another
as I have loved you!

Oh how He loved
you and me!

Behold what manner
of love
The Father has
bestowed upon us
That we should be called
"children of God!"

Bless the Lord, O my
soul,
and all that is within me
Bless His holy name!

Prayer is the deep heart
expressions of the soul
to his Maker
his Redeemer
his Shepherd
the Lover of his
soul.

O how I love Jesus!

Thank you, Lord, for
saving my soul!

Spencer B. Main
Virginia, Minn.

FUNERAL . . .

congregations do not levy a fixed charge, but consider this a part of their ministry. In such cases, a donation, particularly if to a smaller congregation, is clearly not offensive, especially if directed to a memorial fund or specific benevolence interest.

Honoraria to the clergy and musicians will also vary with local custom and philosophy. Most parish pastors hold that funerals for members are part of their ministry for which they receive a salary from the congregation and do not expect, or may openly state, they will not accept a fee. Others will accept an offering but indicate that this will be directed to an area of ministry enhancement either personally or at the denominational level. Policies for the funeral service of members not of the congregation will again vary greatly, depending on whether this is seen as an opportunity for ministry or a community service. Church musicians usually have a fixed fee which is either paid through the church or via the funeral director, as their schedule is usually well established and known. Do not hesitate to ask directly through the pastor, or indirectly through the funeral director, what policies prevail for your area or church. While the Ministry of the Word or of music is done to the glory of God in all things, St. Paul reminds us that the ministers are entitled to reasonable stipends for service (I Corinthians 9:9-15). This is especially true when a pastor must travel a considerable distance to honor a request for participation in the funeral service.

It is customary in many sections of the country to follow the funeral service with some type of collation or fellowship hour at which food is served and there is the opportunity for personal greetings. Occasionally this is still conducted in the home of the deceased; more often this has become a catered event or one given over entirely to a commercial establishment. Third party care of the fellowship hour is not inadvisable; it relieves the bereaved family of the details of arrangements and clean-up at a time when thoughts should be turned to prayer and mutual support. A great opportunity for ministry by

the congregation exists in providing the fellowship hour arrangements for its bereaved members. A church in our city assumes that its women's group will do so for every funeral unless asked otherwise; these ladies are assisted by the men's group of the congregation in the parish hall. Where willing parishioners are available for this type of ministry, the congregation should at least be reimbursed for the cost of the food. Perhaps an additional offering can be made for the work of the groups involved in staffing this event. An alternative setting would be to provide this same type of service in the family home, if it is so requested. In their hour of grief, Christians need the physical and personal touch of support as much as concern in prayer by their brothers and sisters in Christ.

No Christian should consider pre-need funeral planning until and unless it is coupled with estate planning. Provision for the care of loved ones is but one of two primary considerations. The other is how worldly assets and property shall also witness to the needs of the Lord's work in churches, schools and institutions. No Christian should die without a properly executed will which has been prepared or reviewed by a lawyer.

The Christian's funeral, then, is a witness to the community which is both temporal and spiritual. It needs and ought to emphasize that Christ has conquered sin and death, and that there is no longer a victory by the grave. Simultaneously, the stewardship witness of the funeral also presents significant testimony to the community. Pre-need planning avoids excessive expenses triggered by emotion or lack of prudence under stress, and hopefully follows the desires of the individual for a bodily disposition and service of worship compatible with his faith and personal preferences. While we are "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (II Corinthians 5:8), the hour when we surrender our earthly citizenship should be as orderly a departure to heaven as its anticipation can make it through planning.

(Ed. note: See the editorial "The Christian Funeral" on page 9.)

"Please do not remove"

Text: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof" (Psalm 2:1).

Open your hymnbook and see if you find printed on the fly leaf these words, "This Book is the Property of _____. Please do not remove." Does this mean that we may not use the hymnbook? Of course not. The hymnbook was put in the pew for us to use. Why then do you suppose these words are so often printed in the front of song books in the church? They are intended to remind us that that song book in our pew was put there, *not only for us but for the person who may next sit there.* The hymnbook is in the pew that we and *other people* may use it in praising God in His house, but we are not to carry it away.

If we only had eyes to see, we would find inscribed on things everywhere, these same words "*Please Do Not Remove.*" Someone has said, "This is God's World. Do not try to carry it off. Please leave it where He put it." You laugh and say, "How could anyone carry off the world?" Some people, however, do try to carry off the world, or at least as

generous a chunk of it as they are able to "grab off." The Psalmist, ever so long ago, read such a sign on the whole earth itself and wrote in the twenty-fourth Psalm: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein." We all need to be reminded that while God gives us the world and all things richly to use and to enjoy, He wants it also for His other children as well, and we must not try to carry it off as if we believed it was intended for us alone. God wants us to make every possible use of all there is in the world, not only for ourselves but for all His other children. Things are here to use; they are not here to keep or to carry off. God wants everyone to use all things to build His kingdom.

Jesus once told the story of a man who got hold of a lot of God's world and thought it was his own and that he could keep it just for himself alone.

(Let the teacher or leader paraphrase the parable of the rich farmer—Luke 12:16-21—so as to leave in the understanding of the

hearers that we own nothing; that this world and all that is in it belongs to God and must be left when we depart (see Haggai 2:8).

This is my Father's world;
And to my listening ears,
The morning light, the lily white,
Declare their Maker's praise.
This is my Father's world,
He shines in all that's fair.
In the rustling grass I hear Him
pass;
He speaks to me everywhere.

To teach—God owns all things. Things are here to be used by everyone. No one should try to seize them just for himself. "God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy," enjoins us to remember that He gives us "dominion over the works" of His hands in order that we may do good; that we may be rich in good works, "ready to distribute, willing to communicate."

—Guy L. Morrill,
Stewardship Stories, Harper
and Brothers Publishers.

Sing and memorize—"O Lord of Heaven and Earth and Sea." (Call particular attention to all stewardship implications in the hymn.)

HYMN

*O Lord of heaven and earth
and sea,
to Thee all praise and glory be;
How shall we show our love
to Thee
Who givest all?*

*The golden sunshine, vernal air,
Sweet flowers and fruit, Thy
love declare;
Where harvests ripen, Thou
art there
Who givest all.*

*For peaceful homes and
happy days,*

*For all the blessings earth
displays,
We owe Thee thankfulness
and praise
Who givest all.*

*We lose what on ourselves
we spend;
We have as treasure without end
Whatever, Lord, to Thee we
lend,
Who givest all.*

*To Thee, from whom we all
derive
Our life, our gifts, our power
to give;
O, may we ever with Thee live
Who givest all.*



THE WOMEN'S PAGE

Unwavering faith through fiery trials

Throughout the ages, Christians have endured persecution and imprisonment for their convictions based on the Bible. During the latter half of the 17th century, France was rocked with religious debates in the Roman Catholic Church. The issue was salvation by works or by faith. The central figure in the debates was Madame Guyon. Because of her Biblical stand on the Word alone, she became the object of severe persecution. Her search for peace with God, the victory received and the unwavering faith through trials are an inspiration for the reader today.



As a young girl Madame Guyon was sensitive to religious teaching and practice. She avidly read the devout, early Christian writers and spent much time in aiding the poor. Yet the peace of soul she longed for eluded her.

Striking beauty distinguished Madame Guyon as she matured into a young woman. Her family entered their beautiful daughter into the worldly, pleasure-loving society life in Paris. She was found mingling in parties given by King Louis XIV himself.

At age 16 she married a wealthy nobleman. In spite of having everything a woman could ever want from the world, her longing for real peace drove her back to the childhood books and friends. Through studying God's Word, she received definite assurance of salvation through faith in Christ. After this experience she wrote,

"Nothing was more easy to me now than to practise prayer. . . . It was a prayer of rejoicing and of possession, wherein the taste of

God was so great, so pure, so unblended and uninterrupted, that it drew and absorbed the powers of the soul into a profound recollection, a state of confiding and affectionate rest in God, existing without intellectual effort. . . . I bade farewell forever to assemblies which I had visited, to plays and diversions, to dancing, to unprofitable walks, and to parties of pleasure. The amusements and pleasures which are so much prized and esteemed by the world now appeared to me dull and insipid—so much so, that I wondered how I ever could have enjoyed them."

Within two years of her conversion to Christ, Madame Guyon was to be sorely tested. A smallpox attack left her beautiful face ugly with scars. Two of her three children died within a short time of her husband's death. Her family, physical beauty and wealth were gone. Her life was now characterized by simplicity and the power of the Holy Spirit. People from all of France sought her help in leading them to regeneration through faith in Christ.

As a result of her tremendous influence, Madame Guyon was hated by the Roman Catholic Church and by King Louis XIV. Though imprisoned twice and severely persecuted, her faith in God and in His Word remained strong.

The following poem was written while in prison.

—Mrs. Wayne Hjermsstad

Praise from a prison cell

A little bird I am,
Shut from the fields of air;
And in my cage I sit and sing
To Him who placed me there;
Well pleased a prisoner to be,
Because, my God, it pleases Thee.

Naught have I else to do;
I sing the whole day long;
And He, whom most I love to please,
Doth listen to my song.
He caught and bound my wandering
wing,
But still He bends to hear me sing.

Thou hast an ear to hear,
A heart to love and bless;
And though my notes were e'er so
rude,
Thou wouldst not hear the less;
Because Thou knowest, as they fall,
That love, sweet love, inspires them
all.

My cage confines me round;
Abroad I cannot fly;
But though my wing is closely bound,
My heart's at liberty.
My prison walls cannot control
The flight, the freedom of the soul.

Oh, it is good to soar
These bolts and bars above,
To Thee, whose purpose I adore,
Whose providence I love;
And in Thy mighty will to find
The joy, the freedom of the mind.

*"That the trial
of your faith,
being much more
precious than
of gold
that perisheth,
though it be
tried with fire,
might be found
unto praise and
honour and glory
at the appearing
of Jesus Christ."*

1 Peter 1:7

editorials

BE PREPARED

The motto of scouting, as you know, is *Be Prepared*. Prepared for any eventuality.

We don't approach the Annual Conference in quite that spirit, that we expect accidents or really unforeseen incidents. But it does behoove us to be prepared as well as we can for the business to be decided upon at conference.

Personally, we never feel as ready or prepared for an annual conference as we'd like to be, but somehow it all works out anyway. Association annual conferences are rather simple affairs. We avoid parliamentary maneuvering for two reasons: we don't have need for it and we (most of us) wouldn't know how to do it anyway. So we keep it simple.

As to the 1983 Annual Conference, our president, Rev. R. Snipstead, has identified two business matters to come before the conference. One is a report from the hymnal study committee and the other is the need for some changes in the health insurance and retirement program for pastors.

As to the former, the committee, at the direction of last year's conference, is to present a recommendation this year as to the course of action or inaction to be taken in regard to producing a new hymnal for the AFLC. Since the last conference the committee has assembled various data from the congregations, individuals and sources concerning interest in the project, hymns for a new book and financing.

There is support and opposition to an AFLC-produced hymnal. We can't get away from the idea that our own hymnbook would help to unify our church fellowship. We hope the signal for the endeavor will continue to be green. At any rate, let's not put an end to it, but leave doors open.

Concerning the pastors' health insurance and retirement program we have little comment. Certainly it is to be hoped that this can be as strong and helpful as possible. It's too bad that there hasn't been a clear understanding of the situation in recent years. We do need a good program and with as many participating as possible.

The offices of Vice-President and Secretary will be voted on this year as usual. The Secretary, as a three-year incumbent, will need a three-fourths majority on the first ballot to continue in office. It has been proven very difficult for vice-presidents and secretaries to get such a majority, but we shall see. This year may prove the exception.

"Forward with Confidence" is the theme for the 21st Annual Conference. Pastor Elden Nelson, our executive

director of Home Missions, will preach the opening service sermon on the conference text and theme. Perhaps next to the church president, no man is so close to the growing edge or cutting edge of the church and can better point to the "forward" for the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. And it is the word "confidence" which speaks of God and how we will move onward only in the strength which He supplies.

The Lord bless conference days. Be an intercessor for the annual meeting of the AFLC at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis., June 15-19. We can only move forward as there is much prayer. Prayer builds confidence.

THE CHRISTIAN FUNERAL

Our pastor in Fall River, Massachusetts, Gerald D. Blais, Jr., has submitted an article to be found on page 3, concerning a subject which has never been dealt with before in the *Ambassador*. We haven't intentionally avoided it; it just hasn't been covered prior to this.

But now it is good that Pastor Blais opens the subject. We rather think it may have been prompted to a degree by the recent death of his father, from experiences he had in his own loss.

Many of our congregations are rural or small-townish with relatively long histories and well-developed customs about how funerals should be carried out. The procedures are much the same and yet there are the minor variations, some of them perhaps due to the influence of local funeral directors.

Some changes have evolved over the years. It used to be so common to have the casket brought to the deceased's house for a last gathering with family before the church service. In this writer's fairly long ministry he has been involved in perhaps only one such case.

Today there are those who want to turn funerals into "celebrations" of the life of the deceased and of the Christian hope. Yes, let there be the note of Christian hope, but we hold with Dr. Alvin Rogness, when he writes: "But grief, remorse, fear, and even anger are marks of our humanity. To celebrate when we should grieve is a denial of being human. . . . To love is human and to grieve is human, and they belong together. We do not want to reject either" (*The Word for Every Day*, Augsburg Publishing House, 1981). There is a place in the funeral for the somber and the tear.

Pastor Blais has touched on many areas relative to the funeral and its planning. Maybe he has stirred some thought or conviction you ought to share with us. Feel free to do that through a Letter to the Editor or our Opinion Page (800-word maximum on that).



Letters to the editor

Commends editorial

I wish to thank you for your editorial in the March 29 issue of the *Ambassador*. I am referring to the one under the title of "O My God."

It is good to hear someone in all earnestness and from the heart cry or call unto God and claim Him as theirs, whether it be for some need or in thanks unto Him. On the other hand it causes a sense of pain or sorrow to a child of God to hear this used as a meaningless expression as it is on radio and TV. One other word that is used without thought by many is the word "hell." I wonder how many times a day we hear it on radio or TV. Hell no longer is a reminder to the individual that he needs a Savior.

What does the Bible say about our conversation? See the second commandment, Matthew 5:33-37 and James 5:12.

To use these expressions until they become a part of one's speech in no way justifies them, as you point out. Lowering of standards by newspapers, radio or TV does not give a Christian any excuse. A Christian must live by and in the Word.

In this day and age it may come to the place in one's life where he will be persecuted for taking a strong Biblical stand. Again I want to thank you for this editorial and may we never in the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations or any of its member congregations find ourselves in such a circumstance that we need to do as Jesus commands in Matthew 10:23: "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not

have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." The whole chapter of Matthew 10 is good reading to give us strength in our day. We must dare to be Daniels.

Amos Stolee
Kenyon, Minn.

Likes variety in music

This wonderful Easter Day I was blessed by two different types of preaching. I'd like to tell you so you will understand my real point in writing.

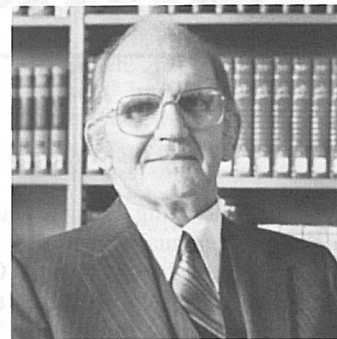
I went to one of our Association churches for sunrise service. One of our wonderful graduates from our Bible school who is now in college preparing for our seminary was the guest speaker. His message was Spirit-led, I felt, and his beautiful presentation was a thrill to me.

Then we attended another of our Association churches for its morning worship. This, too, was a spiritual blessing and so well presented. This pastor, however, is ordained and has been preaching for a while. As I sat thinking, I said, yes, this is what I want to say on the subject of songbooks. I would have really missed a rich blessing if I had limited myself to one church and one speaker today. So that's how I feel about music for worship. God inspires people to write music as well as to preach. So I don't feel making a rule for any music in our free and living congregations would be wise. If a hymnbook could be made as a choice for our churches, okay, but otherwise I feel each church should choose its own books.

Is it possible, if we agree to have a book, this would limit our freedom?

Mrs. Arnold Jodock
Hatton, N. Dak.

(Ed. note: The congregations will always choose the hymnals they wish to use, whether the AFLC were to produce a new hymnbook or not.)



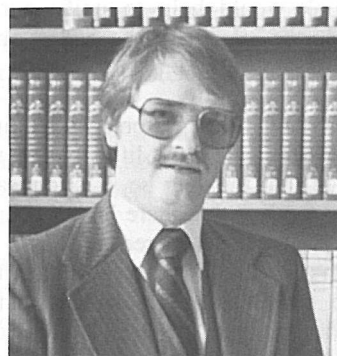
BODSBERG, HARRY

Home town: Amery, Wis.
Completing campus studies, 1983.
Will graduate 1984.



JOHNSON, LES

Home town: Stanchfield, Minn.



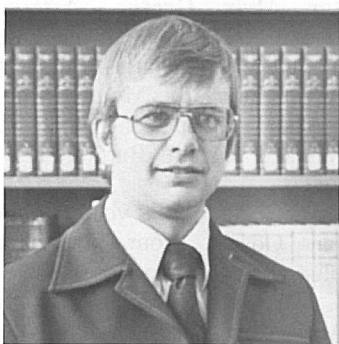
PALMER, DEL

Home town: Ferndale, Wash.
Available for call, October, 1983.

Greater love
hath no man
than this,
that a man
lay down
his life . . . Jn. 15:13

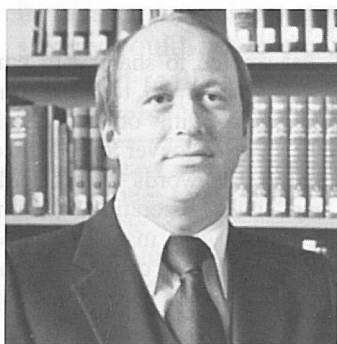


1983 AFLTS Seniors



ERICKSON, RALPH

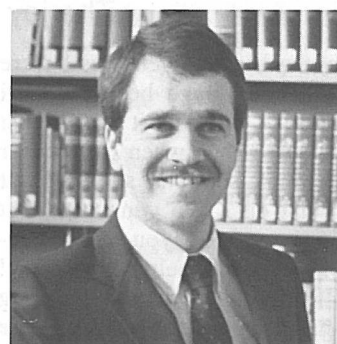
Home town: Annandale, Minn.



FRANZ, PETER

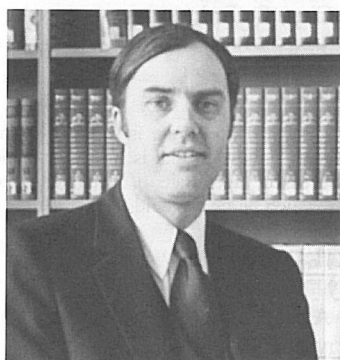
Home town: Cloquet, Minn.

Called to Bethel Lutheran, Minot, N. Dak., and Faith Lutheran, Burlington, N. Dak. To be ordained June 26, 1983, at Cloquet, Minn.



HORN, MARTIN

Home town: Kalispell, Mont.
Available for call.



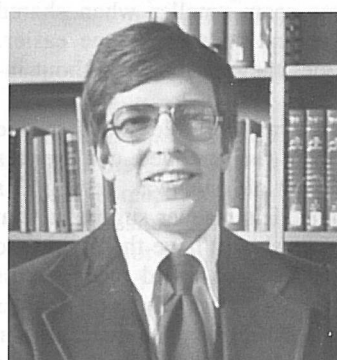
KLENNER, MIKE

Home town: Rochester, Minn.
Available for call.



KOREN, JOHAN

*Home town: Edinburgh, Scotland/
Oslo, Norway*
Available for call.



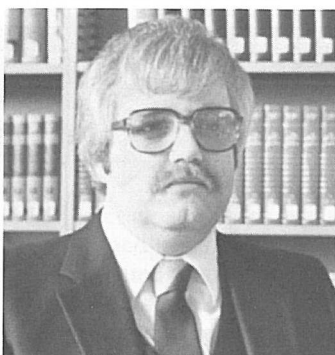
KORHONEN, LYNDEN

Home town: Esko, Minn.
Called to Bethel Lutheran, Culbertson, and Faith Lutheran, Brockton, Montana. To be ordained June 26, 1983, at Cloquet, Minn.



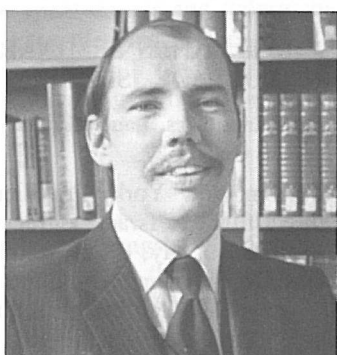
SCHAFFHAUSER, JACOB

Home town: Wagerswil, Switzerland



SLETTTO, KERWIN

Home town: Draper, S. Dak./Dickinson, N. Dak.
Called to Valley Lutheran, Portland, and Ny Stavanger Lutheran, Buxton, N. Dak. To be ordained August 14, 1983, at Dickinson, N. Dak.



STOCKMAN, ANTONE

Home town: Tioga, N. Dak.
Available for call.

fellowship corner

The joy of sharing

Parent-teacher conferences were held last week. I had been busy all day from nine and now it was almost five o'clock. But when a mother came, and as soon as she had sat down, burst out, "Do you know that Matthew prays for you each evening?" I was overwhelmed with joy! Never in my 30 years of teaching school had I heard that remark. Here was this quiet ten-year-old Indian boy, Matthew Bear Eagle, concerned about his teacher.

I replied to his mother how grateful I was and I shared that I, too, prayed for my students each day. Problems seem smaller when shared in prayer and solutions come easier. Sometimes they disappear without incident.

Another mother told me that one time when she attended conferences her ten-year-old son was getting D's in reading. His teacher suggested that the mother should have the child read orally to help on word attack skills and comprehension. She said that as a busy mother she decided the son would read aloud from the Bible each day during home devotions and whenever they had time for extra reading they would do Bible stories. In a few months his reading grade had improved to a C and the child was happy with his progress.

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With Pastor and Mrs. Laurel Udden
Oct. 17-27

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If interested, please write to:
Pastor Laurel Udden
Lutheran Evangelistic Movement
833 Second Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402

So I just wanted to share with you that let's not be afraid to share our love for Christ with others. Mark 8:38 says: "For whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

Mrs. Arnold McCarlson
Eagle Butte, S. Dak.

Honorary Memberships . . . Hampden, N. Dak.

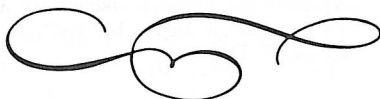


Bethany Ladies Aid of Zoar Lutheran Church honored Mrs. Earl Simon. Mrs. Reuben Ivesdal presented the pin.

Eagle Butte, S. Dak.



Emmanuel Lutheran WMF honored four women. Receiving pins were: Mrs. Ernest Langness, Mrs. Eva Womack, Mrs. Stella Brewer and Mrs. Marie Kost (not pictured).



Personalities

Pastor Alvin Grothe, Astoria, Ore., spoke at Deeper Life meetings in Stillwater and Faith Lutheran Churches, Kalispell, Mont., April 13-20. The local pastors are Dale Mellgren and Richard Bartholomew, respectively.

Pastor R. Norheim, voice of the Lutheran Gospel Hour, was the evangelist at special meetings in Roslyn, S. Dak., during Holy Week. In later April, Lay Pastor Lyle Twite, Cloquet, Minn., spoke in a preaching mission in Hope and Buffalo Lake Lutheran Churches of the Lake Region Parish, served by Lay Pastor Rodney Stueland. Mr. Twite was raised in the nearby community of Claire City, S. Dak..

In memoriam

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

NORTH DAKOTA

Stanley

Mrs. Art (Cora) Nyhus, Feb. 5,
Our Saviour's

ILLINOIS

DeKalb

Joanne Goff, 45, Mar. 21, Grace

MINNESOTA

Greenbush

Emil M. Haugtvedt, 92, Apr. 16,
Bethlehem

Week-end help wanted at the White Earth Indian Mission

Mature single person or married couple.

Requirements: You must be

*A born-again Christian

*Able to drive a van

*Able to play piano

If you feel you would like to serve the Lord in this kind of part-time mission work and would like more details please phone 218-983-3263. Or write Pastor Paul Larson, Bethel Lutheran Chapel, White Earth, Minn. 56591.

Ringbo church hosts meetings

Paul and Becky Abel were involved in special meetings at Emmanuel Lutheran Church of Ringbo, Middle River, Minn., recently. The theme was "A Christian Walk." There was a service on Friday evening, April 15. The next afternoon some youth from Our Saviour's Lutheran, Thief River Falls, Minn., gathered with our youth for a rap session with the Abels at 3:30. A youth banquet was held at 5:30 p.m. Services were held for all at 7:30. A choir made up of the youth attending the afternoon activities added special music to the evening service.

Also, for the first time, Emmanuel held Lenten services, Maundy Thursday services and an Easter sunrise service with special music provided by some of our young people. We also had a continental breakfast after our service.

Marlene Lund

Las Vegas judge warns N. Dak. about gambling

FARGO (AP) — North Dakota has far too few regulations guiding its charitable gaming industry and needs a stronger law enforcement effort, a Nevada judge says.

Speaking here Friday at a trial lawyers' seminar, Las Vegas Judge Paul Goldman said the North Dakota Attorney General's office has in-

I KNOW IN WHOM I BELIEVE,

by Carl F. Wisløff (translated by Karl Stendal), is an approximately 120-page study in basic Bible doctrine. It will be a valuable Bible school resource, as well as a useful aid within the local congregation. You will especially appreciate the material on the Sacraments and the Church (including discussion on the modern ecumenical movement).

The book will be available for mass distribution in a paperback edition, at \$3.50 each. A very limited number of hard-bound copies, at \$6.00 each (which will be reserved for those who order in advance).

You may mail your request for this book with your name, address and your check for \$3.50 or \$6.00 plus \$1.00 for postage and handling to:

SEMINARY PRESS

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Minneapolis, Minn. 55441

Officers to be elected at the Annual Conference

*designates incumbent

Vice-President (1-year term)

*Rev. Leslie Galland, Thief River Falls, Minn.

Secretary (1-year term)

*Rev. Hubert DeBoer, Colfax, Wis.

Pastor DeBoer has served three consecutive terms. To be re-elected, he must be nominated and secure a three-fourths majority on the first ballot.

All nominations for these two offices must come from the floor and there must be at least two candidates placed in nomination for each office.

take up a full bookshelf."

He said North Dakota's gaming laws should be made part of the state's constitution, which would keep them from being changed by each Legislature.

He said gambling can be linked to a higher crime rate, and noted as an example that Nevada has the highest per capita ratio of prison inmates in the country.

Grand Forks (N. Dak.) *Herald*

Motel housing for the Conference

Valley Inn Motel, Dresser, Wis. 54009, Phone #715-755-2781, 6 miles north of the ARC.

Rates Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday:

- 1 double bed—1 person \$20.00
- 1 double bed—2 persons \$24.00
- 2 double beds—1 person \$22.00
- 2 double beds—2 persons \$26.00

Weekend rates:

- 1 person \$26.00
- 2 persons \$29.00
- New addition \$33.00

Weekend Rates:

- 1 double bed—1 person \$27.00
- 1 double bed—2 persons \$42.00
- 2 double beds—1 person \$23.900
- 2 double beds—2 persons \$46.00

Camelot Motel, 359 Keller Avenue South, Amery, Wis. 54001, Phone # 715-268-8194, 20 miles east of the ARC.

Rates:

- 1 double bed—2 persons \$23.00
- 2 double beds—2 persons \$33.00

Dalles House Motel, St. Croix Falls, Wis. 54024, Phone # 715-483-3206, 10 miles north of the ARC.

Rates Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday:

- 1 double bed—1 person \$19.00
- 1 double bed—2 persons \$25.00
- 2 double beds—1 person \$29.00
- 2 double beds—2 persons \$35.00

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, . . . ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Cor. 15:58

WELCOME

Dear Members and Friends of the AFLC:

The Association Retreat Center and its staff consider it a privilege and pleasure to host the 21st Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. We welcome you to the ARC and trust that your stay with us will be enjoyable and spiritually uplifting.

The ARC is located in the countryside near Osceola, Wisconsin, close to the scenic St. Croix River, an area where God's handiwork is beautifully displayed. Many of you have never visited the ARC before and this will be a great opportunity for you to come and see it and the 80 acres on which it is located.

There will be housing available at the ARC at a cost of \$7.00 per night. Please bring your own bedding, pillow and towels. If there are those who cannot bring their own bedding please let us know and arrangements can be made to furnish this for you at a cost of \$1.00. We would appreciate it if

you would pre-register for rooms. Many of our rooms are set up for four or more people and if you are willing to share a room with another couple, etc., please indicate so when you pre-register. This would enable us to house more people at the ARC. Family rates are also available.

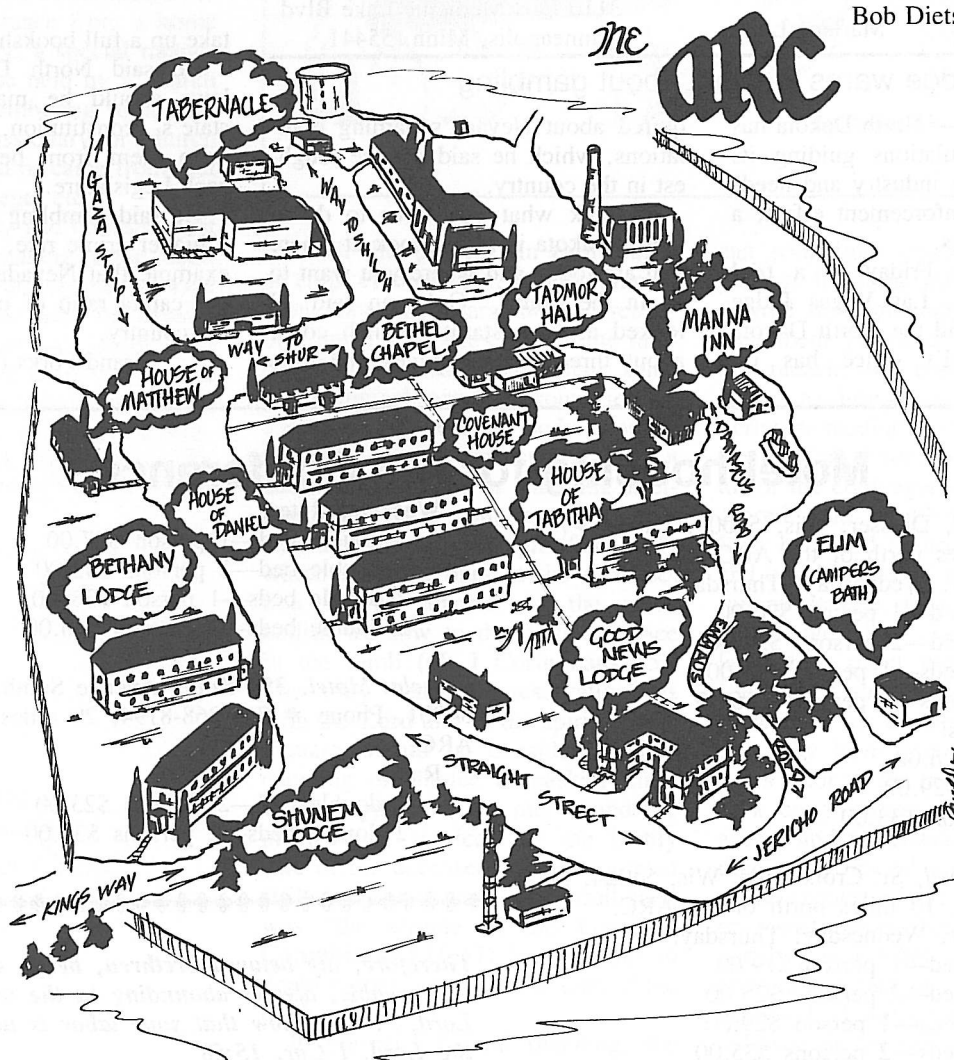
There will also be camping facilities available on the grounds at the ARC at a cost of \$3.50 per night.

A listing of motels located nearby is also included in this issue. If you plan to stay in a motel we suggest that you make your own reservations a number of weeks in advance stating that it is for the AFLC Conference.

Three meals a day will be served at Manna Inn dining hall during the conference. A light meal will be served Tuesday evening for those who are coming in early. If you have any questions, please write The ARC, R.1, Box 92, Osceola, Wisconsin 54020, or phone 725-294-2877.

Again, we say welcome to all of you, and to our 21st Annual Conference.

In Christ,
Bob Dietsche, Director



21st Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

AFLC RETREAT CENTER
OSCEOLA, WISCONSIN

June 15-19

THEME: *Forward with Confidence*"

CONFERENCE TEXT: *Hebrews 10:19-25*

THE PROGRAM

Wednesday, June 15

- 9:00 a.m. The Conference Committees meet for devotions, instructions and room assignments.
- 8:00 p.m. The opening service of the Conference, with the sermon on the Conference text by Pastor Elden Nelson, Minneapolis, Minn.
- Pastor Michael Brandt, Amery, Wis., will lead the service. The opening of the Conference and the appointment of necessary committees by Pastor Richard Snipstead. Offering to Home Missions.

Thursday, June 16

- 9:00 a.m. Devotions.
Report of the Credentials Committee.
Adoption of the Conference agenda.
Election of Committee on Nominations for the 1984 Conference.
The President's Report.
Report of the Chairman of the Coordinating Committee, Pastor Wendell Johnson.
Report of the Director of Development, Mr. Ernest Miedema.
Report of the Director of the ARC, Mr. Robert Dietsche.
Financial Report, Miss Linda Butterfield.
Report of the Treasurer of Family Bible Camp, Osceola, Mr. Gary Modean.
Report of the Treasurer of Family Bible Camp, Lake Bronson, Minn., Mrs. Don Balmer.
Report of the Treasurer of the Wilderness Camp, Mr. George Hartman.
Report of the Budget Analysis Committee.
Report of the Nominating Committee, always in order.
Election of nominees for the Missions Corporation and the Schools Corporation.
Report of Committee No. 1
- 11:30 a.m. Prayer Hour. The Prayer Hours will be led by Pastor Mauritz Lundeen, Bagley, Minn.
- 2:00 p.m. Devotions.
Report of the Credentials Committee.
Election of the Vice-president and Secretary of the AFLC.
Election of nominees to the Mission Committees and the Board of Trustees.

- Continuing discussion of Committee No. 1.
Election of nominees to the Coordinating Committee.
Election of Committee No. 1 for the 1984 Conference.
Report of the chairman of the Board of Trustees, Pastor Michael Brandt.
Report of the Dean of the Theological Seminary, Pastor Francis Monseth.
Report of the Dean of the Bible School, Pastor Kenneth Moland.
Report of the AFLBS Alumni Association Director, Mrs. John Schlenk.
Report of Committee No. 2.

- 5:30 p.m. The Schools Corporation will meet.
- 8:00 p.m. The Mission Festival Service conducted by the Women's Missionary Federation.

Friday, June 17

- 7:00 a.m. The Mission Corporation meets.
- 9:00 a.m. Devotions.
Report of the Credentials Committee.
Continuing discussion of Committee No. 2.
Election of Committee No. 2 for the 1984 Conference.
Report concerning the Schools Corporation meeting.
Report of the Chairman of the World Missions Committee, Pastor Amos Dyrud.
Report of the Director of World Missions, Pastor Eugene Enderlein.
Report of the Chairman of the Home Missions Committee, Pastor David Molstre.
Report of the Director of Home Missions Committee, Pastor Elden Nelson.
Report of the Chairman of the Evangelism Commission, Lay Pastor Verle Dean.
Report of the AFLC Evangelist, Pastor Kenneth Pentti.
Report of Committee No. 3.
- 11:30 a.m. Prayer Hour.
- 2:00 p.m. Devotions.
Report of the Credentials Committee.
Continuing discussion of the report of Committee No. 3.
Report concerning the Missions Corporation meeting.
- 8:00 p.m. Laymen's Service. Leader: Mr. James Peterson, Colfax, Wis. Speaker: Mr. Arlo Kneeland, Summit, S. Dak.
Offering: World Missions.

Saturday, June 18

- 9:00 a.m. Devotions.
Report of the Credentials Committee.
Continuing discussion of the report of Committee No. 3.
Election of members to the Commission on Evangelism.
Election of Committee No. 3 for the 1984 Conference.
Report of the Chairman of the Board of Publications and Parish Education, Pastor Ralph Rokke.
Report of the Executive Secretary of Parish Education, Mrs. Phillip Regnier.
Report of the Chairman of the Youth Board, Pastor Bruce Dalager.
Report of the President of the Luther League Federation, Pastor Allen Monson.
Report of Committee No. 4.



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July 12-17
Kalispell, Montana

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Clarence E. Macartney

PROGRAM . . .

11:30 a.m. Prayer Hour.

2:00 p.m. Devotions.

Report of the Credentials Committee.

Report of the Colloquy Committee.

Election of members to the Board of Publications and Parish Education, and the Youth Board.

Election of Committee No. 4 for the 1984 Conference.

Election of the Colloquy Committee for the 1984 Annual Conference.

Report of the Chairman of the Stewardship Board, Pastor Ernest Langness.

Report of the Chairman of the Board of Pensions, Mr. Walter Lien.

Report of Committee No. 5.

Elections of members to the Stewardship Board and the Board of Pensions.

Election of Committee No. 5 for the 1984 Conference.

Reports of special committees.

Election of the Budget Analysis Committee for 1984.

Report of Committee No. 1, as the Committee on General Resolutions.

8:00 p.m. Youth Night at the Conference.

Leader: Pastor Allen Monson, Tioga, N. Dak.

Speaker: Pastor Richard Anderson, Lake Stevens, Wash.

Offering: Praise Program.

Sunday, June 19

8:00 a.m. Communion Service.

Liturgist: Pastor Hubert DeBoer, Colfax, Wis.

Message: Pastor Ralph Rokke, Minneapolis, Minn.

10:30 a.m. Worship Service.

Liturgist: Pastor Donald Greven, Kenyon, Minn.

Message: Pastor Wendell Johnson, Stacy, Minn.

Dedication of the AFLC Retreat Center.

Offering: General Fund.

2:00 p.m. Ordination Service.

Leader: Pastor Richard Snipstead, Minneapolis, Minn.

Message: Pastor Francis Monseth, Minneapolis, Minn.

Offering: Schools.

Conference Committee:

Pastor Hubert DeBoer

Pastor Richard Snipstead