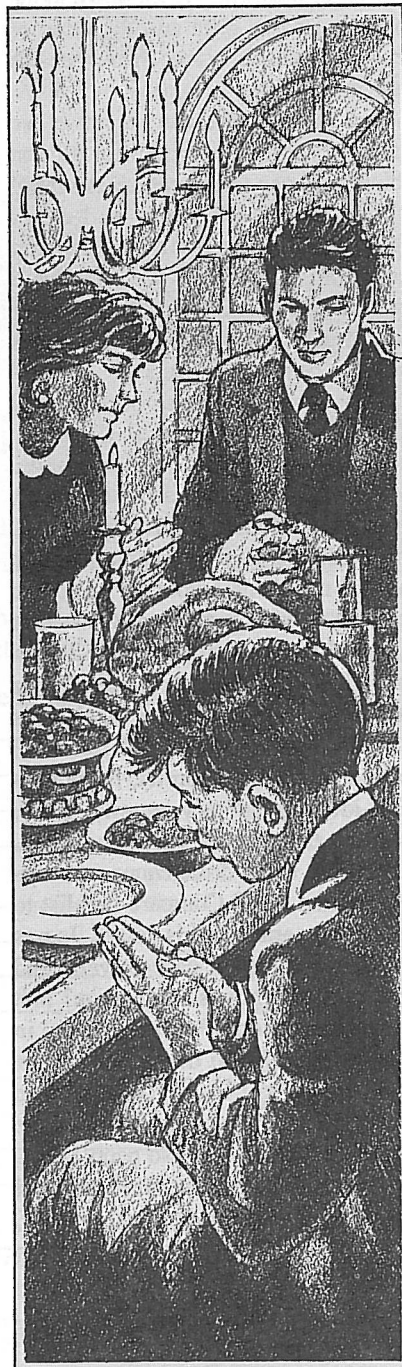


THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

November 12, 1991



*His
mercy
endureth
from
generation
to
generation*

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November 12, 1991 • Vol. 29, No. 21

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Fruits of Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is a time of good memories. Memories of trips to Grandma and Grandpa's farm home, often in bobsleds drawn by horses plodding in the snow. Grandma had the tables loaded with good things. Pioneer farmers knew the reality of the sin-curse when God said after the Fall: "Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread" (Genesis 3:17-19). They toiled to wrest fruitful farms from a sin-cursed nature. God gave the increase, the fruit of their toil. We sat down to the bounties of His gifts and Grandpa or Grandma led us in giving thanks for His blessings. Blessed memories!

In a parish we came to serve, we inherited a previously fruitful garden which had been left to nature. A mat of brome and quack grass and other weeds had taken over. We desired something different so we intervened with much toil, and soon we had bounteous peas, beets, carrots, strawberries and even beautiful flowers.

How about the garden of our lives? What happens when we just let human nature grow as it wills? Do we wonder sometimes when the daily newspaper brings us accounts of horrible and disastrous things done by people just like you and me? Where does all this come from? It is just human nature — the depraved human nature resulting from the Fall! The Bible often speaks of it as "the flesh." And it says in Galatians 5:8-12: "The works of the flesh are plain: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like." Compare this list to your newspaper. In his letter, James (4:1-2) asks: "What causes wars, and what causes fightings among you? Is it not your passions that are at war in your members? You desire and do not have, so you kill. And you covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and wage war." Is this just some bad people? No, my friend, this is "the flesh" we all carry, our sinful nature. Left to itself,

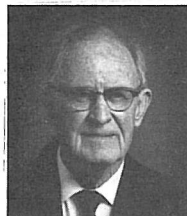
Light on the Way

this is what it will produce, just like a garden which had been good, left to itself became infested with weeds.

But God has given us a Savior and the Holy Spirit to intervene with better plans and purposes for our lives. "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (I John 3:8), including those in our lives. The Holy Spirit carries out His purposes: "For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would" — by nature (Galatians 5:17). What a battle the Holy Spirit often has to wage in our breasts to rid us of the works of the flesh, bringing us to repentance and a new life in Christ! The plow must cut the roots of sin and set us free from the dominion of sin.

Jesus is the Source of all life. We cannot produce good fruit by ourselves. He says, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). The Holy Spirit implements Jesus' life-giving power "and the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). Against such, not only is there no law but for lives filled with such fruits men give thanks. There is thanksgiving even in Heaven for every soul that repents and turns to live a Spirit-controlled life, so also we give thanks on Thanksgiving for the good fruits given of God which bless our lives.

Are we bearing such fruits in our lives that our fellow men can give thanks for what the Holy Spirit has been allowed to create?



— by Rev.
Kermitt C. Grundahl

WHAT IS THANKSGIVING?

Paul, the apostle, writes to the church in Thessalonica, "In everything give thanks" (I Thessalonians 5:18). To the church at Ephesus he says, "Always give thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:20). To the church at Colosse: "Be thankful ... do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God" (3:15,17). And to Philippi, "With thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God" (4:6). Thus the Scriptural proclamation to the Church-about the Church-is that we be a people of thanksgiving. Since this is so, then of what does the giving of thanks consist?

True thanksgiving – Born only in a broken heart.

First, it is proper to say that true thanksgiving is born only in a broken heart. As odd as it may seem to us, yet it is only the "poor in spirit" who will be truly thankful. The poor in spirit, or the broken-hearted, are those who by the Holy Spirit have been convinced of their own helplessness. We are not thankful for what we perceive ourselves to have accomplished by self-resources. If what we have is "ours" or "from us" or "by our own reason or strength," it is not received with thanksgiving, but with egotistical self-praise. Blessed then is the one who is poor in spirit. Only in broken-heartedness can there be the acknowledgment that all we are and have is a gift from Him. Only then can we truly appreciate His gifts as **gifts**; not something we deserve or have earned, but something freely given out of His mercy and grace. It is only in recognition of this that there is and can be a true giving of thanks.

True thanksgiving – Born only in a heart of faith.

Second, it is also proper and necessary to say that true thanksgiving is born only in a heart of faith. Only the believer, in whom the Holy Spirit has done His gracious work of creating faith, can receive that which is so abundantly given by

the God of mercy. The heart of faith recognizes its own poverty, yes, but then it also joyfully lays hold of the gift of God, and receives that gift with true thanksgiving. Faith recognizes and marvels at the richness and mercy of God, and faith joyfully receives His provision. Thus the believer, though poor in himself, is not left in poverty, but becomes rich in all that God provides. Delighted and thankful is the one, then, who by faith in the promises of God has taken hold of heaven and all it encompasses.

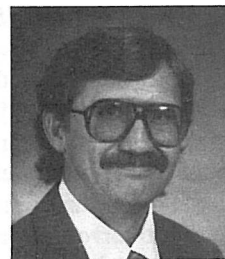
What is thanklessness?

If indeed thankfulness is born in the heart that is first broken and is also a heart of faith, then what is **thanklessness**? Is it not true that thanklessness then speaks of both pride and unbelief? The thankless person sees himself as the center of his own world, and is arrogantly convinced that he has earned and somehow deserves the blessings which are his. Such a person in unbelief has essentially rejected the gift and gifts which are from God. The proud, self-sufficient heart has no need for the gift, and thus scorns that which God gives.

What is thanksgiving?

What is thanksgiving? It is the recognition of faith that says, "All we are and all we have is from Him." Micah describes the heart of thanksgiving when he describes the person of faith in Micah 6:8. True thanksgiving flows from the heart of one who is "walking humbly with his God."

In joyous dependence upon Him we give and live our thanks; thanks to Him for the gift of salvation and all it includes; thanks to Him for parents and families; thanks to Him for food and clothing; thanks to Him for a life of meaning and purpose and hope; thanks to Him for grace in times of struggle and for peace in the midst of the battle. Thanks to Him for it all!



—Rev. Phil Haugen
AFLC Schools
Plymouth, Minnesota

In All Things Give Thanks

Am I thankful? In the past three years? To be sure! At the top of the list I'd have to say that God was with me during those difficult days. Through the time of my husband's battle with cancer and ultimate death, the Lord was present whether or not I realized it every moment.

During times of distress and grief, we're often like poor lost children. We seek reasons. Often nothing makes sense — because the pain is too great. While we beg God for answers, He is saying: "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest. Just trust Me."

Cancer is a dreadful thing to deal with, but it does give time to adjust our thinking. That gift of time prepares us to accept gratefully our loved one's release from the pain and suffering. Those of us who watch and wait can find strength, peace and rest only if we seek refuge under His wings. How He longs to shelter us there.

The night before his surgery, my husband, LeVern, made peace with God. There were ups and downs, of course, because he was dealing with other difficult family burdens. But during the remaining sixteen months of his life, his new sweet spirit continued to grow. I remember someone saying while visiting him in the hospital one of those last few days of his life, "I feel the presence of the Lord in this room." I believe it was true. How I praise God for the assurance of seeing Vernie again!

I'm thankful for the way He sustained the rest of my family, also. I think of my son, Gary, and his wife, Jeanne. Both lost their dads within a month of one another. Gary had a new church to serve and yet he was allowed to make several trips to North Dakota to be with us. The Lord worked through that wonderful congregation in Ottawa, Illinois, to provide the means and emo-

tional support for Jeanne and the children while he was gone. We were, and continue to be, so grateful for that.

During LeVern's illness we weathered the pregnancy of our youngest daughter and the birth of her beautiful son. God was with us. Later, for the marriage of that same daughter and the strength to send her a thousand miles away, God again supplied sufficient grace. I received strength I didn't

believe possible. Even now, He continues to work in her life and mine in amazing ways.

And, how could I ever adequately express thanks for all my children who were so concerned for me even while they were hurting desperately themselves. Family and friends — God has never blessed me more than He has through them!

Give thanks in **all** things? Yes! **For** all things? No. I'd be stretching the truth if I said I've thanked Him **for** all things. But I've learned to trust Him more; I've learned to flee to His infinite mercy; and I've learned that, at all times, I'm sheltered in His love. Yes — "Under His Wings."

— Joanne Jorgenson
Tioga, North Dakota

**Let all the peoples
praise Thee.**

**The earth has yielded
its produce;
God, our God, blesses us.**

**God blesses us,
That all the ends
of the earth
may fear Him.**

Psalm 67:5-7

A Thanksgiving Testimony

One Leper Leads The Way

Jesus and His apostles were walking to Jerusalem. When they reached a village on the border between Galilee and Samaria, ten lepers cried out to Jesus, "Have mercy on us!" Jesus looked at them and told them to go to the Jewish priest and show him that they were healed.

The lepers disappeared, but one

came back glorifying Jesus and thanking Him for curing him — a Samaritan. Jesus said he healed ten men and asked, "Where are the nine?" Perhaps they were grateful, but they didn't tell Jesus.

Many of us are like those nine who forgot to thank and praise the Lord for cleansing them from leprosy. Time after time we pray to the Lord for certain needs. When our prayers are answered, we go merrily on our way forgetting to give thanks.

We usually take for granted our daily blessings — wife, husband, family, food, shelter, good health and many others. Before the coming of rural electrification, water was a precious commodity, in that it was hauled in cream cans from a mile away. Now, when I take a shower, I always thank God for the running water as well as for the liv-

ing water He gives us every day.

Thanksgiving is a wonderful time for people to congregate and count their blessings. "The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy" (Psalm 126:3). Thanksgiving Day is also a day of feasting but worship, prayer and praise should be first in our priorities.

Thanking God for the many blessings in life is easy to do, but how much thanks do we feel when catastrophes strike — illness, death, bankruptcy, loss of possessions?

Sixteen years ago I developed a progressive kidney disease for which there is no cure aside from a transplant or dialysis treatments. When told I would have six months to live if I did not have these treatments, I developed a new perspective on life. First I thanked Him for my condition and prayed for strength to withstand what the future would hold. The dialysis treatments gave me better health and I continue with them three times a week. Now I thank God for each new day and try not to waste a moment of it. Let us remember when we experience bodily illness or pain that Jesus suffered pain much more extreme. And He did it for love for all sinners.

Psalm 107:8, 15, and 31 says: "Oh that man would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!"

Every verse of Psalm 136 gives reasons for thanking God "for His mercy endureth forever." The daily devotional book, "Our Daily Bread," says: "Gratitude is what spoils life when it is left out." How true!

The greatest blessing for which we cannot overdo the giving of thanks is God's forgiveness of our sins and for salvation and eternal life given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ through His crucifixion and resurrection. Think of it and how great is His love for us.

In Ephesians 5:20, Paul says: "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Let us, like the one thankful leper who was cleansed, follow closely this admonition.

— *Corinne Schmidt*
Marcus, South Dakota



Photo by Roger C. Huebner, D. D. S.

Where Are All The Missionaries?

Sometime ago, I had the privilege of speaking at a missions banquet. As I thought about the banquet, the question came to my mind: who are the missionaries? Do Christians today see themselves as missionaries or do they see some other Christian filling that position? Sometimes I think they may feel that they are better qualified to do some other work for the Lord.

I know there are some well-meaning believers who say we should not classify all Christians as missionaries. They believe that people will lose interest in the missionaries God has called to serve in foreign countries. However, I believe just the opposite to be true. I think that when a Christian realizes that God has called him or her to be a missionary right where they are then they will be more interested in the work of other missionaries.

What is mission work? We find our Biblical basis for mission work in the word "apostle." Apostle means "to send." In other words, an apostle is one who is sent on a mission. In Hebrews 3:1 we are told to consider Jesus who is the apostle of our confession. We should look to Jesus as our example of what it means to do mission work. He was the greatest missionary the world has ever known. Yet Jesus never left the area He was raised in during His ministry. Why then does Scripture consider Him a missionary? Because He was "One sent," and the work He did changed the entire world.

Webster's Dictionary gives us this explanation for the word mission: It is a "body of people sent to carry a message to foreigners." An example would be when the president sends a delegation to negotiate an arms treaty. They are sent with a specific message to give to the other country. Mission work is simply carrying a message to some!

How does this truth apply to the Christian?

Romans 12:5 tells us that "we who are many, are one body in Christ." We are the "body" that Christ has sent out. Ephesians 2:9 reminds us that all

Christians are a part of God's kingdom, living in a foreign land.

II Corinthians 5:19-20 tells us that God has "committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors (missionaries) for Christ ..." The meaning of these verses is clear. Every Christian is a part of the group that God has sent into this world of darkness to bring the message of hope and salvation. Whether God leads you to a foreign country, an inner city mission, or to stay in your own community, the message is clear — you are to be a missionary. When Jesus gave the command to "Go" in Matthew 28:19, it didn't mean we had to leave the country. However, we should be willing to if He so leads us. What that command does mean is that every believer should get going with the message of salvation to all those around them. Wherever God has

**"Every Christian is
a part of the
group that God
has sent into this
world of darkness
to bring the message
of hope and
salvation."**



placed you, be faithful! The more you have a burden to win souls right where you are, the more you will want to support those who are doing that in some foreign country.

It should be noted that a burden for the lost is not some emotional frenzy that you work up on your own. It comes through meditating on the Word of God and spending time in prayer seeking the Lord's guidance. As you seek to be a witness for the Lord you will be overwhelmed with the opportunities that come your way. The great hymn writer Ira Sankey wrote:

"Lord, lay some soul upon my heart
And love that soul through me
And may I humbly do my part
To win that soul for Thee."

Yes, to be mission-minded means you have a burden for the lost. Let us never forget to pray for and support the missionaries whom God has called to serve in foreign lands. The work can be hard and trying. And one of the best

All Things Work for Good

I can truly say that my life has not been the same since I started attending Faith Lutheran Church at London, Minnesota, in April of 1988.

In 1975 I did attend AFLBS for the spring quarter, and through that, God planted a seed. I was then a member of an ALC congregation, but after having attended the Bible School for just that one quarter, I often prayed that an Association church would be started closer to my home. My prayers were answered over twelve years later. Even though it has been a difficult transition for some of my friends and family to accept my leaving the former church, I know that God was calling me to do so. I surely have not regretted my decision to join Faith Lutheran Church.

I feel God's presence among the members of this congregation. There is a fellowship and a kindred spirit that I had not felt for a long time. When I

first attended Faith Lutheran, the congregation was meeting in the farm home of Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle Creibrok. It took from 30-40 minutes to drive each way. However, it was well worth it to be able to hear God's Word and to have voids that had been in my life too long now being filled. Everyone whom I met at Faith Lutheran was warm and friendly. I was told that I was an answer to their prayers since I am an organist. Prior to my coming, they had been praying for someone to assist their one organist, Esther Wolff. Esther and I began sharing the organ playing.

On September 16, 1988, the Lord took my four-year-old home to Heaven to be with him. I am thankful that I belonged to a Bible-believing church at that time, for I was comforted greatly by the members and new friends I had made there and by Pastor Unseth's

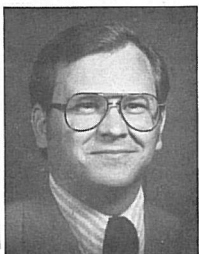
visits to our home and by God's Word. Through Philip's death, my other three children (Joshua, Sarah, and Elizabeth) and I have all been drawn closer to God. We have been continuing in our walk with Him ever since. Now we are praying that my husband may be able to join us at Faith Lutheran.

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." I am also happy to say that we will be having another baby in December. I give God all the glory and I thank Him for all of His blessings and for the members of Faith Lutheran Church. I thank God that in Faith Lutheran I have found a new home where God is present.

— Liana Church
Faith Lutheran Church
London, Minnesota

ways to have a better appreciation for what they are doing is to be busy doing our own missionary work at home.

You need to see yourself as a part of the team that God has sent out. A part of His great mission plan. You need to be faithful in your area of mission work. When we do this, we will see mission work flourish, both home and foreign. So I challenge you to look back and ask yourself, "how was my day as a missionary?"



— Rev. Paul Larson
Detroit Lakes, Minnesota

This article was reprinted by permission from March, 1990, "The Christian Fellowship Banner."

Two 1992 FLY Teams

The Luther League Federation in cooperation with our AFLC World Mission Department is sponsoring two Free Lutheran youth teams.

Pastor George Knapp and Jane Nelson will be traveling with the Brazil team and Pastor Ted Kennedy and one of the pastors in Mexico will be traveling with the Mexico team.

We especially want high school students who have finished their Junior year to go.

Now is the time to begin making plans to take advantage of this opportunity to get acquainted with AFLC World Missions.

1. Talk to your Church council, getting their approval and direction for fund raising and offerings to help the young people.
2. Go to your youth advisors and visit with them about the possibilities. Talk with your pastor.
3. Talk to your Luther League president and other officers. Get their backing.
4. Study Pastor Eugene Enderlein's Bible study on missions. Order it from your Youth Director.
5. Begin to raise funds. Estimated costs are \$1800.00 for Brazil and \$900.00 for Mexico. This can be a League project.
6. Get in touch with Pastor Eugene Enderlein about the details of passports, visas and what is required to cross the border into Mexico.
7. Get a copy of the application blank from Pastor Dennis Gray, Box M, Greenbush, MN 56726, or Pastor Eugene Enderlein, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441.
8. Act now! Applications should be completed by the first part of January, 1992. The team members will be selected shortly after January.

A Hymn of Thanksgiving

by Rev. Roger L. Tappert,
St. Mark's Lutheran Church
Indianapolis, Indiana

*For bread and milk, for dew on grass,
for sun and rain and frost,
for tables laden with good food,
we give you thanks, O Lord.*

*For healing touch, for lively flesh,
for bodies robust, whole,
for tear-filled nights, for laugh-filled days,
we give you thanks, O Lord.*

*For Jesus Christ, our living Lord,
his death and risen life,
for broken hearts he healed with love,
we give you thanks, O Lord.*

*For gath'ring us within your saints,
a feast of endless love,
for serving us your holy meal,
we give you thanks, O Lord.*

*For giving us compelling hope
to walk unnerving roads,
for future days, for healthy dreams,
we give you thanks, O Lord.*

Tune: St. Peter, CM. Concordia, #93 or LBW #345.
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Refuge In Times Of Trouble

Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward (Job 5:7).

These words written by someone who should know, mean simply that as surely as sparks from a fire fly upward, so surely must we face trouble in this life. Sin has made it so.

We have a tendency to watch and wait for life to simplify and get easier, thinking that perhaps then we will be contented. But somehow it never does; if anything, it gets more complicated as our lives and relationships expand.

Is there a place of refuge where we can feel secure even though the storms continue to rage around us? The answer is an emphatic, "Yes!" For the child of God there is security and peace available, for, "Our life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3). Our Lord speaks clearly to this fact in Psalm 91. In verse 15 we read, "I will be with him in trouble, (and) I will deliver him." Here we notice that the Lord does not say He will **keep us from** all trouble, but He will **be with us in** the trouble and bring us **through** it in His good time.

There are many things that can bring trouble our way. It can be the sins or folly of others or sometimes our own. We must remember if trouble comes to us because of these things, that God will not write us off even then if we but turn to Him. Such is the boundless love of God for us.

Another thing that we need to be careful of is that we don't blame God for trouble. However, the Scriptures make clear that He does use suffering to shape us for His use. Someone has aptly said, "God builds into every Christian what He wants to use them for."

Perhaps you are facing some particular trial just now for which there seems to be no possible answer. May you find courage to look to Him who said, "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me" (Psalm 50:15).

— Pastor Martin Christensen, in "Parish Voice"
Badger, Minnesota

No Weasel Words

"The god of this age"
Makes all things pertaining to right and
wrong appear foggy.
He darkens the understanding
So that right seems wrong
And wrong seems right.
He invents "weasel words",
Words to delude, deceive, confuse.

Hitler must have used a lot of "weasel
words"
Or how could he have convinced
So many good German people,
Lutherans and Catholics, pastors and
priests,
To form a New Germany, a super race,
and finally to participate in
exterminating millions
Of ethnic, genetic, politic
"undesirables"?

And now today, "the god of this age"
Continues to use "weasel words"
Spoken by TV commentators,
humanists,
Doctors, professors, pastors, others,
Some speaking ignorantly, themselves
deceived,
Others deliberately deceiving;
And by their words imbibed
Our reason is darkened.

Are these not then "weasel words"?
"Termination of a pregnancy",
"Remove the products of conception",
"The uterine cavity was emptied",
"Fetal anomaly incompatible with
extrauterine life",
"An anomaly compatible with life,
but with"
"Anywhere from moderate to severe
handicaps",
"Tragic option"!

And more
"We have agonized long and hard on
this issue
Have tried diligently to be faithful both
to the medical needs
Of our pluralistic community and to
the statements of synod."
But, has not God spoken?
Is there no Bible?
No straight line of reason,
No guiding principle,
No sacred truth,
No word from God?

The Goodness of God

*Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness:
come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he
that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his
pasture, (Psalm 100:1-3).*

How good it is to know that God is our God! He is our Creator and our Sustainer. How good it is to know that we are His people! It is from a living experience of this reality that a true thanksgiving can arise within our hearts.

In spite of our sinfulness and unworthiness, God has provided us with abundant portions of His grace and His goodness. Our relationship to God rests in the finished work on the cross. Through the redemptive work of Christ in His life, death and resurrection, the enmity between ourselves and God was removed. Our greatest cause of joy today is that our sins have been forgiven. "By His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). "Now therefore, we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19). We are made "heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:7).

We cannot help but experience a position of humility when we receive such undeserved grace and goodness. That is good, for someone has said that humility is a foundation stone for gratitude.

I trust that each one of us will take time during this season of Thanksgiving to meditate and marvel again at the goodness and greatness of our God. May the precious relationship that we have with Him in Christ Jesus be our true source of gratitude.

Now we become so much more aware of the temporal blessings. Now there is even a deeper appreciation for family and loved ones. We have a new thankfulness for health and home. How privileged we are to have our Church and to be able to enjoy the freedom of our great country. The list is endless.

I trust that the words of Charles Wesley are the expression of each of our hearts today.

*O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise;
The glories of my God and King,
The triumph of His grace.*

— Rev. Richard Snipstead

God has spoken:

"Thou shalt not kill!"

The slaughter of the innocents
Causes weeping and great mourning!
Life is mine to give and take!
Who put the scalpel in your hand
To kill innocents?

No, not even government is given the
sword
To kill innocents!

God help us to speak plainly.

"To do justly,
And to love mercy,
And to walk humbly with 'our' God",
And to defend the innocents!

— by Odell O. Kittelson
Newark, Illinois

News from Parish Education

Did you know that ...

The 2nd quarter teacher's manual for grade 2 is ready to be printed (complete with reduced student pages, new cover and spiral binding) but we cannot print it unless the estimated \$2,000.00 is on-hand?

Praise is like a plow set to go deep into the soil of believers' hearts. It lets the glory of God into the details of daily living.

— C. M. Hanson

Do We Really Want the Layman?

And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ... And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved (Acts 2:42,47).

And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

The 1988 Annual Conference of the AFLC adopted a resolution to establish, on the local, district, and national levels, a men's lay group for the purpose of encouraging lay participation and growth in the congregations. This resolution recognized the rich heritage of lay activity found within the AFLC, and expressed the desire to see this lay activity maintained, increased, and passed onto the next generation. Indeed, if the AFLC is to continue, it must be passed on.

This lay activity was certainly a part of the early Christian church, and this activity did not begin there, but was received from the believers of Old Testament times by the very command of God.

Just what is meant by the term "lay activity?" Lay activity means lay people (who are not pastors) involved in spiritual endeavors; in the specific instance of the 1988 resolution, it means lay men. It means deep involvement in personal Bible study and prayer. Daily repentance and self-dedication to God would come as a result of these times of study.

Second, it means fathers teaching these truths and convictions to their own families, and then to the young people in Sunday School.

Third, lay activity means spiritual fellowship. This can come about through preaching and testimony meetings, where the messages are provided

by the laymen themselves. These would be the result of meditation on particular Scripture passages, expressions of personal faith and personal conviction by the Holy Spirit. They would be applications of Scripture to the circumstances common to the daily lives of lay people.

In the fourth place, lay activity means involvement in works of love and mercy. It includes, among other things, the visiting of the sick, giving aid to the needy, and comforting the sorrowing.

Fifth, lay activity means witnessing. Laymen, motivated by love for souls and an earnest desire for the lost to be saved, should be individually and personally involved in evangelism. Each would make an effort to give verbal expression of his personal faith to those whom God has placed in his life. He would lovingly and perseveringly work to see those people brought to personal trust in Christ as Saviour.

Sixth, lay activity means men interested in missions, other congregations and fellowships, and such common endeavors that would be consistent with the objective of a committed Christian life.

In conclusion, lay activity means sacrifice and commitment. It means generous giving of time, efforts and money as the Lord directs. To encourage this type of activity among the men of the AFLC was the purpose of making this resolution at the annual conference.

The resolution simply called for setting up a committee of laymen to begin the process of putting into motion a simple organizational structure which would encourage the establishment of laymen's fellowship groups on the local level. This simple structure would provide guidance and help to remove hindrances in the beginning of local fellowships. Also, they would provide the structure necessary to bring about fellowship between these local groups in an area by area basis.

The organization also would bring men together in fellowship at the time of the annual conference, in the same way as the Women's Missionary Federation meets.

What commitments are necessary for such a laymen's group to be successful? What are some things that must constantly be kept in mind so that this effort will not be side-tracked? First, the commitment to keep it a spiritual movement must always be of prime importance. An active organization does not guarantee that it will be filled with spiritual life.

A second thing to remember is that this organization should not conflict with the office and ministry of the pastor. It should not compete with nor replace the ministry of the Word and prayer to which the pastor is called. It should produce, by God's grace, a mighty army of laymen who are understanding of the Word, committed to it, and desirous of serving the Lord in and through the activities of the local congregations.

Do we really want the layman? Yes.

Do we really want free and living Lutheran congregations? Yes, we certainly do.

In saying yes to one of these questions, we are declaring our commitment to having the other.

—Rev. Ralph D. Tjelja
Blaine, Minnesota

Pastor Tjelja is professor of Old Testament studies at AFLC Schools.

Graham's Largest Crowd

New York, New York (EP)

—Evangelist Billy Graham spoke to a crowd of 250,000 people at a rally on the Great Lawn of Central Park, his largest North American audience ever. The official estimate from the city's park and police officials is nearly double Graham's previous largest domestic crowd.

"Nothing is to be compared to the love of God," Graham said in his Central Park address, based on John 3:16. "If there is one thing that I want you to take from the park when you leave here, it is this: God loves you and God is interested in you."

What Will Your Career Be?

Probably one of the most asked questions is "What are you going to do after you graduate?" You realize this is a very important question and that, perhaps, you can no longer give the answers you gave as a child.

Still, many college students are not able to give a solid answer to the question of what they will be doing to make a living. So, even at ages 18 and 19, there are some important choices still being made.

A large number of juniors in high school would gladly accept help in making their career choices. In fact, they want help in making those choices.

A few years ago, Alan Funt on his famous program sent a number of young people through a career choice testing program. One of the fellows was told his tests pointed to him being a shepherd and to take care of sheep. Just then the phone rang and the "counselor" stepped out of the office.

The fellow began to pace the floor. He could not believe his tests pointed to his being a shepherd. He had other things in mind and those things did not include being a shepherd. He voiced it out loud in a closed room.

Also, I can recall a young man who came to stay overnight with us and to go and register at Dunwoody Institute in Minneapolis. Now Dunwoody is one of the best schools in the Minneapolis area. It trains many people to go into various different occupations.

The testing given him by his high school counselor told him he could not really pass courses at the college level.

That evening we got into a lengthy discussion about his future. Actually, he wanted to be a shop teacher and a coach. He is now a shop teacher and a coach. If he would have gone to Dunwoody he would not have been in the career he wanted. He would have been in a good career, to be certain, but not one of his liking.

One thing high school testing cannot do is measure motivation. The young man mentioned above needed encouragement to go forward and try his plan first.

A good place to start is alone with Jesus in prayer. You can invite your family members, fellow young people, your pastor and Sunday School or Bible class teachers to pray, too.

Talk to your pastor and your guidance counselor at school. Examine your relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the church.

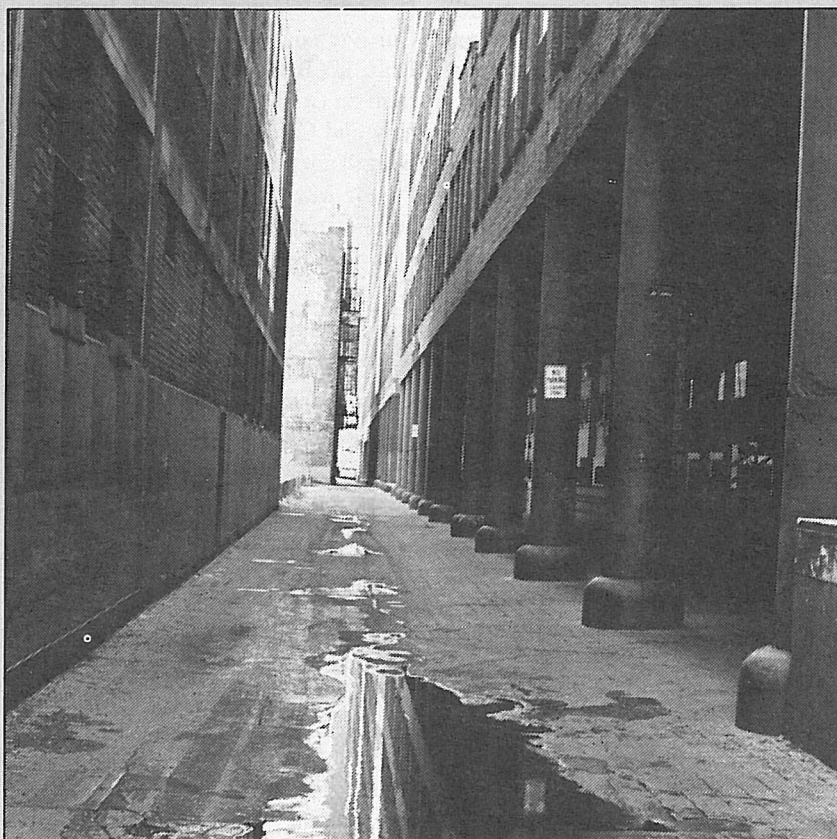
One must find a career that is consistent with what the Lord wants and desires. One that is in His divine will. Your interests, desires and skills must match up. Don't sell yourself short. The Lord gives us abilities and He motivates us, and this motivation cannot be measured always by tests.

—Rev. Dennis Gray
Youth Resources Director

Does it look forlorn?

**Find direction
for your
life.**

**Study and
meditate
on Proverbs.**



A Thank You from Rev. Raynard Huglen

The trip to Israel, September 23 to October 3, 1991, was all that I could have hoped for. It was a gift from the congregations of the AFLC for my years as editor of this magazine and I want to thank you again, now after the fact, for this great experience.

Our group of some 50 people travelled in safety and shared rich fellowship together. It was a trip of a lifetime to see so many of the places where our Lord was on His earthly sojourn, as well as places mentioned in the Old Testament.

Our tour hosts, David and Mary Barnhart, and Abiding Word Ministries, prepared us well for the trip and handled all details over there in a most professional, yet personal way. Our guide, Zvi Strauss, was excellent.

Thank you sincerely for making this experience possible for me. God bless you.

If you are headed South, Living Faith Free Lutheran congregation welcomes winter visitors to Arizona to worship with us when you come south for the winter. Write for further information if you desire. Pastor David Nelson is the new pastor. Living Faith Free Lutheran Church, 6000 S. Cardinal, Tucson, AZ 85746; telephone 602-883-8778.

Murrieta, California — Junior and senior high youth, along with their parents, have been meeting on Sunday evenings, studying Dr. James Dobson's material, "Preparing for Adolescence." Ron and Tarrie Dormanen are leading the sessions at Shepherd's Church of the Valley.

Rev. Marlyn Kruse, Burnsville, Minnesota, has resigned as associate pastor of Living Word Lutheran Church, Eagan, Minnesota, in order to accept the call to become the pastor of Word of Life Church, Mankato, and Hosanna Church, St. James, Minnesota. Pastor Kruse concludes his ministry in Eagan November 24.

Thief River Falls, Minnesota — Our Saviour's congregation enjoyed a Brazilian Barbecue at the Loiell Dyrud farm on October 19. Missionaries Connelly and Carolyn Dyrud co-hosted the Brazilian treat. On October 27-30, Pastor Martin Christensen, Badger, Minnesota, spoke at the annual fall special meetings at Our Saviour's Church.

COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

"Count your many blessings, name them one by one", the song writer suggests, "and it will surprise you what the Lord has done." This Thanksgiving issue is a good time to list a few of our blessings as a church family:

- The generous financial gifts to the AFLC from our congregations. Often we focus on budgets instead of blessings, on what is still needed, rather than on what has been received. The fact is that our income has increased each year, during some difficult economic times.

- The beginning of construction on the new administration building. The hole in the ground may not seem very impressive at this initial stage, but many obstacles have been overcome in order to bring us to this point of progress, and those who are closest to the project see ample cause for praise.

1992

ARC Happenings

Pastors' Conference — Jan. 22-24
Sno-Daze — Jan. 31, Feb. 1-2
Men's Retreat — Feb. 21-23
Women's Retreat — May 1-3
Memorial Work Weekend — May 22-25
Annual Conference — June 17-21
Youth Camp — June 21-27
Family Camp — June 28-July 4
Family Camp — August 2-8
Couples' Retreat — Oct. 23-25
Please pre-register!

Tucson, Arizona — Living Faith Free Lutheran congregation was one of about 150 churches in the area cooperating in the John Wesley White/Franklin Graham Crusade held at Tucson Convention Center on October 6-13. Several members, together with Pastor David Nelson, served as counselors, choir members, follow-up workers, and several more members attended sessions. Youth from the churches enjoyed free pizza prior to the two special Youth Nights at the Crusade.

McIntosh, Minnesota — Mt. Carmel Free Lutheran Church will have Special Meetings on November 17-19, with Rev. Elden Nelson, Minneapolis, as the guest speaker.



Guest speaker Rev. Elden Nelson, Minneapolis, and Jo Lindquist, Dickinson, North Dakota, are pictured at an ethnic dinner last September at Our Saviour's Free Lutheran Church, Dickinson.

- The likely resolution of the India lawsuits. We have been advised that the one remaining claim may soon be resolved in federal court. This still leaves the state lawsuit filed by Bhushana Rao Dasari himself to be settled, but the federal decisions cast considerable doubt on the strength of his claims. God is graciously answering our prayers for protection and peace.

- The application and approval of three future missionary couples. We have followed our Lord's command to pray forth laborers, and He has blessed us bountifully. The funds will follow, too, as we continue to be faithful as a church family.

These four blessings for our church family to count were carefully chosen, because each one is still to be finished. Boards have to struggle with budget shortfalls, the building has to be completed, the legal machinery must run its course concerning the lawsuits, the promise of missionary support for the new candidates is far from the projected total needed.

But look at how the Lord has blessed! Isn't it surprising to see what He has done?

Counting our blessings not only calls us to thanksgiving; it also creates within our forgetful hearts a new spirit of trust in the One who will finally crown those blessings with completeness in His time.

PRESUMED INNOCENT UNTIL PROVEN GUILTY

Our readers must be isolated indeed if they missed the media coverage of the recent confirmation hearings for the latest U.S. Supreme Court Justice. The passage of time between the preparation and the publishing of these editorials complicates any effort to comment on current events, but perhaps some observations are still in order.

Both Judge Thomas and Professor Hill claim to be personal Christians, relying on spiritual resources during their ordeals, supported by others through the power of prayer. Both have constantly been described as very credible witnesses, and their supporters have compiled long lists of friends and co-workers who can vouch for their integrity and character.

But both of them cannot be telling the truth. One of them is lying. May the Lord lead the guilty one to repentance and renewal.

The principle prevailed that the accused is presumed innocent until proven guilty. This precept is for our protection, and its preservation ought to encourage everyone concerned for personal freedom. Yet we cannot avoid a sense of guilt, too, as our eyes and ears were "dirtied" by the sordid details shared with the world during this shameful episode. May the Lord lead us to the cross for cleansing.

The presumption of innocence does not mean that there is no problem with sexual harassment of women in the working world. In fact, one might hope that the explosion of

anger erupting in response to Professor Hill's allegations might open the eyes of us all to the enormity of the problem, as well as encourage women to press their complaints promptly through the proper channels. Christians must not be guilty of minimizing the suffering of those who are the victims of such crimes.

These Senate hearings have wounded the spirit of the United States of America. May our hearts be moved to pray for national healing, even as we bring our leaders before God's throne of grace. Pray, too, for the new associate justice, that the Lord would grant him wisdom during the coming years of service to his country, to glean from his past and to grow through his pain.

Our reflections on guilt and innocence come to a right conclusion as we recall the Scripture cited by Rev. Richard Halverson, chaplain of the Senate, on the morning of the confirmation vote: "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone ..." (John 8:7).

MILLIONAIRE MANIA

Our local newspapers reported that there was bigger news than the Supreme Court controversy on the minds of most people. More sensational than the sexual harassment scandal was the fact that the Illinois Lotto jackpot topped the sixty million dollar mark. Now the drawing is history, and a few people are instant millionaires!

Lotto ticket sales reached new records, the reports continued, as people were even standing in line at corner stores and service stations, lured by dreams of living in the lap of luxury. One writer speculated that people must have been robbing their piggy banks to purchase them.

The fact is that the funds produced by lottos and lotteries seem to have provided little relief for the financial problems of the states that promote them. Those who risk the most are usually the ones who can least afford the loss, and the danger of developing an addiction is great, with some states even devoting a portion of their gambling income for the treatment of the ones so afflicted.

"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs" (I Timothy 6:10).

Christians, too, have been affected by this epidemic. Millionaire mania is no respecter of persons, races, or creeds. We live in the age of instant answers, and the lure of instant riches through the lotteries is a real temptation.

Search the Scriptures, and discover what God says concerning the stewardship of our possessions and the source of our prosperity. Let Him lead you to freedom from the covetousness and greed of millionaire mania.

The Message of Discipleship

And Jesus said to them all, "If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me," Luke 9:23).

Some years ago I read and filed away a comment on this verse by an evangelical author, A.W. Tozer. He wrote: "The cross is the most revolutionary thing ever to appear among men. The cross of Roman times knew no compromise, it never made concessions. It won all its arguments by killing its opponent and silencing him for good. It spared not Christ but slew him the same as the rest. He was alive when they hung Him on that cross and completely dead when they took Him off of it. That was the cross the first time it appeared in Christian history."

With perfect knowledge of all this, Christ spoke the above verse. So the cross not only brought Christ's life to an end, it also ends the first life, the old life of every one of His true followers, this, and nothing less is true Christianity. We must do something about the cross and there is only one of two things we can do — flee it or die upon it.

Today, if any one preaches self-denial as a condition of discipleship, they might hear accusations like: "under-the-law, or old-fashioned, harsh, unloving or legalistic." But our Lord said the above and the Apostle Paul reemphasized and lived this truth. He preached it saying: "I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:2), and again "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14).

Our world is dying for lack of the message of the cross. Christ desperately needs followers who have died to their own selfish, materialistic lifestyle and have determined to live and give of themselves sacrificially, in

order that all may have an opportunity to know about and accept the gift of eternal life in Christ. Can you be counted among the faithful who have denied themselves and taken up their cross and are following Jesus?

Here in Brazil, most of our Free Lutheran churches have a weekly early morning prayer meeting and evening evangelism training sessions. I believe we are beginning to see blessings coming down from this type of faithful effort. In the past six weeks, with vari-

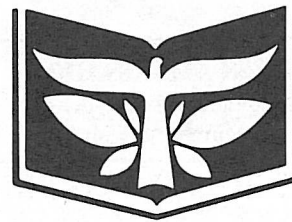
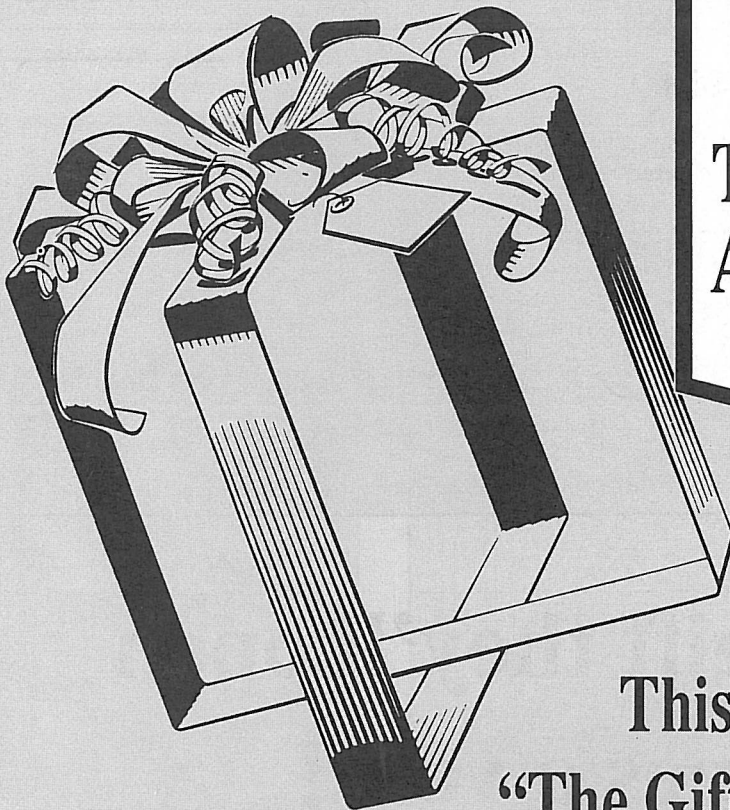
ous programs of special meetings in our churches, we have seen over 150 people coming forward to receive Christ as their Savior. Our pastors and lay people are busy visiting these new Christians. The churches are rejoicing. Would to God that this might be the beginning of a revival. Cross-bearing Christians will pray, and praying churches will see God at work. Brethren, pray for us!

— Missionary-
Evangelist
John H. Abel



en
thousand
thousand
precious gifts
My daily
thanks employ;
Nor is the least
a cheerful heart
To taste those
gifts with joy.

— I. Watts



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