

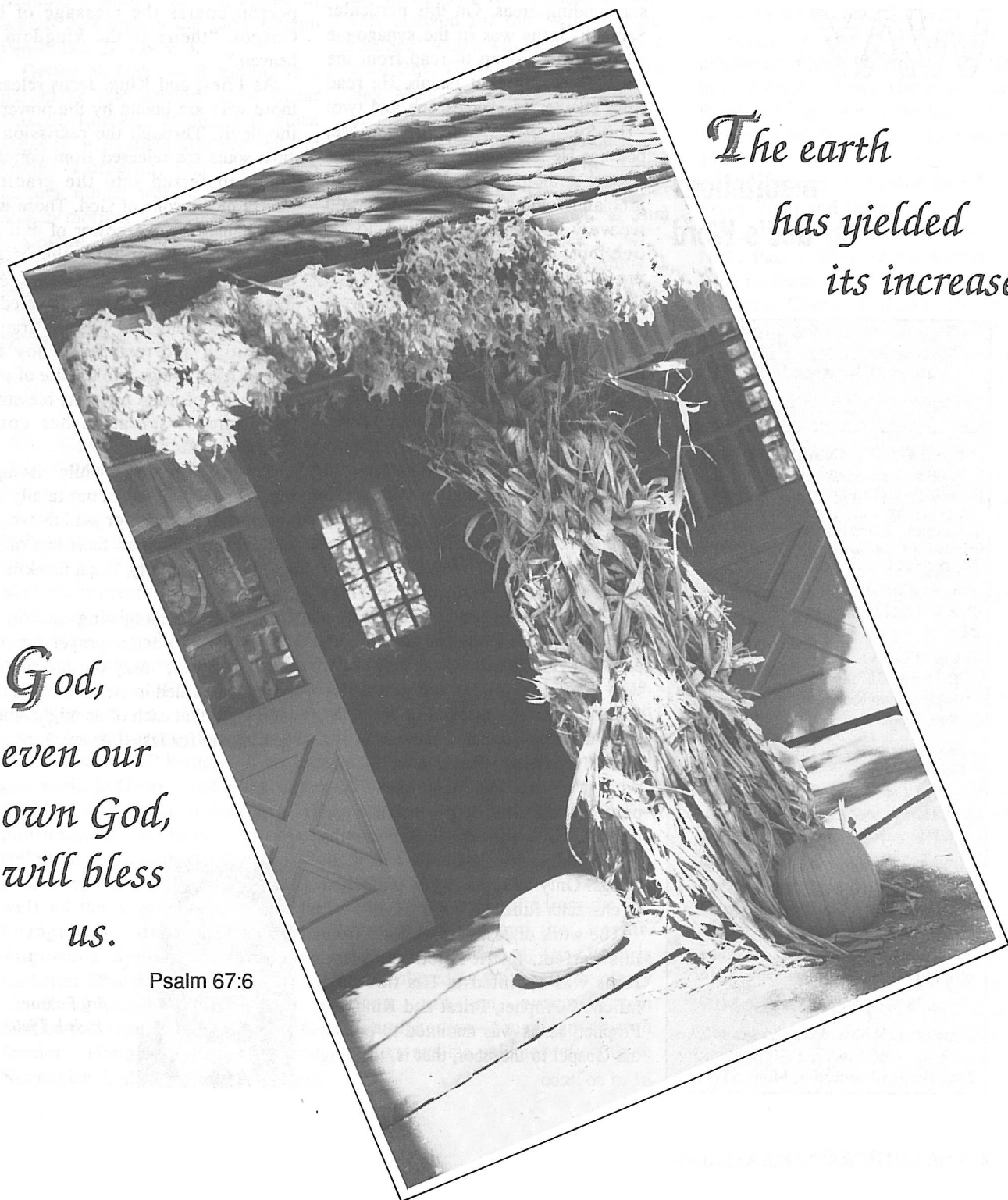
THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

November 15, 1988

*The earth
has yielded
its increase:*

*God,
even our
own God,
will bless
us.*

Psalm 67:6



LIGHT on the WAY

meditations on God's Word

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Roger C. Heubner, D.D.S.

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Text: Isaiah 61:1-7

It was an exciting day in the synagogue at Nazareth. Jesus was in attendance, having been gone for about a year from His home-town. He was no longer an ordinary man from Nazareth. Fame now followed Him wherever He went and news about Him had spread throughout the surrounding areas. On this particular Sabbath, Jesus was in the synagogue where He stood up to read from the book of the prophet Isaiah. He read from chapter 61, verses one and two: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are down trodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord." As He sat down, all eyes were fixed on Him and then He said to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Both the character and the work of our Lord are described in these verses. As to character, Isaiah, in another prophecy, reveals that the seven-fold spirit of the Lord rests permanently upon Jesus. In this One who fulfills prophecy there resides the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, producing perfect discernment of men's hearts. There is also the spirit of counsel and might, enabling Him to rule wisely and justly, with perfect equity in every decision. And, in addition, there is in Jesus the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, meaning that Jesus knows perfectly the Father's plans and purposes and with deep reverence and intimate unity with the Father submits to the doing of the Father's will in all things. Only in Jesus is this perfection of character fulfilled.

The work of Jesus issues forth from this perfect, Spirit-filled character. Jesus was anointed to His threefold office of Prophet, Priest and King. As Prophet, Jesus was anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor, that is, to bring

I am thankful for Jesus

good news to the spiritually-afflicted. In the Beatitudes this poor one is described as "the beggarly poor in spirit." This is the one who comes to the profound realization of utter helplessness and who recognizes complete emptiness and need. The only solution for such a one is the pure grace and mercy of Christ. To this person comes the message of the Gospel, "theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

As Priest and King, Jesus releases those who are bound by the power of the devil. Through the remission of sins, souls are released from bondage and transferred into the gracious liberty of the sons of God. Those who are chained by the power of evil are released to understand the bright illuminating truth of the Gospel. And those who are crushed and shattered by the consequences of sin are granted absolution and restored to joy and peace. Jesus brings into the life of poor sinners all of these priceless blessings. The time of salvation has come. Blessed be His name!

Several years ago, while sitting at the Thanksgiving table, our family was sharing blessings for which we are thankful. In childlike faith one of our children said simply, "I am thankful for Jesus."

In this Thanksgiving season we could offer no better prayer for each other than this, "May the blessings of Jesus be fulfilled in our lives. And may God grant that each of us might simply be thankful for Jesus! Amen."



by Pastor
Ralph Tjelta

What does Thanksgiving mean to you?

Do you have anything to be thankful for? This is a question that each person should ask himself. Today many people are not thankful. They see the material wealth of their friends, what looks like abundance, and feel sorry for themselves. They say, "Why should I be thankful; I do not have as much as my neighbor or friend? I deserve much more!" Do you deserve what you have? Isn't what you have a gift from God? If it is a gift from God, no matter how large or small, we should give thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father" (Eph. 5:20, NASB).

We are to give thanks for everything, not just the things that we like, the good as well as what we consider bad.

Are you thankful for anything? As Thanksgiving approaches, what are you thinking about? Getting turkey and food ready for relatives or is there something else that you are thinking about? What does "thanksgiving" mean? Webster's Dictionary says, "It is an act of giving thanks: a public acknowledgment of divine goodness and mercy; a day set apart for this, on the last Thursday of November." By definition, then, Thanksgiving Day is a day that is set apart to give thanks publicly for God's goodness and mercy shown to us. It says nothing about a day set apart to eat turkey with friends and family or any of the other things that occupy our Thanksgiving Day.

Do you give thanks on Thanksgiving Day? You probably say, "I just don't have anything to be thankful for." Let us make just a short list of things to be thankful for: life, each breath, family, a country that lets us worship freely, friends, food, shelter, clothing, water and clean air. This is just a very short list of what each of us has to be thankful for.

Maybe some of you say, "But I am thankful."

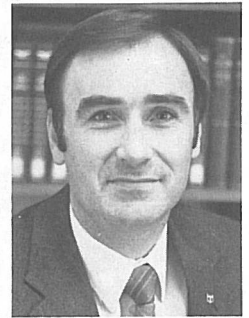
Then why are you thankful? One thing that is missing from the list above is the main reason why I am thankful. That is Jesus; without Jesus there truly is not much to be thankful for. I am thankful because of what Jesus accomplished almost 2000 years ago. He died willingly so that I and each person on the face of this earth could have the hope of eternal life. His blood cleanses a sinner; Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." It cleanses a repentant sinner from all sin, so that "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to

"We are to give thanks for *everything*, not just the things that we like. . . "

forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). Because of Jesus and His blood all those who confess their sins are forgiven and cleansed and made spotless in the eyes of God.

I believe this is a very good reason why a person should be thankful and use Thanksgiving Day the way Webster's Dictionary defines it. It is a day of public thanks to God for His mercy and goodness. When Christ is Savior and Lord a person looks at things in a different light. Remember Ephesians 5:20, stated above; we are to be thankful for "all things." Can that really mean that? Even if I am sick, does He expect me to be thankful? Yes, He does. "All things" means everything.

God has been teaching me this very simple and true fact: "Give thanks for all things." In the last months, many things we take for granted have become more meaningful to me, things such as: the ability to breathe, the ability to eat, and an infant's ability to grow. These



by Rev.
James Rasmussen
Park River, N. Dak.

Thoughts on the goodness and mercy of God



"When Christ
is Savior
and Lord,
a person
looks at things
in a different
light."

things have become special to me after the birth of our son Caleb last spring. God has made me realize what a blessing it is to be able to breathe without effort, to eat without effort and to continue to grow each day. The Lord has made me realize the many things that I should be thankful for that in the past I have overlooked as great reasons for thanksgiving.

I am thankful for our three other boys who have good health, who love Jesus and their parents and who love their little brother very much, even when it seems that this child has taken much attention and privileges that they normally would have had. The Lord shows us what is important. He shows us that the little things are the most important, not the new cars, new homes, new clothes, but health, love, peace and, most of all, a loving and caring Savior.

I have become more aware of not taking my wife for granted and of all the responsibilities a wife and mother has. I give thanks for a wife who loves Jesus and shows it by her love and the good care with which she takes care of her family. This is where Christianity shines. It is in the home, away from all spectators. In recent months the love and concern of family, friends and neighbors has been a real encouragement to me and my family. The bonds of Christian love go very deep and people time after time have shown their love in overwhelming ways. God has used many people to strengthen and uplift my family and this Thanksgiving I am thanking Him for "His people."

I have shared a few things I am thankful for. What are you thankful for?

Do you always give thanks? When Jesus takes over your life, He never says that there will be all good times. Because we are sinners, sin will affect our lives. There will be hard times. God does promise us in His Word that He will help us, comfort us, and He will carry us through our bad times when He is living within us. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that God

causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." It does not say that all things are good, but it does say that God causes all things, good or bad, to work together for good to those who love God. Do you thank God for those things that are not good in your eyes? He says that they will work for good. If you believe this, are you thanking Him for your illness, your handicap, or the illness of one of your loved ones? There is a purpose for these; you or I will never know why when we are still on this earth; only eternity will give us the answer.

If you are like me, it is much easier for you to understand the good things and give thanks for them, than it is to understand the bad things. But, when things are going smoothly, do you give thanks or do you think that this is to be expected and you deserve it? Don't we as humans need good times as well as bad to make us realize what God has given to us? This will make a difference in our giving thanks to the Creator and Sustainer of this world.

Let us remember that the purpose of Thanksgiving Day is to give thanks to God for His goodness and His mercy. This day is not set aside to stuff ourselves with turkey, but it is set aside as a family holiday so that all together might publicly thank God for breath, life, health and, most of all, for Jesus Christ and His healing and cleansing sacrifice on Calvary.

"Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful singing. Know that the Lord Himself is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him; bless His name. For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting, and His faithfulness to all generations" (Psalm 100).

Gratitude to the giver

Surely gratitude to the giver of all good is one of the cornerstones of national security and continued existence. If we ignore Him, He will abandon us to our own devices; then our country will share the fate of the nations of the past which arose, prospered for a

while, and then, because of internal decadence, were destroyed. I tremble for the consequences of national ingratitude. The Bible says pointedly: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

L. S. Keyser

An open door

Since the beginning of our country, during the Revolutionary War, Lutherans have served in the Army chaplaincy. That opportunity is still open to clergymen of all denominations. Even recent court challenges have upheld the constitutionality of the chaplaincy on the basis of the free exercise of religion which is guaranteed to every American citizen. The rationale is that since the government is requiring men and women to leave their homes in the service of their country, it becomes the responsibility of the government to see that their religious needs are met, just as freedom to vote must also be provided for through absentee ballots. We need to be in prayer that this open door for the ministry of God's Word remains!

As I've been in seminary preparing for the ministry, and feeling the call to the military chaplaincy, I've been asked, "Why the Army instead of a regular parish?" I'm sure that our two chaplains on active duty, Chaplain (MAJ) Timothy Skramstad and Chaplain (CPT) Mark Antal, were also asked that same question. Without presuming to speak for them, I know from talking with them that we share some of the same convictions and want to share them with you.

My sense of call into the chaplaincy is tied in an integral way with my call to the ministry. God has laid upon my heart the desire to serve him in a full-time manner, sharing the Word so that others might come to know Him. And, the Great Commission has come to have the specific application of my "going" to share Him in a literal sense. When the Association moved to place the military chaplaincy under the "wings" of the World Missions Department, it was simply another confirmation to me of God's moving in this direction in my life. My last sermon of internship at St. Paul's in Cloquet, Minn., was entitled "The NCO Message" (NCO meaning the Need, the Call and the Opportunity, rather than non-commissioned officer) and spoke of the open door before us as Christians to share our faith. The need of Army personnel to hear about Jesus became real to me during my time on active duty, prior to seminary. The call of God to ministry, and to this particular type of ministry, has been time and time again reinforced through experiences and people. And the opportunity is before us in a way that perhaps will never again happen.

Knowing that we have so many congregations without pastors at this time, it would be easy to

Why the chaplaincy?



"...it becomes the responsibility of the government to see that their (the service men and women) religious needs are met. . ."

say "no" to the chaplaincy. However, I also know that we have a God who is willing and able to raise up men of His choosing, as we are faithful in prayer (Matt. 9:37-38). Because of a shortage of certain faith groups in the chaplaincy, the door is open to us beyond what would normally be available. Because of our small size as a denomination, normally one or two men in the chaplaincy would be all we would be allowed. However, the quota system has been put aside for the time being and the Army is taking in chaplains from other groups to meet its over-all requirements. How long this situation will continue is uncertain and I cannot but help think that God is leading.

As a chaplain in the Army, normally you are assigned to a unit known as a battalion. For that unit, you are "their" chaplain, regardless of denomination. This gives a unique opportunity to reach the lost, as many who would never think of darkening a church door are brought into contact with the chaplain through incidental Army duties which the chaplain performs. A chaplain is free (indeed, expected) to come to the work place of the soldier, to "mix and mingle" in the very times that a person is most open to spiritual input: in field exercises and deployments which often involve separations from home and family. A chaplain has counseling opportunities which arise from military matters, opportunities which would

by Michael Crowell,
Senior,
Association Free
Lutheran
Theological
Seminary

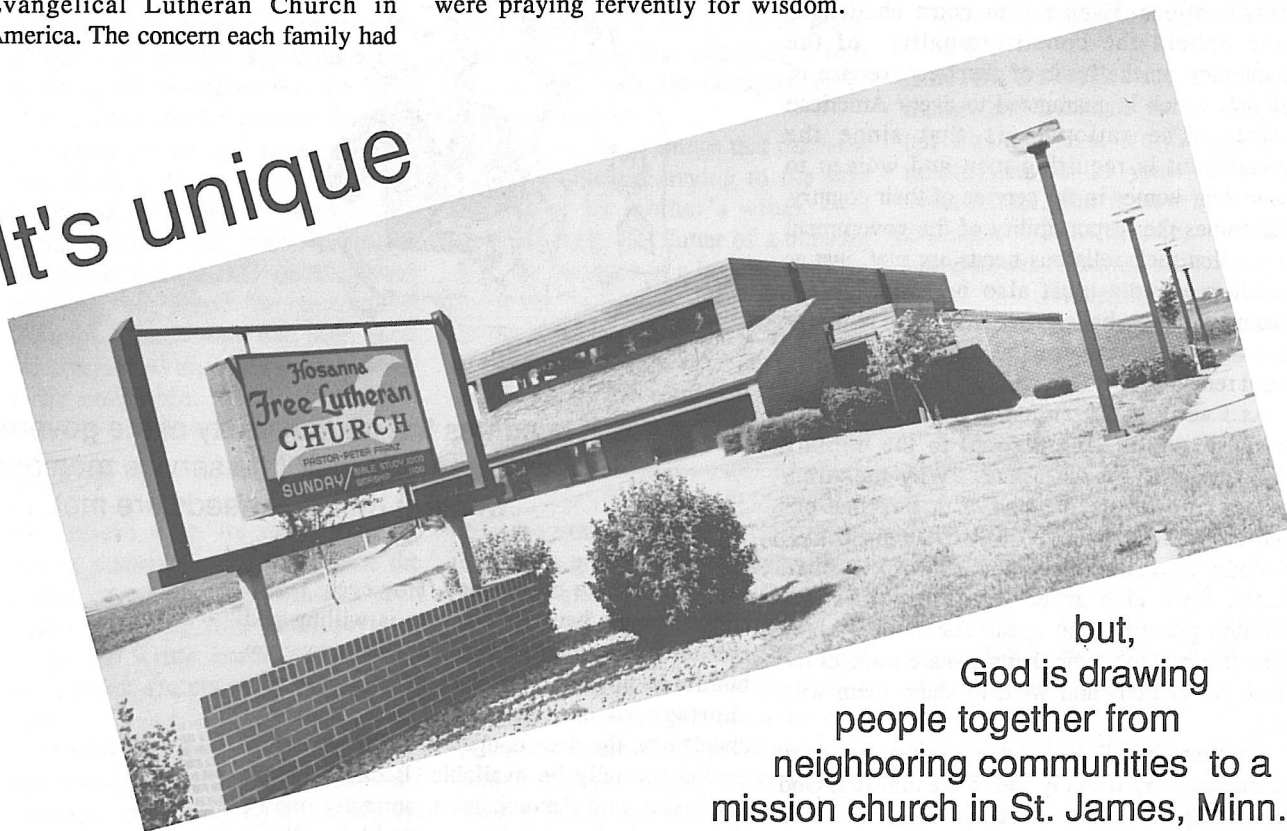
Nearly three years ago the Lord began bringing individual families from south central Minnesota communities together. They found themselves attending the same proposed merger meetings for the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The concern each family had

for the future drew these people together. Little did they realize that they were about to form the charter membership of Hosanna Free Lutheran Church in St. James.

As 1986 arrived, these few people were praying fervently for wisdom.

Convictions solidified and action resulted. Individual and corporate decisions were made. Questions flourished. Friends and neighbors watched. But God was blessing these few dedicated men and women with

It's unique



but,
God is drawing
people together from
neighboring communities to a
mission church in St. James, Minn.

CHAPLAINCY

never be available to civilian pastors, because of their dual role as pastor and Army staff officer.

Assignments to basic training units also provide unique opportunities for reaching the lost, as literally hundreds of young people, who are often scared, tired, lonely and in a period of transition, come through and the chaplain can be there to point to Jesus. The inevitable overseas tours also come with a unique opportunity to minister the Word, particularly with young families who often face difficult choices and situations.

It is my prayer that we as an Association will continue to see the military chaplaincy, as we have in the past, as an opportunity for eternity. I pray that we would uphold Chaplains Skramstad and Antal and see them for what they are, missionaries facing a unique and exciting field and desperately in need of our prayer support.

Where there is great opportunity, there is also a fierce battle being waged by Satan to close those doors to us! And I pray that if God allows me to work in that same mission field, you will remember me in prayer as well.

I believe that God will continue to bless us as an Association so long as we hold to the vision of reaching the lost with the Gospel and remain true to that vision by our action.

(Ed. note: Since writing this article, Michael Crowell has come to the conviction that he should delay his entrance into full-time military chaplaincy until after he has served in a parish of the AFLC. The reasons are two: the need for pastors at the present time and the value to be gained personally in later military service from parish work. He will be a chaplain in the Army Reserves and active duty remains Michael's long-term objective as the Lord leads.)

HOME MISSION NEWS

peace and courage to move forward. The first service was June 29, 1986, in Memorial Park in St. James. Nine people were to begin this Home Mission congregation and no one was from St. James.

One year and three months later, Hosanna Lutheran had a pastor, Peter Franz. He also began serving Word of Life Lutheran in Mankato, another Home Mission work. By the end of 1987, the congregation had 35 members and was seriously looking for their own facility.



Farm Credit Services had built a beautiful office on the edge of town in 1981. That property and building was now for sale at a price attainable by the Hosanna congregation. Home Mission director Elden Nelson came to look at it. As he drove up to the site, he is quoted as exclaiming, "You gotta be kidding!" Unique as it is, the FCS sign was about to be replaced with a new church sign.

By the end of January, 1988, Hosanna Lutheran began worshiping in their own facility. The large reception room became the sanctuary. Pews were donated by a Minneapolis church. Richly decorated offices surround the sanctuary, which convert beautifully to Sunday School rooms. Indeed, it is a delightfully unique facility.

Hosanna is an island church in St. James. Pastor Franz stated, "One of our big concerns is to reach into that city, but I think it will take some time." When visitors do come, they find a refreshing spirit of gratitude for the Word and an obvious unity in pressing on for the Lord. Pastor Franz added, "Good news travels fast and together we look forward to seeing how God will bless us." Neighboring communities of Darfur, Storden,

Truman, Madelia, LaSalle, Long Lake and others will continue to watch and be influenced by what the Lord is doing at St. James through that faithful, growing flock.

— Solveig Hjermstad

Blaine, Minn.

"Maranatha" is the name chosen by the new Home Mission congregation in Blaine, Minn., a northern suburb of Minneapolis. Rev. Donald Greven, Bible School dean, serves as interim pastor of the congregation, which meets in the Northtown Shopping Center on Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

Pray for open doors in California

Rev. Elden Nelson, AFLC Home Missions Director, traveled to California in mid-October and accompanied Pastor Orville Hiepler on a preliminary survey of several communities to consider the possibility of new work in the area. Pastor Nelson brought the message on Sunday, October 16, at First Lutheran Church, Camarillo, which is the first AFLC congregation in the state. Remember to pray for new doors to open in California and for provision to enter those doors in Jesus' name!

photos by S. Hjermstad



The pastor and youth ministry

The parable of the Good Samaritan could be rephrased this way. "A certain teenager was walking along the road when suddenly he fell among thieves, who robbed him and left him for dead."

The only good person in the parable of the Good Samaritan was the Samaritan himself. He did not call on some kind of a committee to help the person. He showed no fear, only concern, for the individual involved.

In our ministry as pastors, we must appreciate and accept our teens. They need to have pastors who are interested in them and who think they are important. Sometimes this is going to require setting aside the schedule and the planning and all of the duties which seem so all-important to show interest in our youth.

Youth are the church of today. Yes, also of tomorrow, to be certain, but followers of Christ and true leaders can also be found among our young people. To quote one of our 1987 AFLBS Ambassadors, "They are the developing leaders of today's church."

Pastors must know what is happening among their youth. We need to have a personal understanding of them. We must be careful not to put them all in one stereotype bag and classify them as being unapproachable and uninterested.

We must have open doors. That is, we must be available to our youth. The doors of our offices must be open for them. In fact, we might want to ask them to drop by or go out for a coke with them. It is called establishing relationships, relationships which will be good for them and for us. May our youth rise up to be even more valuable than us in the kingdom work.

Going to their retreats, rallies, conventions, etc., can be of great benefit. Drive your kids to these things and stay there. Find someone else to take the Bible study or pulpit!

Get involved with the actual

planning of the youth "program." Even if you have a youth director or the greatest advisors in the world, the youth need you to be involved, even if you sometimes just sit and listen.

Of anyone I can think of, Pastor, in your congregation you represent the future to your youth. Follow through on those confirmands. Keep the relationship going.

Yes, you will meet teens who are trying to you. They are not, perhaps, so trying to you as to themselves. One teen said, "How can I expect people to understand me? I don't understand myself." Somehow, I have always felt drawn to the kids that don't fit in because they seem like such a God-given challenge to me. What do you think?

Oftentimes it was the boy or girl who did that confirmation lesson just right who had the problems. At any rate, all are important. And, Pastor, you are important to them.

One part of the pastor's ministry is to help families. Christian families are crying out today for help. Families need to have good, sound, Biblical wisdom and there are many opportunities to build the family.

Then there are those advisors who were chosen to carry on the work of the Luther League. You need to encourage them and to work with them so that all might better communicate.

Youth work is a team work. Take a look at all the people who are involved with your youth. You are involved now. You must be involved later.

Our work is that of prevention. By the time a person is on drugs or alcohol or is experimenting in sex, the problem is too severe. Start by knowing all the children in your church that you can. Make them feel important.

One of the joys I had was taking a little gal out for a coke and fries because she had memorized the Books of the New Testament. That was her prize. I enjoyed the visit but was encouraged by the comment the girl made later when her family went out to eat at the restaurant. She told them, "There is where the pastor and I were

"... the youth need you to be involved. . ."

the other day."

These young lives can be molded. You are the primary example. May the Lord lead you in your ministry. By showing personal interest in the children and youth of your congregation, you will reap a harvest for Christ! Believe me!

—Pastor Dennis Gray
Youth Resources Director

As a hen gathers her chicks

While living in Africa I learned that modern chicken farms (run just like the commercial operations here in the United States) supply most of the eggs to the large cities. But when I think of one special hen mentioned in the Bible, the chicken that comes to mind is not that productive creature of the cage who never sees the light of day.

This Biblical hen is found in Matthew 23:37. Jesus used her as a picture of Himself: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings..." The Lord's illustration is of a "country chicken" if it is of any, and it's a picture of unfailing love expressed through firm protectiveness, patient dedication, and gentle comforting.

In the rural village I lived in, as in many other African villages, chickens are allowed to run loose and forage where they please. There I would occasionally see a large dog stop in its tracks and make an unscheduled detour rather than risk the ire of a hen with chicks. The village dogs weren't cowardly — they were wise!

Once a friend of mine noticed that a little chick following its mother was

cont. on p. 12

THANKS TO GOD

In a son's reflections on the life of his father, a common Canadian Christian man, he tells how his father would have his children make an inventory of the produce of the year each Thanksgiving. That is, to total how many jars of peas had been canned, how many squash gathered, how many bushels of carrots stored, how many bushels of oats threshed, and so on.

It was a father's way of bringing home the reasons for being thankful to the Lord for his benefits.

One year, in that family, there was a very short list of harvest home for the year had been exceedingly wet. A rabbit provided the meat for the Thanksgiving dinner instead of the traditional turkey and it didn't get very well done no matter how long the mother baked it. But even in that year the family came to see that they had much for which to be grateful because that year electricity had been brought to their home. They could thank God for that as well as for other things they did have.

As we survey our situations today, we see that we have so much. Many of you have suffered from the drought of 1988. Economic and social trends haven't been favorable for some for some years. And yet we have so much. Our needs have been supplied. We have pleasant conditions in which to live and work.

And what of the spiritual circumstances? Here again, we have much. We have the Word of God, which is the subject of the editorial which follows. We have our churches. Some of you have left congregations in which you long had had membership. That isn't an easy thing to do. It's a very hard thing. But for conviction's sake you have made the move and found new church homes, perhaps helping to start new congregations. It is exciting.

Most important of all, we may know Jesus personally. We have invited Him into our lives. We call Him Savior and Master. He has given purpose and meaning to life. While we may lack in material things, and more at times than in others, we have the Pearl of great price. We are seeking the kingdom of God first and seeing how all other things are added unto us.

Thanksgiving 1988. Another year of God's grace and blessing. May Nov. 24 find us truly counting our blessings and giving all praise and thanks to God. Each day should find us thankful and saying so, but on that day especially set aside for thanksgiving may we be careful to say "Thank You" to the Lord.

GOD'S WORD FOR ALL

Universal Bible Sunday (Nov. 20) will be over before some of you read this and that can't be helped. Perhaps your congregation has chosen another Sunday in the year to observe as Bible Sunday.

The autumn season is often the time when members of

Gideons International visit our congregations to tell about their work and inspire us with testimonies about how lives are changed as copies of the Bible are picked up and read. These true life stories are so encouraging and the Gideons are getting new testimonies right along, some of which they get to share with us.

The Bible is an inspired book, we say. Men wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. We use the word "inspired" in speaking of great prose and poetry. But it is different when we use the word in regard to the Scriptures. There we are speaking of a force which can change people's lives for eternity. That's quite a difference.

Today, let us think of those people, past and present, who devote themselves to the transmission of the Bible, those who make it available. First of all, we remember copiers. Today when one mentions the word "copier," we think of machines and the sophisticated equipment available to us. For a few moments remember those who preserved the Scriptures by making hand copies. Not a few of us would shrink from the assignment to copy, say, the Book of Genesis by hand, in English. For over 15 centuries all new copies of Biblical books and portions had to be done by hand and with inferior writing supplies.

Today, the Bible is duplicated by various printing methods in huge quantities. The demand is insatiable. Today Bibles are being printed in China!

Second, we think of the translators of Scripture. It isn't easy to put the words of one language into another. Oh, yes, some of it is easy, but then there are words and idioms which don't pass easily from one language to another. But the Lord has guided it so that His truth is passed on with a high degree of accuracy, yes, we can say, with complete accuracy. This work goes on as faithful workers strive to come to the day when every distinctive language has all of the Bible available in it.

Finally, let us mention the distributors. Any product must get to people who need it in order for it to do good. This is where the Gideons come in, and the Bible societies. There must be someone to place copies of the Bible in the hands of others or to lay them where people may "take and read." Long ago the reprobate Augustine heard a child speak those words. He understood it was the Bible he should read, and it was at hand. Directed by God's Spirit to a passage in Romans, he experienced the light of God in the reading. And so it happens today, too, as the Scriptures are brought out and sent out by people who care.

God works in mysterious ways, but always through people. Somewhere we read of a barber in Japan who had a fondness for strong drink. One day he found copies of three of the Gospels on the seashore. Out of curiosity he brought them to his shop, those "Jesus Books," and when his trade was slack he read them. He was moved by what he read, and

◇

I was missing something

My name is Marcelo Camargo e Silva. My home is in Campo Mourao, Parana, and I am a member of Central Free Lutheran Church. I am 17 years of age and come from a family of four boys and one girl. I am the second oldest. My mother, two brothers and my sister are Christians and we are praying for the conversion of our father.

I have always liked sports, but my favorite is soccer. My dream was to become a professional player.

But one day all this changed. Someone told me I needed Jesus and His forgiveness and that without Him I could not have salvation. I accepted Jesus as my Savior and Lord and He transformed me and changed my desires. I no longer wanted to be a famous soccer player. Now I wanted to learn more about Him who had died for me. God started to use me in many areas in church and at school, as I witnessed to my friends.

But this wasn't enough. I always felt I was missing something and that something was studying at the Bible School. But it always seemed that it

would be difficult for me to do. I was working at an excellent job. Then I remembered the passage where Jesus said, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life? For the Son of man is to come with His angels in the glory of His Father, and then He will repay every man for what He has done" (Matthew 16:24-27).

After much prayer, I decided to come to Bible School. God has blessed me very much in this short time I have been here and I know that He has a plan for me when I finish this year at Bible School.

I have a burden on my heart for missions and I am looking to the Lord to reveal to me what part I may have in this work. I ask for your prayers for me and my future.

— Marcelo Camargo e Silva

from Mexico

How I came to receive Jesus as Lord of my heart

When I was seven years old, my mother and I used to sit at the foot of my bed in an armchair beside the large window in my bedroom, and my mother would read to me from the Bible. On the 24th of October, 1982, I remember that I was very excited listening to her read to me. That day she showed me the plan of salvation and she told me that if I invited the Lord Jesus into my heart and repented of my sins, I would be saved. At five minutes after six that afternoon, I received the Lord Jesus joyfully, and believed that He was now in my heart and had become the Lord of my life.

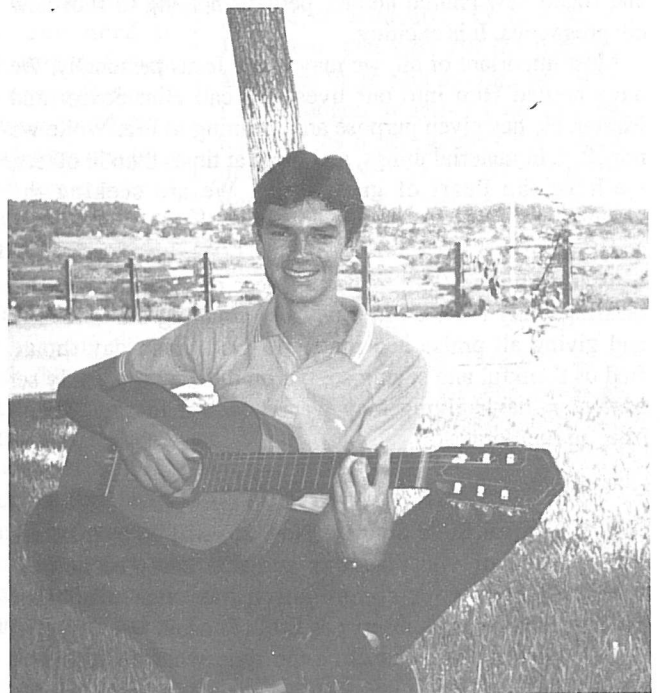
From that day on, I began to experience beautiful changes in my life, and I began to feel an ability to control my temper so that I no longer got angry so quickly when my sister irritated me. I never could do this

*Praise being the fairest
blossom of the soul, we
should ever cultivate the
"bloom of thanksgiving"!*

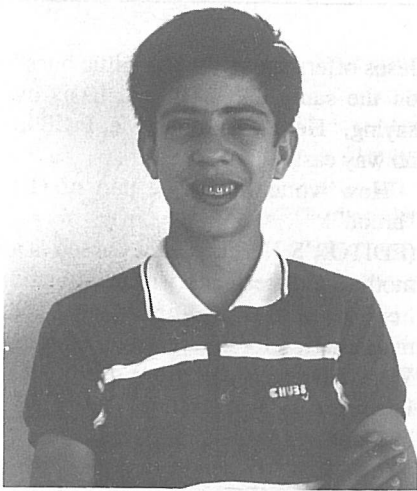
EDITORIAL

he believed it and was subsequently baptized into God's household. The barber always believed those books were sent especially for him and so they were.

God's Word made available. That's what we want. Let us support the work of the Gideons, the Bible societies, the colporteurs, as well as those who produce and translate the Scriptures, in order that the Word of God may be sent forth in our world as never before.



Marcelo Camargo e Silva



Jose de Jesus Vargas Infante

before. Even though I had often determined to do what I thought Jesus would have done in my place, I used to succumb to the anger every time. After this, even when I got angry over something serious, like when my sister broke a favorite toy, I would begin to pray and ask the Lord Jesus to help me and in a little while I would calm down and instead of anger I would feel peace and calm and great joy.

Since then I turned into a different person. I even found I could concentrate better in school and got better marks with less effort. The classes no longer seemed too difficult for me. I went around feeling peaceful and happy and the grades improved without a lot of effort on my part, it seemed. I felt all new, with a new feeling of hope, patience and joy, and a new feeling of self assurance. I felt things that had never been part of my experience before.

I suddenly began to want to please God with my life, to serve Him and to know that He was pleased with my behavior. I wanted to know His will for me and live according to it.

I remember being very impressed with Daniel the prophet, how the Lord called him, "Daniel, man well beloved." I liked that, and it pushed me to serve God more.

I have learned since that these are the desires that distinguish a person who has been touched by the wonderful hand of God. The things

that used to occupy all my thinking had become unimportant to me, even disgusting, and the desire of my heart was to be pleasing to God. How wonderful!

Of course, before I accepted Christ, there was a sort of desire to improve myself, to be a good kid, to not fight with people and not be living entirely for the world. I thought that was all there was to it. I had no idea how much greater life could be. But the Lord was aware of these desires and He kept His promise to fulfill them. "You will seek me and you will find me, when you seek me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13). I sought the Lord, I wanted to find Him, and in His great love He answered me and showed Himself to me. "I love those who love me, and he who seeks Me early shall find me" (Proverbs 8:17).

I began to learn about the great love of God through all the things my mother read me in the Bible, which made the things I heard seem simple and clear.

My mother taught me to pray to the Lord and I prayed to Him about everything. I asked His help, I told Him about my anxieties, my fears, my sadnesses, anger, happiness, trust, gratitude, or sometimes I just talked with Him. My faith began to grow and my confidence in Him increased, and I began to trust Him as my closest friend.

As it says in I Peter 1:15, I want to be holy in all my way of life and be pleasing to God and be faithful to Him.

The Lord is certainly greater, more tender, more loving and compassionate than what our minds can ever comprehend. Even though we sometimes want to wander away from Him, He never forsakes us. He is always waiting for us to return to Him and recognize Him again as our true and only Lord, and let Him have His way in our lives.

It makes sense to give ourselves up completely into His omnipotent hands, since we can never find joy, peace and happiness in the world, in spite of all it offers. And even if it means suffering and trouble in the world, it's for Jesus and He is waiting to receive us in

BOOK REVIEW

THE THREAT OF FALSE DOCTRINE

Gerald F. Mundfrom, *"The Threat of False Doctrine."* Osceola, Wisconsin: Mercy and Truth Publishers, 1988. Published by Faith and Fellowship Press, Fergus Falls, Minnesota. 131 pp., \$5.00 plus postage. (Order from: the author, Route 1, Box 503, Osceola, Wis. 54020.)

"I did not find it easy to write this book, but I was burdened to write it, and I felt that God wanted me to write it," the author states. This is the latest work of a pastor of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations who has written extensively in books and articles on numerous current issues in the churches.

Mundfrom believes that false doctrine is not only a threat to the spiritual health of the church but to that of individual Christians as well. He has pursued that theme in more detail in his previous works, *"Purged and The Depressed Christian"*. In this, his latest book, Mundfrom explores the menace of false doctrine with specific reference to the ecumenical movement, liberal theology dependent upon reason, charismatic theology dependent upon emotionalism, misunderstandings of the Law-Gospel relationship and of miracles, the misuse of prayer (the chapter title for Chapter Seven is "Using Prayer to Pressure God"), faith healing, feminism, and the New Age

heaven! What is a lifetime on earth compared to eternity?

Besides all this, God created us, so it makes sense that we should humble ourselves and obey Him, because He made us so that we should honor and serve Him, not out of compulsion, but out of conviction, until He comes for us. Our heavenly Father loves us, and all that He does for us is for our good. God's power to change lives and transform them and make them new is truly great!

—Jose de Jesus Vargas Infante
Aguascalientes, Mexico

CHICKS

hobbling because it had become entangled in a piece of string. Bending down to free it, he found his actions had roused the attention of the hen. She immediately spun around and prepared to fight a grown man! Signalling all her chicks to fall in behind her, the feisty little mother fluffed out her feathers, stretched up on her toes, and did everything in her power to make her six pounds look bigger. Then she flew to the attack — feet first! Needless to say my friend quickly ducked away from the little brood. He realized that although his intentions had been good, his actions had represented real danger to the mother hen.

This gives reason to wonder...if a hen will so fearlessly speed to the defense of her children against a foe so much larger and stronger...how much more is the Lord Jesus able to guard and protect His dear children? Where this analogy ends, the omnipotence of God only begins!

There are many things that can send a young chick scurrying to the safe shelter of its mother's wings — a strange sound, the flutter of a blowing leaf, the presence of a larger animal, or even the falling of rain. It doesn't matter if the danger is real or imagined; a chick can always find comfort and safety under the wings of its mother.

Jesus offers shelter to His "little ones" on the same unconditional basis by saying, "He that comes to Me, I will in no way cast out."

How wonderful to be part of His "brood"!

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Laura Laesch is a mother and freelance writer. She and her husband Jim worked as LBT missionaries for 13 years in Liberia, West Africa. Jim is now serving as Director of Ministries at LBT headquarters in Aurora, Illinois.

*Written by Laura Laesch
— Messengers of Christ
(Lutheran Bible Translators)*

BOOK

Movement with its promotion of secular humanism. In a short space the author covers the high points of each theme, showing how each deviates from the Bible truth and clearly delineating the contrasting points of view.

Drastic changes have taken place in the churches within the past half century. "False prophets infiltrated the church and, like high-pressure salesmen, have pressured and convinced the church that a change was needed. However, she was not asked to make the complete change all at once." In a continuing process of change "the church lost her purpose for being and much of her spiritual life... like a mother who threw out her baby with the bath water" (viii). Other developments, both caused by and causing this continually erosive process of change, include the neglect of Bible study and prayer and the laxity or complete absence of discipline within the church. God's people have been caught unprepared and often totally unwilling to fight for the Word or to disturb the false peace which prevails in most church circles. Untruth has become more appealing than the truth.

"The motive for accepting false teaching is the same as that of worshipping idols. It is less restrictive

than the truth, deadens the conscience, and gives greater freedom to sin. Like poison which kills physical life, false doctrine destroys spiritual life" (p. 5). False doctrine "has poisoned the souls of many people and left them with a spiritual hunger which only true doctrine can satisfy...False doctrine, to which many are ascribing, fails to satisfy. Many open-minded Christians who are sincere have been deceived and led astray. The devil is on the offensive in the Christian warfare against sin and evil. The battlefield is covered with the spiritually wounded and dying. A revival of true doctrinal teaching is sorely needed" (p. 7).

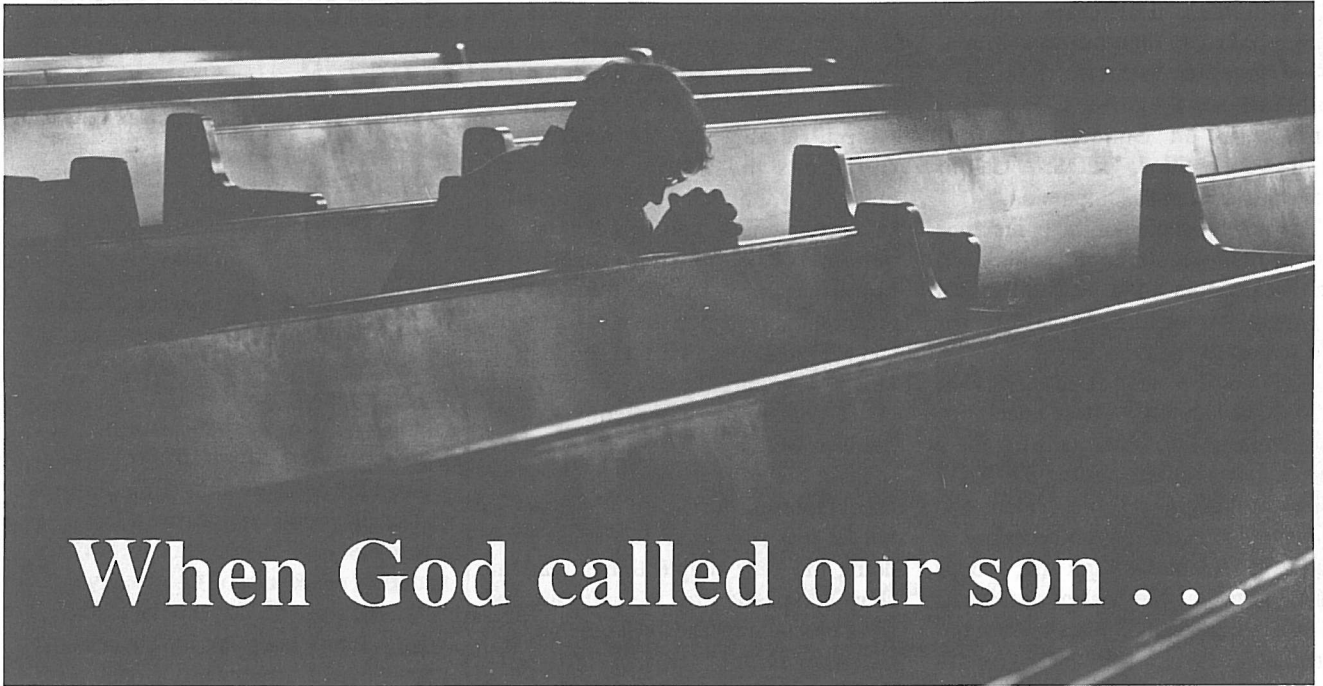
Mundfrom spells out the proper relationship between love and truth, the Biblical doctrine of the Holy Spirit, His relationship to the Word of God and the proper understanding of Law and Gospel and how each relates to the other. The proper place of praise and joy in the Christian life is spelled out as an antidote to the distortion of both in charismatic circles.

Some of Mundfrom's insights are novel and should spark discussion if not complete agreement. He believes that as draft deferments led many less than committed young men into the seminary and the ministry, these often became "hirelings" who accepted the modern liberal theology willingly and

often uncritically, leading to the further erosion of the health of the churches. (Could this also be a clue to the large number of pastoral resignations and demittals and, more recently, pastor defalcations over sexual matters? Mundfrom leads one to the edge of this question but fails to take it up.) He feels that the crying need for counseling today springs from the failure in many churches to provide solid Biblical preaching to answer people's basic needs, hungers and fears. He sees a link between the ordination of women and the "inclusive language" changes leading to such heresies as "God our Mother" (p. 90). He also attributes to Satan the tendency to rob Jesus of due credit by encouraging people to pray to the Virgin Mary or various saints (p. 32).

This book provides an excellent overview of many issues in the forefront of attention today. It is one of the few readily available aids for confronting these problems and crises from a Biblical point of view. We recommend the purchase of this book for personal libraries and for Bible study groups or classes in the congregation. A helpful bibliography for further study is provided on the last page.

*Pastor Edward A. Johnson (ELCA)
Batesville, Ind*



When God called our son . . .

We prayed for each of our children before they were born. As Hannah did to Samuel, so we dedicated each child to the Lord. Daily, we prayed with and for our children in family devotions. Often we prayed that God would call forth laborers because God has asked us to do that. Also we often prayed for specific servants who had needs. Our children knew we honored those in the Lord's work because they had accepted a noble and holy calling. It was exciting to entertain pastors and missionaries in our home. As the children grew, we emphasized living for the Lord and serving Him in whatever field God would choose. We can only rejoice in our son's calling into the ministry."

"I know my son was called when he was 9 years old. I'm thankful we have a biblical, sound seminary for him to attend. That is an answer to prayer. Ever since he told us that he felt called to seminary, we prayed that he would have complete assurance of his call and obedience to God's will."

"Years ago, our pastor and others began telling our young boy that someday he would be a good pastor. As our son got older, he was scared to even consider seminary because he was afraid he would go just to please people. His biggest struggle was the assurance that the call truly was from God. We pleaded with God to clearly show our son His call and will. Over a period of time, he did receive that assurance through the Word. Now at AFLTS, he is confident he is where God wants him. We love the verse in III John 4, 'Nothing gives me greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.'"

"Our son was a good boy but not saved. For 9 years we

were in business together. It was growing and we were on the verge of expanding. But then we had special meetings in our church. For a long time my wife and I had prayed for our son's salvation. During those meetings, he not only got saved, but also felt the Lord's call into the ministry. We were thrilled! We didn't want anything to stand in the way. I even told him, 'If we can't sell the business, we'll give it away.' We prayed about it and within two weeks the business was sold. The Lord really confirmed His will. God provided other work for me and our son left for school. That was years ago and I don't regret a thing. When God is leading, I don't want to stand in His way."

—AFLC parents



AFLC headquarters and school campus.

Churches confront AIDS issue

Emmaus Lutheran Church (AFLC), Bloomington, Minn., together with two other area Lutheran congregations, hosted a conference on Sunday evening, October 16, entitled, "AIDS: A Call to Biblical Clarity and Compassion."

The stated purpose of the conference was to help people better understand the disease from a factual and Biblical perspective, with suggestions for ministering to AIDS patients.

Dr. David Pence, University of Minnesota Hospital cancer specialist, was the main speaker, calling for a three-pronged attack against the AIDS epidemic: treatment, enforcement and education. He stressed the necessity of testing all people in high risk groups and the duty of medical professionals to exercise their public health "police" function.

Pence criticized the current emphasis on AIDS education, comparing it to the tobacco industry running a campaign against smoking. The main message of any educational program, stated the doctor, must be to limit sexual relations to marriage and not to use drugs.

He concluded by suggesting that the churches need to re-emphasize the virtues of mercy, chastity and patriotism in order to stop the AIDS epidemic.

The second speaker, Thom Michels,

represented an evangelical outreach ministry to homosexuals called Outpost, Inc., and serves as a volunteer "buddy" with the Minnesota AIDS Project. He suggested four areas where Christians must start in order to minister to the victims of the disease: (1) getting past the disease to the person, (2) getting past the homosexuality to the person, (3) meeting the person at his point of need, and (4) broadening our focus to include others who hurt (family, friends, etc., of the patient) and ministering to their needs as well.

Michels closed with a word of encouragement to not be afraid and to not let fear stop us as Christians from doing the very simple things that can show compassion for the suffering and from proclaiming the message that God has given us.

One of the most moving times during the conference was the testimony of a young mother, Dorothy Hazard, whose little daughter was a victim of AIDS as a result of blood transfusion. Her story was front-page news two years ago when the family's pastor called and informed them that their daughter would no longer be allowed in the church nursery.

But the other side of the story which the media never reported was the outpouring of love and support from

cont. on p. 16

Something old, something new: a visit to the archives

Something new has been added at the AFLC headquarters on Medicine Lake Boulevard. But it's really something old.

The addition of a new faculty member this fall led to a new office arrangement for the instructors. Rev. Ralph Tjelta joined Rev. Steve Lombardo in the north wing of the Bible School office area, vacating his former office in the headquarters building. Now Room 102 has a new sign on the door, ARCHIVES.

The dictionary defines an archive as a repository for any documents or other materials especially of historical value. Although the AFLC is a comparatively young church body, we have a heritage that is over a century old. Some years ago the concern was expressed that an effort be made to gather and preserve historical material relating to our fellowship, and an archives committee was appointed. It was not until several years later, however, that some space was set aside specifically for this purpose.

The first archives room was a small storage area adjacent to the faculty lounge and guest room in the men's dormitory, which is now the office of

◇



New members at New Luther Valley Lutheran in McVile, N. Dak., are; front row, left to right, Raymond Thara and Angela Rudd; middle, Alan Twedt, Mrs. Gelaine (Donna) Tweed, Mrs. Bert (Genevieve) Jenson, Michael Thara, Karla Ruud, Robert Ruud, Mrs. Roger (Ruth) Quanbeck, and Mrs. Mark (Jane) Quanbeck; and, back, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon (Ardis) Twedt, Gelaine Tweed, Bert Jenson, Mrs. James (Donna) Thara, Mr. and Mrs. Elden (Peggy) Ruud and Pastor Wesley Langaas. Not pictured are Carol Maisel and Duane Twedt. (Ed. note: We regret the error in previous publication of these pictures).



New members received recently at Bethany Lutheran Church at Binford, N. Dak., are left to right, Mr. and Mrs. Roy (Beatrice) Rasmussen, Mrs. Tom (Marion) Stockeland, Junie Mellby, and Pastor Wesley Langaas; and, back row, Mr. and Mrs. Art (Velda) Twedt, Mr. Tom Stockeland and Mrs. Blaine (Joanne) Larson. Also joining but not pictured are Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence (Theone) Stangeland, David, Ruth, Esther and Nathan.

from here and there . . .

Massapequa, N.Y. — A service of Homecoming and Dedication (for the new church) was held at Unity Evangelical Lutheran Church on Sun., Sept. 18, at 10 a.m. The church is located at 138 N. Linden Street.

Roslyn, S. Dak. — Rev. Michael Brandt, Cloquet, Minn., spoke at special meetings in the Lake Region Parish, Oct. 30–Nov. 3.

Ortley, S. Dak. — Returning to a parish he had served, Rev. Einar Unseth, London, Minn., was guest speaker at evangelistic services in Ortley Lutheran, Oct. 23–25. A potluck dinner was served after the Sunday morning worship service.

Roseau, Minn. — Likewise, Rev. Jerome Nikunen, Minnewaukan, N. Dak., was back in his former congregation, Roseau Lutheran, for special services, Oct. 23–26.

Kalispell, Mont. — A new program for the “kids” of Faith Lutheran has been started this fall. It is the Pioneer Club and meetings are held at 6:45 p.m. on Wednesday evenings at the church.

Warroad, Minn. — The new church building for Warroad Lutheran was utilized for the “All for Jesus Crusade” which was held Sept. 10–14, with Rev. Herbert L. Franz, Dollar Bay, Mich., as speaker. The church is located 2.7 miles west of town on Hwy. 11, at the Pine Ridge Estates.

Reva, S. Dak. — The South Dakota–Nebraska District Luther League Convention was held at Slim Buttes Lutheran, Oct. 22–23.

Binford, N. Dak. — Rev. Amos O. Dyrud, Minneapolis, Minn., preached at special meetings in Bethany Lutheran, Oct. 16–20.

Personalities

Chaplain Timothy Skramstad, one of two AFLC pastors in the military chaplaincy, has received promotion to Major. He continues to be stationed at Ft. Riley near Manhattan, Kans.

Chaplain Mark Antal has received promotion to the rank of Captain and is stationed at Columbia, S. Car.

Retired Lutheran Free Church missionary **Caleb Quanbeck** is living in St. John's Lutheran Home, Rimrock Road, Billings, Mont. He had a long career in Madagascar, beginning in 1926.

The address of **Pastor and Mrs. Terry Wold and family** in East Grand Forks, Minn., 56721, is 1207 4th St. N.W. Pastor Wold serves Christ the King Lutheran in that city.

Mark Olson, DeKalb, Ill., has accepted a call to serve as lay pastor of Freedom Lutheran Church, Ottawa, Ill., and St. Petrie Lutheran Church, Baker, Ill. and has begun work. Olson, who will be licensed by the Co-ordinating Committee, and his wife, (the former Dawn Nelson) are AFLBS graduates. **Odell Kittelson**, former lay pastor of the Freedom/St. Petrie parish, is moving to his home at Newark, Ill., and will be continuing as director of the “Cup of Cold Water” ministry.

Rev. Jerome Nikunen, pastor of the Minnewaukan, N. Dak., parish since 1981, has accepted a Home Mission call to serve Escanaba Lutheran Church, Escanaba, Mich., beginning the end of December. **Roger Krueger**, who has served as part-time lay pastor of the Escanaba congregation during the past year, will be returning to his home at Waupaca, Wis., where he is the director of a nursing home.

Rev. David Hinrichs, Cokato, Minn., has been placed on the regular clergy roster of the AFLC after serving for one year on the fellowship roster. Hinrichs is the pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, a Home Mission congregation in Cokato.

Mrs. Eugene Enderlein, the Bible School parish education instructor. This modest beginning was overflowing almost before it opened, surprising faculty and library staff at the amount of historical material that had already accumulated.

The new archives room is not a large one, but does provide needed space for present requirements and limited expansion. Most of the books in the archives are in the Norwegian language, reflecting the dominant strain of our AFLC heritage. There are also works in German and Swedish, as well as numerous older English publications. A fairly complete collection of the Lutheran Free Church annual reports has been collected, as well as the annual reports of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Augustana Synod, the American Lutheran Church, and the Lutheran Church of America. There are also a few annual reports on file from the former Hauge Synod, United Norwegian Lutheran Church, the old

American Lutheran Church, and the United Lutheran Church in America.

Most of the material in the archives is of a religious or historical nature. The works of Hauge, Rosenius, Sverdrup, Hope and Hallesby are well represented, together with those of some lesser known authors such as Ricard and Skovgaard–Peterson. There are volumes of systematic theology, Biblical commentaries, hymnals, and devotional books stacked side by side, representing the spiritual heritage of our forefathers.

The archives receives its material from the libraries of retired pastors and from the bookshelves of numerous homes. Special acquisitions were gifts from the late Dr. Iver Olson and the late Mr. Leonard T. Ohnstad. Dr. Olson is remembered as the former seminary dean and an authority on Scandinavian–American church history and his volumes reflect these

cont. on p. 16

ARCHIVES

interests. Mr. Ohnstad, who was raised in the McIntosh/Fosston, Minn., area, passed away last December in St. Paul, Minn. A friend of our schools, he was a collector of books with special interests in church history and his gifts to the archives include some unique volumes.

It is unfortunate that many families have disposed of their parents' or grandparents' old books without realizing their value for future generations.

A current project in the archives is the collection of available material for all of the AFLC congregations. A file has been purchased, and it is the archives' goal to include a folder for each congregation containing a copy of the constitution and any historical booklets that have been printed. The project was first instituted by Mr. Anker Harbo and is now being continued by the undersigned. Many have already participated by sending available material and the cooperation of others is encouraged so that the goal might be reached.

Possible acquisitions for the future include collections of *Folkebladet* and *The Lutheran Messenger*, as the archives of the merging Lutheran Churches are consolidated. There is also a need for material from the churches of Finnish background, including the annual reports of the Suomi Synod. The seminary archives is glad to receive all gifts of old books and other publications that relate to our AFLC heritage.

Your "something old" may be just the "something new" that the archives needs.

—R. L. Lee

AIDS

congregation and neighborhood, which sustained the family especially during the difficult weeks before their daughter died. She quoted from I Corinthians 10:13, testifying that this verse marked a turning point in her spiritual life as she discovered the "way of escape" that God provided during this crisis of faith and declared



My Thanksgiving Prayer

How often when sleep evades me,
I get out of my cozy bed;
I sit in my cozy armchair
And count the blessings I've had.
I look out my picture window
At the moonlit sky up above,
Or the stars that shine so
brightly—
It all reflects God's love.
Thank You, Lord.

For fields of golden grain
That sway when soft winds blow,
The multi-colored leaves
Under newly-fallen snow;
The love of friends and neighbors
And children we hold so dear,
Whose hearts are turning
homeward
This special time of year.
Thank You, Lord.

For eyes to see the beauty
Of Your wonderful creation,
The bounty of your goodness,
Your gift of free salvation;
The freedom of religion,
To worship as we choose;
Our privilege to hear, to tell,
To share the Gospel news.
Thank You, Lord.

For missionary families,
Who leave loved ones and home,
To tell the lost of Jesus' love
Far from the friends they've
known;
For pastors true, and teachers,
For Christian parents who pray;
I pray that You will bless them
In a very special way.
Thank You, Lord.

—Verna Kammen
Badger, Minn.

that one of the consequences is that the family will be leaving next summer for missionary service in Africa.

The conference concluded with comments by a panel, consisting of the speakers and Pastor Bill Moberley of Christ is Lord Lutheran Church (AEC), Bloomington. Moberley attempted to focus on the main purpose of the conference by asking the question, "What can we as Christians do?" He then clarified the fronts by asking three additional questions:

"How can we get Christians to stand against the tide?"

"How can we protect people from infection?"

"How can we minister to the suffering?"

Panel members responded to these areas of concern, in spite of differences, with a clear call to involvement.

The conference was attended by 50-100 people, a level of participation that is "disappointing but very typical," according to James Ritter, associate pastor of Emmaus.

A similar concern was expressed by Dr. Pence when he noted that Christians have generally allowed the agenda to be set by a strange coalition of gay activists and a few "ultra-conservatives" (who would like to see the homosexuals and drug addicts kill themselves off!).

"Just because you get involved in AIDS does not mean that you approve of homosexuality," quoted Pence, warning that in actual fact the statement is often untrue because Christians have neglected to face up to the enormity of the epidemic that our society is facing and to commit themselves to compassionate involvement.

—R. L. Lee