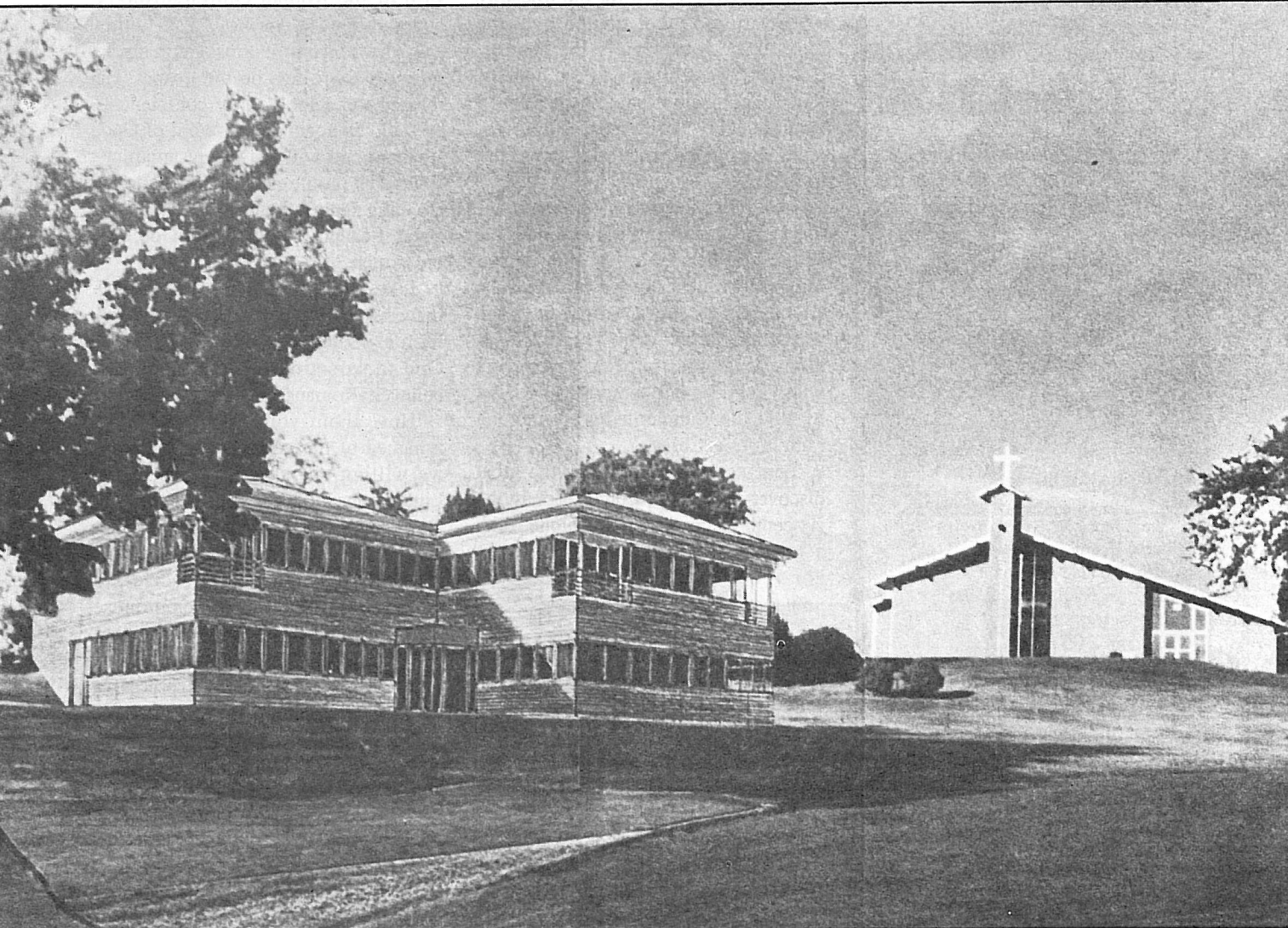


THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

October 18, 1990



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LIGHT on the WAY

meditations on God's Word

Volume 28 Number 19

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Holding fast the Gospel

The Reformation began with a great search! Martin Luther, an Augustinian Monk and professor of the Bible at Wittenberg University sought earnestly for an answer to the question, "How can a person become right with God?" For many years Luther tried to find an answer to this question in his own good works. He diligently fasted and prayed. He tried to mortify his flesh. He even became a monk in hope that he might make it to heaven. Luther came to see in time that he could not be saved from his sins by his own works.

In his great search for the true way of salvation, Luther poured over the Scriptures — especially the Psalms, Galatians and Romans. In the book of Romans, he continually pondered Romans 1:17. "In the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith."

As Luther meditated on the meaning of the "righteousness of God," the Holy Spirit opened his eyes to see that the righteousness of God is the gift of righteousness that God gives to the repentant sinner who trusts Christ alone for salvation. Right standing with God does not come by works but by God's free unmerited grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Four key phrases convey the great discovery of Martin Luther back in the sixteenth century — grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone and Scripture alone. We are saved by God's free, unmerited grace alone (Romans 3:21-24; Ephesians 2:8-9). We receive God's free gift of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:16, Ephesians 2:8). Jesus Christ alone is the Savior from sin (John 14:6, Acts 4:12). The Bible alone is the only source for Christian doctrine and faith (Mark 7:6-13, II Timothy 3:16-17).

Martin Luther's discovery of the gospel of God's free, unmerited grace is of great significance for us as Christian believers today. We do not have to strive to gain acceptance with God as Luther once did. Rather, we must cease our striving and rest in Jesus alone for our salvation from sin. The law says:

"do this and you will live." The gospel says: "Jesus Christ has done everything necessary for your salvation. Simply come to Jesus and receive by faith the full forgiveness of your sins." May we come to Jesus and rest in His saving work alone. And may we confess with the believing Church of Christ in the words of the hymnwriter: "Nothing in my hands I bring. Simply to Thy cross I cling."

After his great discovery, Luther boldly proclaimed salvation by grace through faith. While many were receptive to his gospel preaching, the leadership of the Roman church strongly opposed him. In April of 1521, Luther was summoned to Worms, Germany, to recant his writings on the gospel. He refused to recant. "...My conscience," he said, "is bound to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is unsafe and dangerous to do anything against the conscience. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen."

Like the Apostle Paul, Luther was not ashamed of the gospel; for he knew from experience that it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes (Romans 1:16).

How about you and me? Are we ashamed of the gospel of Christ? Are we willing to risk our life for it, as Luther once did? Martin Luther's stand at Worms teaches us that we must not compromise our faith or the Word of God. Many forces in the world are putting pressure on us to compromise our stand on the inerrancy of scripture and the gospel of God's free unmerited grace. We must resist these pressures and resolutely hold fast to the Word of God and the gospel as Martin Luther so valiantly did at Worms.



—by Rev.
Mark R. Bateson

It was spiritually uplifting to be a first timer at the 1990 AFLC Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I am thankful to be a part of the AFLC family and serving the Home Mission Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. I know that the Lord will continue to bless us as long as we keep the mission of the church in tune with God's plan.

The vision of 300 new churches in the next ten years gives me the security of a people with a vision of souls being saved and a recommitment to spiritual growth in all of us. This also brings with it growing pains; i.e., the need for the new administration building.

BIOGRAPHY: In 1957, Erwin W. Brandt began serving as a lay pastor in Hettinger, North Dakota. Six years later, he graduated from Luther Seminary and was ordained by the ELC. He went on to serve two congregations in Lake Preston, South Dakota, from 1963 to 1968; Emmaus Lutheran, Bloomington, Minnesota, from 1968 to 1977, and then two rural congregations near Sinai, South Dakota, until his retirement in 1985.

He currently serves Abiding Savior Free Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and is on the AFLC Fellowship Roster.

Pastor Brandt is married to the former Lorraine Larson. They have four children, one of whom is Rev. Michael Brandt, Cloquet, Minnesota.



—by Rev.
E. W. Brandt
Garretson,
South Dakota

LET'S GET GOING

"The people responded, "Let us start rebuilding, and they strengthened their hands for this good work" (Nehemiah 2:18).

The Christian is a Builder with God

Nehemiah was sad because his homeland was in trouble because of sin and disobedience. He called to His people, "See what trouble we are in because Jerusalem is in ruins and its gates are destroyed: Let us rebuild the city walls and put an end to our disgrace." Let us face the truth, there is sadness in our land. The spiritual walls have crumbled and there is trouble and evidence of disgrace. This is the bad news, but there is still good news. Believer, if you have lost your first love, then Jesus is calling you to return to Him and begin building up what has been torn down. Peter said in Acts 4:19, "Repent therefore and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out. That times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."

We have the tools

It is the Divine Word and the Promise of God, Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, it is the power of God." This Word has never changed. It is up-to-date, thoroughly adequate and its blueprint needs no revision. It is written for our instruction. We need to be hearers and doers of His Word.

Builders Must be Consecrated Workers

Jesus said, "He who is not with Me is against Me. He who does not gather with Me scatters" (Matthew 12:30). What a difference this world would see if each one of us learned first to build our own lives properly. How can we follow directions or make any corrections if we don't know the Chief Architect and follow His commands? Through vital contact with Jesus the currents of His Spirit will cleanse our souls and revitalize our lives.

"So they strengthened their hands for good work"

We exercise for good health. Hard workers need three wholesome meals and some lunches every day in order to be strong for work. There must be plenty of rest and clean living if one is going to last until the work is done. Builders with God draw their strength for work, first, *in prayer*. If we lack wisdom, "Ask God, who gives generously." Prayer is also action. Second, *reading the blueprint*: God's Word. If there is weakness in individual lives or if the church is weak and not working properly, it is because God's people are not living by His written instructions. To get the rebuilding done Nehemiah had to unite the people. Law and Gospel will do this. God tells the church today, "Stir up one-another to love and good works." The work becomes easy when we are resting in the Lord. If we are to be strong builders there must be a turning away from sin and all manner of wickedness and a determination to do the will of the Lord.

God Always Keeps His Promise

God said to Cain, "If you do right will I not accept you." Also, II Chronicles 7:14 declares, "If my people, who are called by My Name, humble themselves, and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." Friends, there is a desperate need for an awakening in our church. We are not playing church! When I was a young lad I often played church and to me at that time it was real. But the Apostle Paul said, "When I was a child I spoke like a child. I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways." Really, it is time for us who know the truth to *"Rise up and Build."*

THE NEED IS GREAT

Proverbs 3:9, 10 says, "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."

What a wonderful privilege and blessing we have in being partners with our Lord in the work of His Kingdom! Further, is it not a great and glorious blessing to know that by sharing the material blessings God has given us, we honor Him! By so doing, then we can claim His promise of even further blessing — our barns will be filled with plenty, and our presses shall overflow.

Do we stretch our interpretation too far to suggest that "our barns and our presses" refer as well to the harvest of souls? Certainly, no matter how we might wish to evade it, God does use our money, our time, and our talents for the furtherance of His Kingdom. Sometimes, as we are challenged with special appeals, we forget that even if the need is not as "glamorous" as some other ministry, the need nevertheless is great.

Why offices?

The steady growth of the AFLC had prepared us all for a building program sometime in the future. Many of us had expected that this would be in the direction of an adequate classroom-library building. In recent years, however, we have been faced with the realization that we were running out of office space.

The Co-ordinating Committee met with the School Board in September of 1988 to discuss the needs of the AFLC. Each Committee selected members to a Building Committee which reported to the October meetings. A second meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee and School Board was held on January 17, 1989. Parish Education, with its pressing needs for space, was also represented. At the third meeting of these Boards, on March 9, 1989, the majority of those present agreed that a

As simply and forthrightly as we know how to state it, the need for a new Administration Building is critical. This need is becoming even more critical as the weeks and months go by. As additional congregations join our fellowship, additional services are of necessity provided. As additional offices are brought in, (i.e., *The Lutheran Ambassador* office has recently moved into the girl's dorm), the "space crunch" becomes more acute. As Bible School enrollment increases, it becomes more and more critically important to move many of

our offices away from the dormitories.

So — where do we stand now? We have, roughly, raised one-third of our goal of \$650,000. \$192,000 have come in by pledge or cash gifts, and \$100,000 will come from the Schools, which totals \$292,000 in funds raised to date. This means that we have to raise \$358,000 if one hundred percent of funding is to be achieved.

We ask you to pray much for this effort. And pray that you also might join with the hundreds who have already given in making possible the realization of a "dream fulfilled."

May God be honored!

— *Building Fund Committee*
Cliff Johnson, director

Questions and Answers —

We have now, for one year, sought to secure funds so that a new Administration Building could be built at our Headquarters. Our goal was to begin construction this fall. However, we have had to delay this project until next year because the minimum amount of funds has not been received.

At our Annual Conference, it became evident that some still have basic questions about this building. Some of them are:

Question: Are the plans overly "fancy," and couldn't it be made much smaller?

Answer: Building Codes in the City of Plymouth are extremely stringent. The specifications represent minimal standards for a commercial building, in order to secure a building permit. As for size, prudent planning demands that there be adequate space for anticipated needs for many years to come.

Question: Isn't it true that the large amount of glass windows will substantially increase the cost of the building, as well as heating costs?

Answer: We've double checked with the Architect; he says that the difference in cost when building is negligible, and that the type of windows that will be installed are going to be very energy efficient.

Question: How much will the building cost?

Answer: It is impossible at this point to give an exact cost, because firm bids have not been submitted. However, the original estimate of \$650,000 still holds; there might be a slight increase because of inflation.

Question: Is the need truly as great as represented?

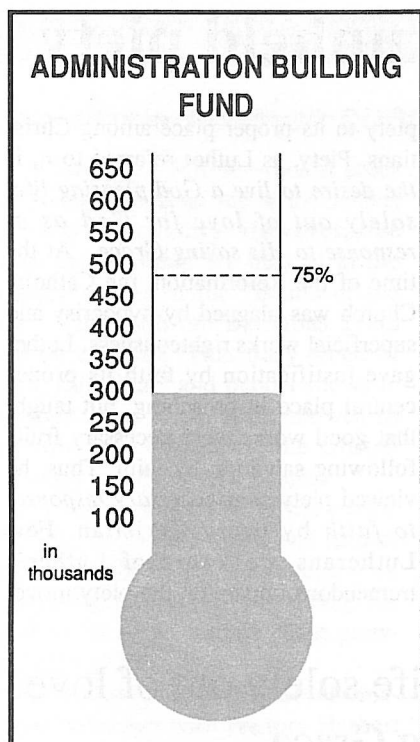
Answer: Yes! And, the need becomes more pressing as time goes on. Currently, Bible School enrollment is at the point where no additional space is available for dormitory rooms. The "guest rooms" are all filled. Other needs, such as Parish Education and the WMF, are growing. Suffice it to say that current conditions are extremely crowded. We wish everyone could "come and see!"

new Administration Building was the most pressing need for the AFLC.

The Co-ordinating Committee proceeded to appoint a committee for the purpose of making the needs known to our people, and to begin the process of raising the needed funds.

The Conference in June, 1989, approved the project, stipulating that seventy-five percent of the funds must be on hand before construction should begin.

— *Rev. Richard Snipstead*
AFLC president



You can help

The mandate for construction of a new Administration Building came at the Annual Conference held in Minot, North Dakota in 1989. There were two conditions imposed before construction could begin. First, the debt of the Association Retreat Center must be fully paid. Second, a minimum of seventy-five percent of the projected cost of the new building must have been received.

We praise God that the first requirement has been met. However, we are short by over \$200,000 in fulfilling the second requirement. We know that we can easily receive this amount of cash and/or pledges very soon. We have prayed, and God is able!

However, wouldn't it be a tremendous blessing if the entire funding could be received, so that we would not have to secure a loan? As we pray, we must be confident that God is able to move the hearts of people to give so that we could build debt free.

We emphasize again: *Contributions to the Rise Up and Build Fund must be over and above the on-going ministries of our AFLC!*

— *Building Fund Committee*
Cliff Johnson, director

A Sunday School's challenge

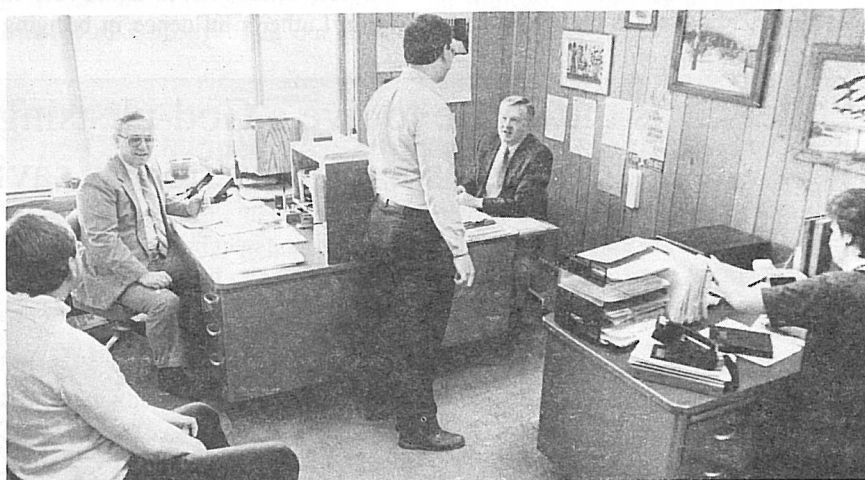
The Sunday School of Calvary Lutheran Church in Wallace, South Dakota would like to challenge all Sunday Schools in the AFLC to have a special fund drive for the Headquarters Fund Drive.

In September we had a bike-a-thon with all the proceeds going to the "Rise Up and Build" Fund. We believe that if all the Sunday Schools in the Association will have a special project of some kind, a significant step can be taken in helping to reach the \$650,00 goal.

It is always good to involve as many people as possible when a project such as this is started. So let's involve the youth of our churches in this worthwhile project.

Please consider this challenge in your church and together let us **RISE UP AND BUILD!**

— *Jim Keller*
Calvary Lutheran Church
Wallace, South Dakota



The Home Missions Director and the Business Administrator share an office.

AFLC ADMINISTRATION BUILDING CAMPAIGN "LET US RISE UP AND BUILD" Nehemiah 2:18

By God's grace, and in gratitude for all He has so richly blessed me, I hereby commit \$_____ per month for one year to the AFLC for the purpose of constructing a new Administration Building, payments to begin on _____, 1990.

In addition (or alternatively), I hereby commit a one-time gift of \$_____.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Congregation _____

Telephone (area code) _____ / _____

Date _____, 1990

Please complete and mail to:

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
Administration Building Campaign
3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Martin Luther The Reformer who upheld piety

— Rev. Dr. Paul Ziellow
Milford, Illinois

Luther's contributions to the modern church are far-reaching. He boldly stood in faith upon the Word of God, confronting the heresies of Catholicism at a time when his forerunners were burned at stake. Luther's *Large Catechism* and *Small Catechism* have been used in the instruction of millions of Lutherans in the past few centuries. Perhaps even more significant, Luther reoriented the church from an emphasis on salvation by works to salvation based on God's grace in his teaching of

"justification by faith alone" (Romans 1:17). Further, he had great impact on public worship by making the preaching of God's Word central, allowing lay involvement in the liturgy, and substituting the common language of the people for Latin in the service. In the realm of music, all of us have been blessed by Luther's hymns, including "A Mighty Fortress" and "From Heaven Above." Overall, Martin Luther's impact can be seen everywhere — in Lutheran doctrine, catechism instruction, worship and hymns.

Often overlooked, however, is Martin Luther's influence in bringing

piety to its proper place among Christians. Piety, as Luther referred to it, is *the desire to live a God-pleasing life solely out of love for God as a response to His saving Grace*. At the time of the Reformation, the Catholic Church was plagued by hypocrisy and superficial works righteousness. Luther gave justification by faith its proper central place in preaching, but taught that good works were necessary fruits following salvation by faith. Thus, he viewed piety as *a necessary response to faith* by every Christian. Few Lutherans are aware of Luther's tremendous impact on the piety move-

"Piety,...is the desire to live a God-pleasing life solely out of love for God as a response to His saving Grace."

Luther is the trumpet, or rather the thunder — he is the lightning which has aroused the world from its lethargy — it is not so much Luther who speaks, as God, whose lightnings burst from his lips.

— John Calvin
(*Lutherans in All Lands*)



The joyous Christmas time at the Luther home.

ments in Germany after the Reformation era. The following discussion emphasizes Martin Luther's stance on piety in writing the catechism, in his personal lifestyle, and in his preaching.

Piety in Luther's Catechism — It was Luther's desire to further piety in the church that motivated him to write the *Small Catechism*. When visiting congregations in Germany, Luther was shocked at the lifestyles of church members. He commented in his preface to the Catechism:

"Alas! What misery I behold! The people, especially those who live in the villages, seem to have no knowledge whatever of Christian doctrine... And nevertheless, they all maintain that they are Christians...; they live as if they were irrational creatures, and now that the Gospel has come to them, they grossly abuse their Christian liberty" (*Luther's Small Catechism*, p. 1).

Luther urged pastors to "instruct the great mass with all diligence, so that they may know how to distinguish between right and wrong in their conduct towards those with whom they live, or among whom they desire to earn their living" (same source, p. 3).

Piety in Luther's life — Piety was also central in Luther's life. He lived and practiced his faith. Those who knew Luther spoke of him as a godly man who desired simply and humbly to please God. One of Luther's closest friends, Melancthon, described him with these words: "No base passions or revolutionary designs were ever observed in him; on the contrary, he was at all times of the counselor of peaceable measures" (*Luther's Church Postil Gospels*, Vol. V, pp. 7-8). Erasmus, an adversary of Luther's, commented on Luther's personal lifestyle: "It is no small prejudice in his favor, that his morals are unblamable, and that calumny itself can fasten no reproach on him (same source, p. 7)."

Piety in Luther's sermons — Piety was firmly embedded in Luther's sermons and preaching. In fact, an influential pietistic movement gained momentum in Germany in the century after the Reformation. The movement was initiated by Philipp Spener, a Lutheran pastor who urged German

Lutherans to return to the piety of Luther. Spener was so influenced by Luther that he said: "Among the books a pastor should have in his library, I should recommend first of all the Church Postil (sermons) of our beloved Luther" (*Luther's Church Postil Gospels*, Vol. V., p. 9). Spener was responsible for publishing Luther's sermons and recommending that they be read in each home as a means for maturing in faith.

Luther did not regard piety as a means of salvation — Luther made it clear that piety was separate from the righteousness given to us by Christ in heaven. In fact, Luther regarded godliness, piety and good works as earning nothing in the form of salvation. Luther explained that piety was a necessary response of faith. In a sermon on Ephesians 5:1-9, Luther warned that faith without works is dead:

"They know full well that a faith barren of works is nothing, is a false faith; that fruit and good works must follow a genuine faith of necessity" (*Sermons of Martin Luther*, Vol. 7, p. 159).

The proper motive for Piety is love for God — The proper motive for piety was the simple desire "to live in order to please God" (I Thessalonians 4:1). Luther believed that every Christian who has received salvation is to drown the old Adam daily. He explained that we are to invite the Holy Spirit to help us slay the sinful desires of the flesh, as it says in Galatians 5:24: "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires." Luther taught that we are to yield ourselves "in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness" (Romans 6:19). He urged his listeners to be imitators of God and of Christ (Ephesians 5:1) for the sake of the unbelievers, so that they would not take offense at God. For God said in I Peter 1:16, "Be holy, because I am holy."

Luther warned that those who reject piety will not be God's heirs — Luther possessed boldness to proclaim God's truth even when it was painful to speak and hear. Anyone who questions the importance of piety

should pay heed to the words of Luther in his sermon on Ephesians 5:1-9:

"A Christian name, and association with Christians will count for nothing... Christ's words (Matthew 7:21) concern every man: 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.' There must be performance; faith must be manifested by works. If the great fire of divine love which he uses as his first argument will not draw us, then may the terrible threat of hell fire prove a sufficient incentive. In other words, if men follow not God, walking in love and showing their faith by their deeds, let them know they are not God's children, not heirs in his kingdom, and therefore are unquestionably heirs of the evil one in hell" (*Sermons of Martin Luther*, Vol. 7, p. 157).

Luther concluded his sermon with these words: "A Christian... should not bear the name without the works; he cannot be a Christian and yet live a heathenish life, a life of unchastity, covetousness and other vices" (same source, p. 161).

Piety is healthy Lutheranism — Following in Luther's heritage, a church which upholds piety is indeed "needed and right for our day (1962 AFLC Historical Statement)." It's fair to say: *A church without piety is not Lutheran*. Jesus Himself exhorted us to be a salt and a light in the world (Matthew 5:13-14).

Praise God for Luther! — Without doubt, God worked a tremendous miracle of revival and reformation through Luther. Perhaps Luther's friend Melancthon said it best:

"Whatever (Luther) writes, whatever he utters, pierces to the soul, fixes itself like arrows in the heart — is a miracle among men" (*Luther's Church Postil Gospels*, Vol. V. p. 7).

(Pastor Zietlow serves the St. John's Lutheran Church of Schwer, rural Milford, which finalized its affiliation with the AFLC earlier this year. He has been on the clergy rosters of the ALC and TAALC before being accepted on the AFLC Fellowship Roster.

He and his wife Cynthia have one son, David, age 2-1/2.)

A look at our heritage

To fully appreciate the heritage of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, one must look back to the former Lutheran Free Church and even beyond to the developments within the Lutheran Church in Norway.

The Lutheran Reformation dates from October 31, 1517, when Luther nailed his 95 theses against the sale of indulgences to a door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. The results were immediate and widespread. Within the first twenty years the Lutheran Reformation had penetrated Scandinavia. The Reformation in Scandinavia was intimately bound up with political and social movements. The Reformation offered the king a means of crushing the power of the great prince bishops by confiscating the church property and by bringing the church directly under the control of the crown.

Thus the State Church of Norway came into being. It was a department of the national government. Churches, parsonages, and other buildings used for religious purposes were built and maintained at government expense. The government provided for the religious instruction of the youth of the land through public schools and confirmation classes. The salaries of the theological professors and pastors were paid by the government. The pastors were appointed to their churches by the Minister of the Church and Education.

This situation continued for about 250 years. We are told that moral and spiritual conditions were generally bad. God brought a young Norwegian peasant on the scene. The man was Hans Nielsen Hauge. At the age of 25, he experienced personal conversion while working in the field on his father's farm. He felt an unusually strong and deep conviction of sin in his heart. He knew that he was spiritually lost, and cried out to a holy and loving God for salvation and forgiveness in Jesus Christ. God heard his call, and Hauge that day found forgiveness of sin through faith in Jesus. He came to know the joy of a personal assurance of salvation in Christ.

Hauge experienced a burning conviction that God was calling him to witness to others. He immediately responded to that call. Within six years he had covered all of Norway,

mostly on foot. He conducted services wherever he went, usually in homes. God used this man to bring about the first nation-wide revival in Norway.

The Haugean revival resulted in a strong influence on many of the immigrants who came to America from Norway. In fact, Norwegians were divided into the same two groups in America that had existed in Norway. There were those who favored the State Church pattern for the church in the new homeland, and others who favored the ideals and methods of the revival movement.

The Lutheran Free Church was organized by some of those who favored this "new tendency." Its leaders were Georg Sverdrup and Sven Oftedal, professors at Augsburg Seminary. Years of bitter strife led to the break. The "Fundamental Principles" and "Rules for Work" were drawn up and adopted in June of 1897, when the Lutheran Free Church was born.

A surprising fact is that midst all the controversy, bitterness, and criticism, a revival took place. Sverdrup in speaking about the revival of the 1890's said: "We have already seen a beautiful harvest. This new springtime which has now come does not promise anything less, by the mercy of the Lord."

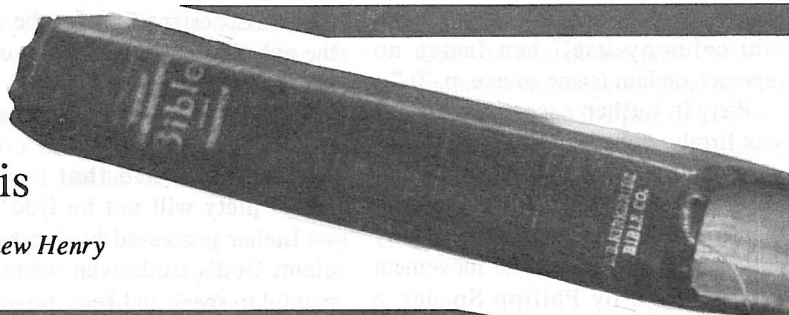
We have taken many of our facts from *"The Years of Our Church,"* by Clarence Carlson. He writes about how the revival came about. There was not mass evangelism or pressure, but one individual simply witnessing to another individual about being reconciled to God. "At the special meetings which were held there was the singing of the old hymns and gospel songs and the simple preaching of the Word of God. The messages sought to bring the hearers to a realization of their sinfulness and their need of salvation and to invite all penitent souls to accept the grace of God in Christ Jesus."

This is the beautiful heritage which was continued after 1962 when The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations was born. This is what we want to continue to be as an AFLC.

—Richard Snipstead

A good man carries
his Bible with him always;
if not in his hands, yet in his
mind and heart.

—Matthew Henry



EDITORIALS

LIFE ON THE EDGE OF MY TOWN

Two of the tributes to our former editor in the last issue mentioned a series entitled, "Life on the Edge of Town." The series seems to have started in 1975 when Pastor Huglen was serving as the Bible School dean of men, living on the edge of a major metropolitan center. The articles continued after he moved to his family home on the edge of a northern Minnesota village. Those who enjoyed the series especially appreciated the insight that the reader received into the mind and heart of the editor.

Life on the edge of town is a matter of perspective.

My town is even smaller than our former editor's, and it's impossible not to be on the edge of it. Most maps do not even include Helmar, Illinois, since there is no post office here. We are merely a crossroads cluster of homes, overshadowed by the large church building where I serve, surrounded by fertile fields of corn and soybeans. The license plate on the van of our Sunday School superintendent reads "Hogs R Us."

But change is coming to our comfortable rural community. Chicago seems to be moving closer, and further development in the county is a very divisive issue. The commuters in our congregation may already outnumber the farmers.

This is life on the edge of my town.

The pattern of change is not unlike what I see happening in the AFLC at large. I didn't check his mathematics, but a friend assures me that the Illinois district is the second largest in our church body... a district that didn't exist three years ago.

Home Mission outreach to Texas and California, as well as the addition of new congregations, has expanded our vision beyond the comfortable midwestern center into the heart of American's growing "sunbelt."

The old ethnic distinctions are disappearing, too, and any bilingual ministry today would probably include Spanish instead of one of the Scandinavian languages or German.

Is there something missing?

Yes, the color is missing from this issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador*!

Roscoe Printers has generously contributed color to our for several months, but it is time for us to pay for cost and time that color requires. The charge is a comparison with industry standards. However, in spite of an increase in our subscription rate this month, the rising cost of postage and other expenses will more than absorb any possible surplus.

The Co-ordinating Committee is still considering the possibility of increasing the printing costs to provide for the added color. New revenue for *The Lutheran Ambassador* can come from two additional sources: (1) an increase in subsidies, or (2) an increase in the number of subscribers. The last is best. Your comments are welcome.

Our roots are in the Lutheran Free Church, yet only two of our active pastors were ordained in that church body. Almost two-thirds of the pastors have studied at our own seminary. Our original core congregations have multiplied five times over. The homesteaders outnumber the pioneers.

This issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* highlights the scope of life on the edge of our town as a church body. The message on the Lutheran Reformation reminds us of our rich heritage; the articles concerning the "Rise Up and Build" program remind us of our need to face the future as a growing fellowship.

My perspective is one of a pastor in a changing rural community. (Students, look up "exurbia" in your dictionaries.) My experience includes over ten years of teaching in our Bible School and Seminary, enriched by frequent weekend service in Home Mission congregations, on the growing edge of our church fellowship. My AFLC roots reach right back to the beginning.

Welcome to life on the edge of my town! Watch for it in the issues to come.

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New AFLC congregation begins in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota

A small Bible study group that met for more than two years has resulted in a new Lutheran congregation in Detroit Lakes, Minn. It is called Faith Lutheran Church and the first Sunday service was held on March 24, 1990. Bob Thompson, a layman from St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Fargo, N. Dak., is currently serving as pastor.

In January, 1990, an informational meeting was conducted by Rev. Elden Nelson, Director of Home Missions, and the organizational meeting was held in February. Sunday services were conducted in Curt and Karen Johnson's home during March and beginning the first Sunday in April services have been held in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church at 404 Richwood Road. The Sunday School meets at 8:45 a.m. and the worship service begins at 10. Worship service attendance has been between 35 and 45 each Sunday.

We are very thankful for the Lord's



Faith Lutheran congregation in front of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

direction as our congregation is becoming established and look forward with anticipation to what He has planned for us. It is wonderful to see how God has brought us together and sustains us through His Word.

Please pray that we may fulfill His will for this congregation being organized in Detroit Lakes and that whatever we do, it may be to the honor and glory of God.

— Corr.

letters to the editor

Why the debate?

Several people in the congregation have rightly asked me why there is so much debate over the issue of grace and man's will, contained in the September 4, 1990 issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador*. They wonder why some pastors need to debate so fiercely on an issue they didn't realize was an issue. I sincerely pray and hope this does not leave a bad taste and hard feelings in the AFLC and cause unnecessary rift and division.

— Rev. Joel T. Lohfer
Bruce, South Dakota

On tithing

Some five years ago I was introduced to the AFLC through Living Faith Free Lutheran Church, Tucson, Arizona. I was 25 years old then.

Because of the biblically solid ministry there, I became convicted to read the Word of God and have committed my life to serve our Lord. I praise Him for the ministry which led me to my Saviour!

It was through the reading of God's Word that I found the truth about tithing. There are so many portions of Scripture which teach us about the tithe — however, my favorite is found in Malachi chapter 3. Like so many of my Christian friends I misunderstood or ignored the subject of tithing. It wasn't until I began serving on the church council that I began to see the need for each and every one of us to "bring the whole tithe into the storehouse..."

Brothers and sisters, let us not fool ourselves. The Lord *requires* 10% of our entire income (before taxes), including capital gains and inheri-

ances. "Bring the whole tithe into our storehouse," the whole tithe! Our personal storehouse is our congregation. The storehouse for the congregation is our Association. There is no doubt that the Lord has blessed the work of the AFLC. However, the promise in Malachi is that He will "open the floodgates" with so many blessings that we will not be able to store them. This has yet to happen, because many of us in the AFLC don't tithe and, as Malachi reads, are "robbing God."

Dear friends, please pass on to one another the message of tithing. Pray about it and make it a part of your next business meeting as we have at Living Faith. Let's not hinder the work of the Lord in our Association any longer. Remember to tithe! Amen.

In Christ's service,
Robert Maurer
Tucson, Arizona

Our Home Mission congregation on the Minnesota-Canadian border

WARROAD, MINN.—You'll probably recognize us as one of the coldest spots in the country. However, one week this summer we basked in the tropical theme of the "Island of the Son" VBS with the Barnabas Team and 94 children. That busy week of VBS, canvassing and puppet shows in different areas of our town allowed us the privilege of sharing the Gospel message with many new people.

We are very grateful to the people of the AFLC for the vision and help of our Home Mission Department in establishing churches and seeing the need for an AFLC church in the growing town of Warroad.

In September of 1985 after informational meetings with Pastors Herbert Franz and Elden Nelson, a small group of about 15 people began Sunday morning services with Layman Rod Kjersten in an old theater building. As our numbers grew, the Lord provided larger facilities for rental from the school system. In the summer of 1988, with the help of the Church Extension Fund, we were able to purchase four acres of land three miles west of Warroad on Highway 11. Construction of our church began with our members doing most of the work. We began worshiping in our church three months later amid 2-by-4s and insulation. The churches of Amery, Wis., and Cokato, Minn., sent us helpers and individuals

from Radcliffe, Ia., and East Grand Forks, Minn., volunteered their time and talents. We have continued the "finishing touches" as we have had the monies available. Our last hurdle is carpeting, which we hope to install in the near future.

Our congregation has a membership of 32 families who have gone through our adult membership class and our Sunday morning attendance averages 100 - 120. Approximately 25 families have relocated from our church to different communities due to the high turnover of employees in our local

industry. We have an active WMF, men's prayer breakfast, weekly Bible study and evangelism program. A Christian school was established last fall and we had 15 students our first year.

As we look back over the past five years, we are grateful to God for His goodness to our church, for the many needs for which He has provided and the many prayers He has answered on our behalf. We are also very grateful for your partnership in the Gospel here in Warroad. Remember us in prayer!

Pastor Paul Nash

Services begin in Pine City, Minnesota

Sunday, September 9th, marked the beginning of the newest AFLC Home Mission congregation, when a group of interested people met for worship in Pine City, Minnesota. Rev. Ralph Tjelta, AFLC Schools instructor, has agreed to conduct services for them during the time of organization.

Two congregations receive pastors

Lay Pastor Alvin Magnuson has accepted the call to serve Grace Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, South Dakota. He began his work on September 1.

Rev. Paul Larson has accepted a Home Mission call to serve the new congregation at Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. He recently resigned as missionary-pastor at the White Earth Indian Reservation (Minnesota), where he ministered for ten years.

Please pray with us as these Home Mission congregations seek to call a pastor.

In Minnesota - Brooklyn Park
Dexter/Kasson
St. Cloud

In North Dakota - Rugby
In South Dakota - Sioux Falls
In Wisconsin - Wautoma



Finishing the basement floor.



Warroad Lutheran Church.

DRUG ABUSE AND YOU

We are all very much concerned about the use of drugs. There are many people who are using drugs. Even the wide misuse of legal or prescription drugs has us concerned. Drug abuse is also not only a problem for children and youth but for adults, too.

What can you do in your Luther League, Sunday School and parent groups about the situation? The first step is to be evangelistic in your ministry, even more so now "as we see the day drawing closer." That is, the day of Christ's Second Coming. Our outreach for Christ must become the primary goal of our youth ministry.

This evangelistic outreach must also be an outreach of prayer. We need always to pray. The Word of God tells us to "pray without ceasing." We must urge ourselves to be involved in the work of prayer.

Our people need to become familiar with the kinds of drugs people are hooked on. This can include the Valium located in the medicine chest in our bathrooms or beside our beds!

We need to be alert to those who are taking drugs. That is, we need to know how to identify those who are using them. There are certain signs to which we can be sensitive. Here are some of those signs:

1. Talking about drugs, reading drug-related magazines or having drug-related slogans on clothing.
2. Displaying hostility or personal characteristics which are not normal for the person to display.
3. Having mood swings; good grades turn into bad grades or spending an abnormal amount of time alone. Rock music may play a part, too.
4. You sense a certain odor or smell or there is an odor or smell being covered up in some way. There may be the use of butane torches or cigarette lighters.
5. Bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils,

loss of appetite are among the physical signs of someone using drugs.

More than likely a combination of these things points to the person using drugs. One must then seek to take action. This is called intervention. Intervention must be done so that the



person's problem with drugs will not get worse.

Usually drug usage is related to other concerns, most of which have to do with communication breakdown.

Youth groups can offer more than our public schools. They can offer the spiritual dimension. Frank and open discussion is the key to working on this problem of drugs.

When we set up "programs" for the Luther League, it is very important that we do not judge. Trygve Dahle used to say, "We are not called to be judges but we are called to be witnesses." Amen to that. Whoever leads in discussions must not be preachy, either, and come across knowing all the answers.

It is evident that people need to say no to drugs, which includes alcohol. Still, simply to give a sermon or message with that flavor does not go deep enough.

There needs to be something — Someone — better to take the place of the drugs. This is the person of Jesus Christ. He will satisfy the craving. Also, the Luther Leaguers who are

saved need to surround people with love and understanding.

It is evident that some people have not experienced alcoholism nor are concerned with drinking or drugs. We are happy for this fact. However, sometimes these people are the very ones who have too simple an answer. And, they are often not very loving when they give out their answers.

This is why these matters are related to communication. There must be a communication established between any one of us and the Lord Jesus Christ. Also, there needs to be ministry between the people of God. Ministry is caring and loving others.

A person coming out of drugs or alcohol needs Jesus and also needs others. In fact, these two communication needs may have very well been the reason most have gone into drugs and alcohol.

We all have three basic needs. We need to be loved. We need to love someone. We need to be accepted. We are loved by Jesus, and we can love Him even though we are sinful, and we are accepted by Jesus. The same is true with people.

Your youth group can present Jesus to its members and to the entire congregation. It can become more and more a group of saved people who are really concerned about one another and others in the congregation and community.

What do you think?

— Rev. Dennis Gray
Youth Advisor

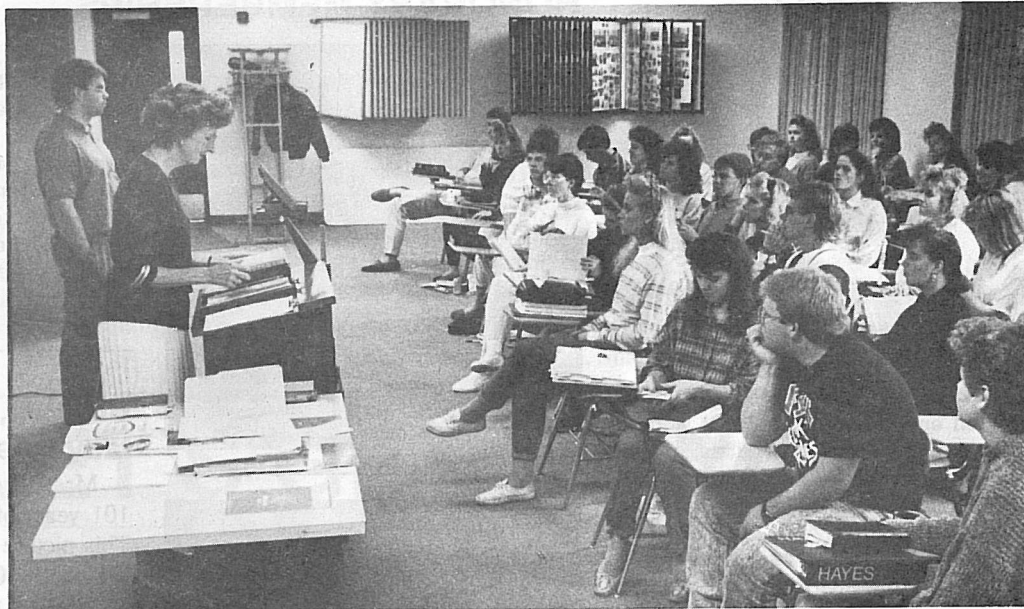
Books for you

Youth's Favorite Songs, recently reprinted by the Youth Board, has been sold out. One thousand copies were printed one year ago and there are only about eighty books remaining.

Good Counsel for Counselors was also reprinted. We urge you to order your copies soon. Pastors and Luther League advisors will find many helpful ideas in this book. Order from AFLC Youth Resources, Box 68, Greenbush, Minnesota, 56726. The cost is \$5.95.

Students settle into campus life

Ron Engen, resident assistant, makes an announcement to the Senior Christian Education class.



Five weeks of school are past. For one hundred seven AFLBS students, it has been a busy time of finding jobs, adjusting to roommates, taking class notes, beginning those future projects and papers and just settling into a routine.

At 6:30 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, students gather for prayer. On the first day, twenty people attended. According to student body chaplain, Steve Kruse, "The Juniors are very serious about the spiritual life on campus. It's so encouraging to see so many wanting to make the most out of their time at school."

Gospel Teams are now called Ministry Teams to reflect the expanded areas of service. Some teams provide music, and now some teams specialize in children's work, counselling and nursing home ministries, to name a few.

Student officers already elected are: Resident Assistants — Ron Engen, Eastend, Saskatchewan, Canada; Billie Jos Lane, Willmar, Minnesota.

Student Body President — Jay Robertson, Menomonie, Wisconsin; Vice President — Neal Anderson, Clearbrook, Minnesota; Chaplain — Steve Kruse, Burnsville, Minnesota; Secretary — Stephanie Ptacek, Brooklyn Park, Minnesota; Treasurer — Julie Skordahl, Murietta, California.

Missions Club President — Steve Kruse; Vice President — Neal Anderson; Secretary — Stephanie Ptacek; Treasurer — Teri Olson, Reva, South Dakota.

Co-Editors of the Yearbook — Megan Hoff, Fergus Falls, Minnesota; Steve Kruse.

Faculty and seminarians serve congregations on the weekends

Faculty at the AFLC Schools are all serving congregations on an interim or short term basis. They continue to be available for special meetings or weekend Bible Conferences. Listed are the current places where faculty members are serving:

Rev. Don Greven to Unity Lutheran, Massapequa, New York.
Rev. Philip Haugen to Granite Free Lutheran, St. Cloud, Minnesota.
Dr. Steven Lombardo to Home Mission church, Menomonie, Wisconsin.
Dr. Francis Monseth to Solid Rock Lutheran, Brooklyn Park, Minnesota.
Rev. Ralph Tjelta to home Mission church, Pine City, Minnesota.

AFLTS has four Middler students assigned to serve congregations on the weekends. They are as follows:

Alan Arneson to Zion Lutheran, Dexter, Minnesota.
Jim Haga to St. John's Lutheran, Finlayson, Minnesota.
James Molstre to Our Saviour's Lutheran, Zumbrota, Minnesota.
Greg Smith to Mt. Sion Lutheran, Kasson, Minnesota.



Middler Greg Smith.

CRADLE ROLL



FREEMAN, SOUTH DAKOTA

The WMF of Salem Free Lutheran Church enrolled Caleb, son of Roland and Jean Svartoi and Lucas, son of Marc and Teresa Svartoi in their first Cradle Roll Department. Salem Free Lutheran joined the AFLC in 1988. Pastor Mike Klenner serves Salem Free Lutheran and Immanuel Free Lutheran of rural Centerville.



BINFORD, NORTH DAKOTA

Two Katies completed the Cradle Roll program at Bethany Lutheran Church. Katy (Katrina) Twedt and Katie Adrian are pictured at the party hosted by Mrs. Kenneth Tweed.

Winger, Minnesota

Mother's Day, Sunday, May 13, was a very special day for the Bruce Benbo family of Winger, Minn., as well as for the Dovre Free Lutheran Congregation of Winger, when the Benbo's youngest son, Caleb Seth, was received in baptism at the same service as the Benbo's daughter, Heather, was confirmed in her Christian faith.

Pastor Lloyd Bjornlie spoke on the commission text of Matthew 28:19, in which Jesus commanded his disciples'

HONORARY MEMBERSHIPS



TIOGA, NORTH DAKOTA

Honorary Membership pins and certificates for 25 years of service were presented to Mrs. Bob Malzer and Mrs. Larry Torgerson, of Zion WMF, Tioga, North Dakota. Sharon Malzer (right) is receiving her pin from a friend, Mrs. LaVonne Mickelson. Mrs. Torgerson was unable to be there for the presentation.

Brooten, Minnesota lady celebrates 101

Mrs. George (Elvera) Odell was 101 years of age on October 2, 1990. This picture shows Elvera as she celebrated her 100th birthday in 1989.

She is a resident of the Belgrade, Minnesota, nursing home where she has lived for the past 10 or so years. She has been going deaf and has lost a lot of her sight, but her mind is keen and she enjoys company.

George and Elvera lived in Brooten, Minnesota, for a number of years, where he managed the elevator. They were both members of the Our Saviour's Lutheran Church of Brooten.



*Begin to train them early
To fear and love the Lord,
To carry on life's pathway
God's lamp — His holy Word!*

—Clara Fennema



to make disciples by: 1) baptizing, and 2) teaching. Both were represented in this one service. As parents, and as a

church, we seek to do both as early as possible — to bring, and to keep our children in the faith.
—Corr.

Personalities



Rev. Stephen Mundfrom was installed as pastor of Bethany Free Lutheran Church, Blue Grass, Minnesota, on July 19, 1990. Rev. Richard Snipstead, president of the AFLC, officiated at the installation and brought the message during the morning worship service. Following the service a potluck dinner was held to welcome Pastor Mundfrom and his wife Joanne. Pictured with Pastors Mundfrom and Snipstead are members of Bethany's church council (left to right): Merle Bounds, Don Lillquist, Dee Bounds, William Zondlo and Alfie Erickson.

Rev. Charles Knapp, pastor at Redeemer Free Lutheran, Ontonagon, and Grace Free Lutheran, Pelkie, Michigan, has resigned effective the end of October. He plans to pursue other avenues of ministry. Pastor Knapp's new address will be: Rt. 1 Box 34, Karlstad, Minnesota, 56732.

In memoriam

MINNESOTA

Stanchfield

Wallace L. Johnson, 66, August 21, Salem, Dalbo. (Mr. Johnson was the father of Rev. Les Johnson, Lake Alma, Saskatchewan and a brother to Rev. Wendell Johnson, Cambridge, Minnesota.)

SOUTH DAKOTA

Lake Preston

Mrs. Earl (Alma) Nelson, 82, August 21, Calvary, Arlington. (Mrs. Nelson was the mother of Rev. Elden Nelson, New Hope, Minnesota.)

Rev. Alvin Grothe has resigned from Bethany Lutheran Church, Astoria, Oregon, after fifteen years of service. Pastor Grothe is planning on semi-retirement, a year's sabbatical and waiting on the Lord for His leading after that. The Grothes plan to continue living in the Astoria area.

Rev. Martin Horn has accepted a call to serve Bethany Lutheran Church, Astoria, Oregon. Rev. Horn has spent the last year and a half pursuing a Master of Theology Degree in New Testament Studies at Bethel Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. He previously served the Kasson and Zumbrota, Minnesota parish for six years. On November 6, Pastor Horn will begin his new duties at Bethany. The Horns' new address will be: 575 34th St., Astoria, Oregon, 97103.

Rev. Willard Conradson, Salem, Alabama, was accepted on the AFLC clergy roster by the Co-ordinating Committee during their September meeting. Pastor Conradson's most recent affiliation was the World Confessional Lutheran Association (WCLA).

The Co-ordinating Committee also accepted **Rev. Howard Franzen**, Hastings, Nebraska, on the clergy roster at the same meeting. He comes to us from The American Association of Lutheran Churches (TAALC).

All Boards meet

The Annual AFLC All-Boards Workshop was held at the ARC on Tuesday, September 25th. President Richard Snipstead led the sessions, and reports were presented by representatives of the various boards and committees concerning our common work. A common theme in all of the presentations was a call to prayer.

An important benefit of these workshops, besides offering an opportunity for the boards to meet, is an awareness of what is going on in all areas of our church life, which helps to keep each aspect of our common endeavors from a limited vision of our total ministry as a church body.

We shall never be able to make peace in the world until we have learnt the secret of peace ourselves.

F. B. Meyer

Notice for LBI students

Have you graduated from or attended Lutheran Bible Institute, Minneapolis? If you are interested in meeting for breakfast during next year's Annual Conference, please contact Rev. Dennis Gray, Box 86, Greenbush, Minnesota,

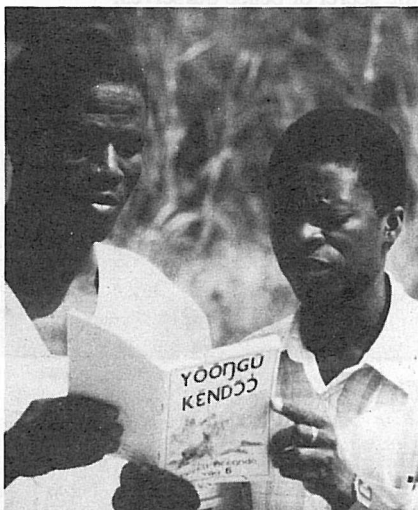


Our Saviour's, Zumbrota, Minnesota, was the recipient of a sizeable gift from the Emil and Margaret Kuehl estate. The members have decided to build an addition which will house classrooms, a pastor's study and a meeting room. Seminarian Bud Davis, who is pictured here along with council members and children, conducted the ground-breaking service and the plans are to be in the structure by fall.

*Our prayer
and God's mercy
are like
two buckets
in a well;
While the one
ascends,
the other
descends.*

—Ezekiel Hopkins

Kisi New Testament now published



John Borbor (left) and Emmanuel Kollie are Liberian literacy supervisors from the Kisi people who are working with Lutheran Bible Translators in their West African homeland. LBT has established a successful program of Scripture translation and literacy among the Kisi people. The Kisi New Testament is now being published and work has begun on the Old Testament. Here John and Emmanuel are reviewing a Scripture booklet in the Kisi language which is especially popular with new readers. Lutheran Bible Translators celebrated Bible Translation Sunday and LBT Prayer Day on September 30.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Second-Class



On August 10, 1990, the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wisconsin, burned its mortgage. As a part of the AFLC Family Camp, a Thanksgiving Service was held at 4 p.m. in the Tabernacle.

A time of sharing testimonies concerning the ministry of the ARC was enjoyed, as was a number by the camp choir. Rev. Robert Lee, AFLC vice president, officiated at the ceremony, accompanied by members of the ARC staff and the ARC Board.

A letter recently received expresses the appreciation for such a facility as the ARC.

The ARC is a marvelous place for families and friends to gather for fellowship around God's Word. Just ask those who were present for the recent Labor Day Camp.

About one hundred fifty adults and children from twenty-one churches took part. God's blessings were many.

Our sincere appreciation to the ARC staff for their kindness and efficiency. Our Lord being willing, we hope to gather like this in ever increasing numbers for years to come. God be praised for His goodness!

Sincerely,

A. L. (Lenny) Nelson
Eden Prairie, Minnesota