

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

October 3, 1989



100 years for Beaver Creek Lutheran Church, Tioga, N. Dak.

See story on p. 6

LIGHT on the WAY

meditations on God's Word

Volume 27 Number 17

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Studies in I Peter

Children of obedience

"As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'" (I Peter 1:14-16).

Peter is continuing to speak to believers in these verses. He challenges and calls the child of God to holiness in life.

The quotation in verse 16, "You shall be holy, for I am holy," is a reference to the "Holiness Code" from the Old Testament book of Leviticus (chapters 17-26). In Leviticus, God instructed His people Israel how they were to live. God had just delivered His people from Egypt and He had separated Israel to Himself through the waters of the Red Sea. Because of the Lord Jehovah's action, the nation had become a separate or "holy" people (unfortunately, some of the people in unbelief rejected this gracious work of God). It was only the people of faith who truly were a holy people unto the Lord.

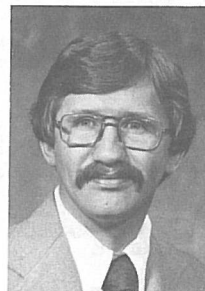
Before He could call upon Israel to live a holy life, He first, by His merciful and gracious action, had to establish them as a holy and separate nation — a people "first-born" unto God (Exodus 4:22, 6:6-7). After this, in Leviticus 17-26, God then could instruct His people in holy living. Because God is holy and because He did establish His people as a holy people, He then calls upon them to live a separated life. This holy life was to be a visible demonstration to other nations of what the Lord Jehovah had done in and for and among His people Israel.

It is significant that Peter refers to this portion of Leviticus in I Peter 1:14-16. Peter is giving instructions to the believers, the people of God in the New Testament. They, as believers, are the elect, chosen into a new covenant of obedience and of sprinkling of the blood of Christ (I Peter 1:2). In verse 14, then, Peter prefaces his instructions to the believers with the Gospel statement, "as obedient children." The

expression "as obedient children" strongly serves to remind the reader of God's work. He, the Lord, is the One who has caused the believers, who once lived in "lusts" in their ignorance (I Peter 1:14) and who once were "children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3), to be born again as "obedient children," or "children of obedience." The word "obedient" literally means "one who hears." "Obedient children" are children who have been begotten by God to hear in obedience what the Lord says in His Word. They are obedient children because God, by means of baptism and the Word of God, has effectively worked repentance and faith in their hearts. It is on the basis of this beautiful and effective work of God that Peter challenges the believer to then live a holy and separated life.

As obedient children, children of the Father by faith in Jesus Christ, then, "be holy yourselves also in all your behavior." It is not your holy behavior that makes you an obedient child. Rather, it is because the believer is an obedient child by the grace and mercy of God that he is to be holy in his behavior. To indulge in sin and to serve the former lusts is unworthy of one who is a child of the Father and blasphemes the Father's name. It is only a life of holiness that is consistent with being an obedient child. It is only a life of holiness that glorifies the Father and it is only a life of holiness that truly testifies to the world of what the Father has done in Christ.

May praise and glory be to the Father through the lives of His "children of obedience."



by Pastor
Philip Haugen

Where the greatest
learning takes place

The University of Hard Knocks

There are many great universities in our land, such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, the University of Minnesota, etc. But there is another school that has had more graduates than any other school that has ever existed. Its tuition fees are the costliest on earth, but the lessons we learn there do more for us than those in any other school. That is the "University of Hard Knocks."

Paul's degree was from the University of Tarsus, where he sat at the feet of Gamaliel and other great teachers of that day. But he learned far more from the University of Hard Knocks, for there he sat under God's great teaching.

In our text, God's Word tells us Paul had a "thorn in the flesh" which buffeted him. We are not told what it was. If he had revealed this knowledge to us, we would tend to say that it "doesn't apply to me." As it is, this text applies to all of us. We all have a thorn, or will have one soon. The thorn could be any affliction, any trouble, anything that keeps us from being what we ought to be. But even though the thorns are there, God's consolations are always available to us.

In verse 8, Paul prayed, "O Father, remove this thorn from my flesh." Did God answer exactly what he prayed for? No! Although God answered his prayer, He told Paul, "I am not going to take away the thorn, but I am going to give you more grace and power so that you can bear it." And Paul, great man that he was, said, "Thank You, Lord. I'd rather have the thorn with Your added grace than to be without the thorn and not have Your grace." And I believe that God works the same way today because He has something to teach us.

I. We grow Spiritually through Hard Knocks

To keep us from exalting ourselves, God allows from Satan a thorn in the flesh to buffet us. We grow spiritually (or should) through the polishing of hard knocks. For those of us who have a relationship with Christ, hard knocks should draw us to our knees and the Word of God (v. 8) to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Should we pray for healing and for God's help? Yes! And God can heal and will help, but life is not always easy and spiritual growth is

often difficult, but in the end more of God's grace and power are experienced.

As God's servants, the growing process often nearly kills us, but it always turns out to be for our good. A young man is called into the ministry. With little experience, he is thrown into the midst of the battle. He is called to serve a congregation of imperfect human beings. He does his best. As the years go by, the world crushes him and people disappoint and hurt him. But these things make a sympathetic minister of him and in time he grows and becomes a humble servant blessed by God.

II. Let's Look at Some of the Hard Knocks

1. *There is the hard knock of failure.* There have been many times in my life that I've thought that I had failed. But I've learned that often what we think of as failures are actually opportunities to learn lessons that lead to success.

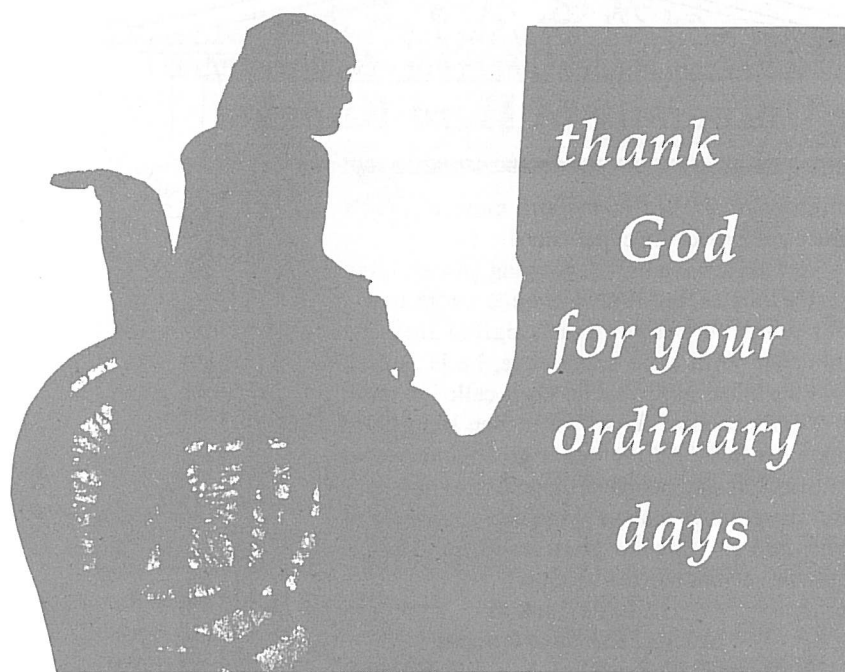
A man said, "There are so many things I wanted and planned to do. But I am an old man now and it is too late. I feel that my life has been a failure." But sometimes these failures bring success. It is said that Edison failed dozens of times before he invented the electric light bulb. His failures spurred him on to greater efforts.

2. *There is the hard knock of disappointment.* Often we make our plans and set high goals, but often these conflict with what God has planned for us. Then, when things don't go our way, we become disappointed. Instead we need to pray as Jesus did: "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as *You* will" (Matt. 26:39b NIV).

3. *There is the hard knock of bad health.* When God made man, He gave him a wonderful body, but man fell into sin and disease and sickness put their hold upon him. When Jesus comes, there will be no sickness and He will give us perfect bodies. But, for now, bad health may be a part of our education. In sickness we often learn the lessons of patience, sympathy, faith and courage.

Even so, we must always be obedient to God's Word, according to Jas. 5:13-15, where we are commanded to call for the elders when

by Pastor
Jay Eberth
Wyoming, Minn.



It was just an ordinary day — full to overflowing with things to do — people to see, letters to write, cleaning and gardening to do, meals to make — you know, all the usual things. The typical interruptions were there, too, and I just kept pushing on, trying to squeeze in all I could.

Then it happened — the bike accident! Oh no — all my plans changed instantly. X-rays showed a broken leg above the ankle and I found myself lying flat in bed with my leg propped up on pillows. Under doctor's orders, I must lie here for several days with my leg up until the swelling goes down so they can put on a cast.

Wow — what a change! Suddenly I feel helpless, needing assistance to do most anything. Even the smallest movement of my leg brings pain, so the best thing to do is to lie still and try to get extra rest.

"Why, Lord? It seems like such a waste of

HARD KNOCKS

"There is no hope for a person who goes through the troubles of life and learns nothing from them."

we are sick, and they are to anoint with oil and pray, and we are to pray for God to heal. And the "prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up" (NIV).

4. *There is the hard knock of deception.* You trust a friend and feel that he is on your side, but he proves untrue, Zech. 13:6: "I was wounded in the house of my friends." Some people put on the facade of being your best friends, but a true Christian should be a true friend. There is a friend that sticks closer than a brother and is always true to us, and that is Jesus.

5. *There is the hard knock of persecution.* There is a woman who wants to go to church and serve the Lord in her home, but her husband ridicules her. But what did Jesus say? "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake" (Matt. 5:11 KJV).

6. *There is the hard knock of losing a loved one.* Sorrow comes and we go down deep into the valley. We feel that we cannot go on, but we are learning. Ecclesiastes 7:2 tells us, "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting" (KJV).

In all these circumstances God meets us with His love and consolation.

III. What Do These Knocks Do for Us?

We are going to the University of Hard

Knocks. Are we getting any benefit from it? Yes.

1. *Hard knocks soften us.* We are like diamonds in the rough that need to be buffed in order to bring out the shine. When we are being buffed, it draws us to our knees in prayer and opens our ears to hear God's Word. It is then God's Word that brings healing, mercy, strength and peace.

2. *These hard knocks teach us.* There is no hope for a person who goes through the troubles of life and learns nothing from them. It is said that if you stop learning you start dying. Some of the biggest men in life were once failures. But they learned lessons from these failures which made them great. Experience is the greatest teacher in the world, but her lessons are the hardest.

3. *These hard knocks tenderize us.* Selfishness and pride must be knocked out of all of us before we can help others. We must be tenderized. Hard knocks make us grateful and fit us to sympathize with others.

What does this all mean to us? It means that we are to go ahead in spite of the hard knocks. And we are to remember that God's grace will always be sufficient. He will always be with us. The Christian life does not offer a downy couch and a bed of roses. But the blessed Savior will walk with us when troubles come, and He will meet us at the end of the way.

"Suddenly I feel helpless,
needing assistance to do
most anything."

time. ...But is it? I know You have something special to teach me. I know You're right here, and I have a need in my life to take more time alone with You. That's really what I need more than anything else, isn't it? So, Lord, I'll look to You and be content. I'll search for wisdom in this situation as Proverbs 2 says: "like hidden treasure." Thanks for what You're going to do during this time in my life.

It's ironic — today is "Labor Day," and I can't do any labor! What a lesson! Have you thanked God for your normal, ordinary, busy day? No matter what your tasks — whether office work or classroom assignments or dirty dishes or tractor to fix — have you appreciated

health and strength to be "up and around," active and able to work? That's a blessing that we rarely appreciate.

I just read a little book written by disabled children. Do you know what they want most? They want to be able to walk and run, to talk plainly, to be accepted by others, and to be able to do things by themselves.

So today, thank God for your ordinary days! Use your strength and abilities for the glory of God. Remember that *He* is the one you are serving. And check your attitude: "serve the Lord with gladness!"

— Mrs. Lyndon (Linda) Korhonen
Culbertson, Mont.

Thoughts on the stewardship of money

Permitted to share in God's work

Is money important?

Is it important to you? To your church? To God?

Most of us spend 80% of our waking day working for and thinking about money. In the Bible there are over 700 scripture passages that refer directly to money. Nearly two-thirds of Christ's parables deal with the use and handling of it. However, few Christians seem to understand God's will when it comes to money. Many Christians have withheld this area of their lives from God and are struggling with the world's financial system. We know from Matthew 25 that God will withdraw resources from poor stewards and give it to the good stewards. Are you sure that you're being a good steward?

A steward is a person who manages another's resources. Each of us is a manager, not an owner. Many Christians mistakenly talk about "their" money or "their" farm or "their" business, etc., when actually the concept that these assets belong to

us is totally false. Everything we "own" actually belongs to God and He will use it to direct our lives. God is the owner and we are to manage according to His plan. Acceptance of this principle is necessary for a Christian to be free from financial bondage and to receive God's blessings in this area.

If we have accepted God's ownership of all that we have, we must then seek His wisdom and direction. God's will and His ways are not always the same as ours, but when we turn our finances over to God we must be willing to accept His direction. God commands us to lay up treasures in heaven rather than on earth. How much, then, of our resources will we share for God's work as manager and

— "...few Christians seem to understand God's will when it comes to money."

steward?

Certainly we are not now required to tithe as part of God's law. Abraham tithed a tenth of all his spoils before the law was even written. Abraham did so because he loved God and felt led to do so. We read in Deuteronomy 14:23: "And you shall eat in the presence of the Lord your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil and the first born of your herd and your flock in order that you may *learn to fear the Lord your God always.*"

God established the tithe that we may always learn to fear the Lord our God. Remember, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10). We must seek wisdom from God and one of the ways to do it is through the tithe.

The amount is not important to God. As Paul pointed out in II Corinthians, "Each one must do — not reluctantly or under compulsion, for continued on p. 16

Beaver Creek notes centennial

Beaver Creek Lutheran Church, located 21 miles south of Tioga, N. Dak., celebrated its centennial on July 1 and 2. Beaver Creek is the oldest Lutheran congregation in Williams County. It is served by Rev. Stephen Odegaard. The theme verse for the anniversary was taken from Psalm 103:2: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." The theme hymn was "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord."

At the Saturday evening service the welcome was given by Donald Anderson, president of the congregation. A former pastor, Rev. Robert Lee of Minneapolis, Minn., brought the message. A singspiration was led by Marie Vance. Special music was provided by a ladies' chorus singing "Like a River Glorious" and a trio, Linda Odegaard, Marie Vance and Barbara Anderson, which sang "Praise Ye the Triune God." Hoagie sandwiches and Norwegian goodies were served following the service.

Rev. John Strand, Remer, Minn., who served the congregation from 1952-1964, preached the sermon at the Sunday morning service. He spoke on Phil. 4:4-7. The ladies' chorus sang "I Lay My Sins on Jesus" before Holy Communion was served by Rev. Odegaard, assisted by Rev. Strand and Rev. Lee. "I Love to Tell the Story" was sung by the Sunday School as a call to worship. A duet was sung by Rev. and Mrs. Odegaard, "God Will Take Care of You," and a duet during the offertory was sung by Marie Vance and Barbara Anderson, "His Guiding Touch."

A catered dinner was served following the service to the large crowd attending.

At the afternoon service, Mr. Arley Hartsoch led in Scripture and prayer. A centennial choir made up of members, former members and pastors, sang two selections, "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" and "Amazing Grace." Verdi Halverson read the history and the Confirmation roll call. Marge Walter read a poem, "Our Centennial,"



Pastors Tony Stockman, John Stand, Stephen Odegaard and Robert Lee

written by Beatrice (Kamp) Nelson of Hamilton, Mont., a member of the 1919 confirmation class.

Greetings were read and brought by a number of people, including former pastors, Martin Heide, Williston, N. Dak., and Robert Lee, and Rev. Tony Stockman, Brandon, Minn., a son of

the congregation. A solo, "It's Time for All America to Pray," was sung by Lila Lalim and the service concluded by all singing "Blest Be the Tie that Binds."

An anniversary cake, baked and decorated by Florence Ferguson, was served at the close of the afternoon session.

—Corr.

Brief History

Services were held in the Missouri River valley south of Tioga and Ray, N. Dak., from 1889 and on. The first service was in the Halvor Thorson home by Rev. J. U. Pedersen. Formal organization took place in the fall of 1895 at a meeting chaired by Rev. A. A. Brunsvold, who lived in Minot.

It was decided in 1907 that the church building should be put on the "government 40," but it wasn't until 1910 that the church was completed. A basement was put in in 1949. The church was moved to Epping, N. Dak., in the late '70s and a new church placed on the basement. This was dedicated in 1980.

The Ladies Aid was organized in 1910. Beaver Creek was one of the founding congregations of the AFLC. Three of the original 13 students at Association Free Lutheran Bible School were from Beaver Creek: Maureen Hartsoch Severson, Bonnie Ferguson Haugen and Janette Hove Ritterman. A son of the congregation, Tony Stockman, is a graduate of Association Bible School and Seminary and is now an AFLC pastor. A former member,

Raymond Bolstad, served as a missionary to Tanganyika (now Tanzania) for a number of years.

Pastors who have served Beaver Creek are: J. U. Pedersen, 1889-93; A. A. Brunsvold, 1895-97; Mons Gjerde, 1897-98; Nicolay Nilson; A. G. Lee; O. C. Dahlager, 1903-06; H. O. Helseth, 1906-09; A. J. Logeland, 1909-15; A. G. Hansen, 1916-20; A. T. Moen, 1920-30; E. M. Hanson, 1930-35; E. A. Evenson, 1936-41; Harald Grindal, 1942-46; Carl Carlsen, 1946-51; John P. Strand, 1952-64; H. Albert Larson, 1965; Robert L. Lee, 1966-72; Reuben Wee, 1968-70; Trygve Dahle, 1972-73; Forrest Swenson, 1973-78; Karl Stendal, 1978-80; Gilbert Schroeder, 1980-87; and Stephen Odegaard, 1987--.

The following have served as lay pastors at various times: John Hartsoch, Martin Heide, Ed Mathison, Rodger Olson, Arley Hartsoch, Charles Pegelow, Robert Rieth, Melvin Walla, Otto Saukerson and Clifford Dyrud. There have also been numerous student pastors and/or interns over the years.

About Miss Ragna Dahle's death and burial

It's as though we can't believe it is true, that Ragna Dahle really has left us for good. No longer ago than last Saturday she was around and taken up with different things. And she worried over all that she had to get ready before the approaching annual meeting of the native church; but it was as though she didn't have the strength to do anything. She had also become so pale and gave the impression that she had become very tired the last three-four weeks, when fever had plagued her more or less. That had especially seemed to have been hard on her the last week under the stress of examinations in all her classes and rehearsing the school children in songs for the annual meeting.

It was evident that she needed rest and therefore Dr. (J. O.) Dyrnes had suggested to her on Friday that she should go with Mrs. Dyrnes and Sister Petra as far as Tulear when they travelled immediately after the annual meeting in order to go back with the Hallands (Rev. and Mrs. A. W.) to Manasoa. We mean, you see, that Hallands were coming by "Bagdad," which is expected at Tulear around Dec. 10th. Mrs. Dyrnes and Sister Petra hope to sail on that ship from Tulear to Tamatave. Ragna took the doctor's suggestion enthusiastically, and felt so weak all of Saturday that she felt glad with the thought that she would be getting away from the hectic pace at Manasoa for a while. And she did get to get away — but how much sooner than any of us expected, and in what an entirely different manner than any of us thought!

Sunday night she became seriously ill with sharp pains in her back and hard chills, symptoms which told us that she had the dreaded "blackwater" fever. Everything was done for her that could be done to save her life and we hoped against hope until Monday

evening. Then it became clear to all of us that Ragna didn't have long left. At 12:30 she drew her last breath and we stood again in sorrow over the place which had become empty. Naturally, it was hardest for my wife because this sister had always been so close all the way from childhood days, all through school days and now for almost two years on the mission field. But she has been brave through it all and so thankful that she could be with her sister to the last.

The funeral took place yesterday afternoon. At about 4 o'clock all of Ragna's school children gathered outside the house and as the casket was carried out by six of her schoolboys from last year, the children sang softly as they followed after to the church. One of the native teachers and Dr. Dyrnes spoke in the church. From the church the white, flower-covered casket was carried by the teachers to the grave. Out here in Manasoa's peaceful cemetery among the many missionary graves and beside that of our little Reinert's, the memorial marker to Ragna was also raised.

We feel reason to ask, Why should she just now be taken from us, who had entered into the work she had dedicated herself to ever since she was a child, and for which she seemed to suited and so well equipped? But we will likely not understand why; and so we can first be quiet and comforted when we can rest in the unshakeable confidence that God in the end does all things well and that all things work together for good for those who love Him.

Ragna Dahle was throughout a fine soul. That was a trait of character that came out in all that she undertook, whether it was her school work or the more personal interests she occupied herself with. Everything that was beautiful she embraced with an undivided

(Ragna Dahle was a sister of the late and beloved Pastor Trygve Dahle. She passed away in her late twenties.) The writer of the article, Leif Awes, was her brother-in-law.)

enthusiasm and devotion. And nothing was more wonderful for her than the Christian life. And she let us understand that, not so much by what she said but throughout the life she lived from day to day.

The Malagasy as well as the missionaries who stood together with her in the work won't quickly forget "Mademoiselle Dahle," as the aborigines are wont to call her, as the leader of the school, as a teacher, as a worker in the sewing class — for the life she gave to song and music; and neither will the children forget the times she took the time to play their games with them. She has left behind a memory which won't soon be erased. In spite of the sorrow and disappointment, then, we have so much for which to thank God. He who gave our mission Ragna Dahle, and then took her away so soon, will surely find someone to fill the place which is now empty.

I send this with a heartfelt greeting from my wife and your devoted

Leif H. Awes.

In a letter which Miss Dahle wrote to Professor (J. H.) Blegen (treasurer, Board of LFC Foreign Missions), nine days before her death, she thanked him because he had, at her request, paid out a part of her salary in contributions to various causes she wanted to help, and then closed with these words: "Here is nothing to buy either necessary or unnecessary. I feel therefore that my dollars — like the talents the Bible tells about — increase more quickly when they are in circulation than when they lie in the bottom of my trunk out here. To say nothing about the joy it gives me to be of a little use. I have done nothing but receive all my life; now I can begin to give."

— Translated from Norwegian

More on the LLF Convention

"No Turning Back" from Job 23:11 was the theme for the 1989 Luther League Federation Convention. The Convention was held at the Silver Star Resort near Vernon, B. C., July 17-21. Pastor Gerald Gettis and the local Association congregation were our hosts. A special thank-you to the folks at Vernon for their kind hospitality and for all of the work they did for us.

A record number of young people attended this Convention. At least 600 youth were in attendance. About 30 pastors were present. Over 50 people were on the staff. The grand total of persons involved reach 750. The Luther League rented a large tent for the evening services and for the morning Bible study. The tent was filled, with most adults standing!

As far as it is known, this Convention was the largest youth gathering in AFLC history and very well may be the largest gathering of any kind since the Association came into being some 27 years ago.

The young people should be complemented on their fine conduct. There were very few disorderly people. It was a real joy to witness the fine co-operation our Luther League President, Pastor James Johnson from Reva, S. Dak., was given.

Pastor Johnson and his officers did a splendid job in organizing this event. Especially was this true when it was realized that the number of youth in attendance was over the capacity of the Silver Star Resort.

Pastor James Fugleberg from Fern-dale, Wash., was the Bible study teacher. He taught from the book of Jonah. Dr. Steve Lombardo, AFLC Schools, was the evening evangelist. When the evening altar call was given, at least 60 youth came forward to be saved. Others were led to the Lord or counseled by their counselors in the hotel rooms.

The 600 young people were divided into discussion groups led by dedicated

older youth, many from our Bible School in Minneapolis. These four different "schools" met in workshops with Pastor Gettis, Pastor Terry Wold, Pastor Kenneth Moland and Pastor Dennis Gray.

During the afternoons, Pastor Keith Quanbeck and his capable helpers organized activities.

An offering of nearly \$1500.00 was given to Missions.

The next Luther League event, a Leadership School, is sponsored by the Youth Board in co-operation with our Bible School. It will take place in Minneapolis, Minn., the third week in July of 1990. The theme for this event is the Law and the Gospel.

This Leadership School will be limited to 200 young people. Pastors will be encouraged to attend, even though they may have to stay in motels in the Plymouth area. Arrangements will possibly be made to pay for most of the expense of staying off campus. Additional details will be mailed out sometime toward the first part of the year.

The 1991 Luther League Convention is also announced for the third week of July. So both the Luther League Leadership School and the Luther League Convention will be on the very same week each year, unless announced differently.

May the Lord lead all of our pastors and youth workers, which includes Sunday School teachers, to be continu-

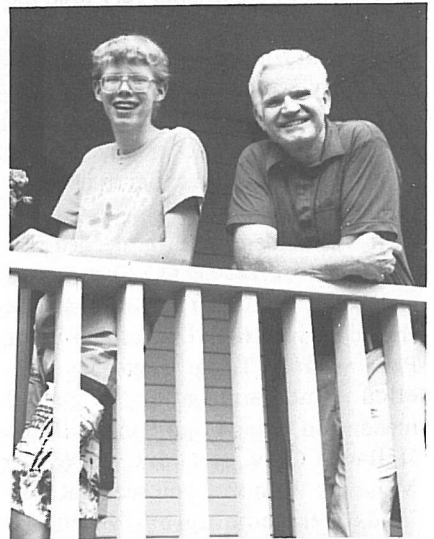
ing the strong movement among our young people.

We must always realize and conclude that this is the Lord's work and that He is to receive the honor and glory for all that is done. May His name be lifted up.

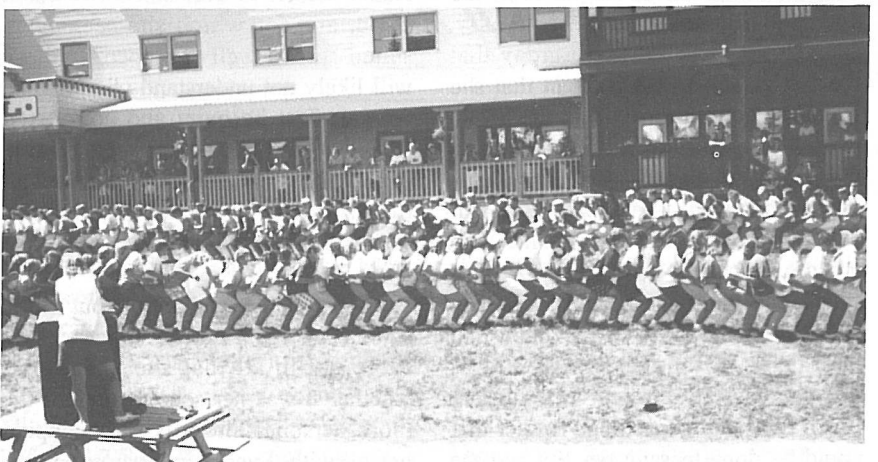
— Pastor Dennis Gray
Youth Resources Director

DISTRICT LL RALLY THIS WEEKEND

The South Dakota-Nebraska District Luther League Federation is meeting in a rally this weekend, Oct. 7-8, at Bethel Lutheran Church, Faith, S. Dak., Todd Klemme, pastor.



Nathan Lokken, Canton, S. Dak., and Pastor Ted Berkas, Wallace, S. Dak.



Over 400 people sat on each others knees in an effort to prevent the "domino effect."

PASTOR SIDNEY SWENSON

Lay Pastor Sidney Swenson went to be with the Lord last month. As I write about him, I wish I had an account of his life before me. Many of us heard snatches about his life in the testimonies he gave at annual conferences, family camps and Bible conferences.

He was a Chicagoan and he went back there to live out his days. He was converted to Christ on a Saturday night, as I recall, when he ended up at a prayer meeting instead of his customary bar or saloon.

Psalm 34 was his Psalm, especially these verses: "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him" (6-8). "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him," that was the core of it all to Sidney Swenson, as the basis of his own salvation and the theme of the sermons he preached.

He worked in the Lutheran Home Rescue Mission in Chicago for 16 years after some Bible school study and lay ministry at a church in Minneapolis, Minn. He had stories to tell about the mission work on Chicago's west side. Then somehow he became a lay pastor in the Association in 1964, when the AFLC was very young. Interim service followed. He was faithful in attending conferences and camps over the years. He delighted in being present for the fellowship and inspiration to be had. It doesn't seem that long ago, but the record shows that he last attended an annual conference in 1981 at church headquarters at Medicine Lake, Minneapolis.

Sidney Swenson will be remembered not only for his testimonies to God's saving grace in his life, but for his prayers. They always began with the quotation of considerable Scripture before he got into the use of his own words. How fortunate he was to have laid up God's Word in his heart. We can believe that that stood him in good stead in his last years, too, when other abilities may have lessened.

Thank you, Sidney, for the fellowship of those years, for your faith, your good humor and the steadfast devotion to the central purpose of being a Christian — the salvation of souls — which you showed us all. Blessed be your memory among us.

CURTAIL ADVERTISING

Americans who care for decency at all applaud the war against drugs which has been undertaken, albeit belatedly, in the U.S. and Colombia, as well as in many other places in the world. Let us support and pray for those who are willing to "stick their necks out" in the face of threats to their safety in order to attack the problem head on.

But there is more. Immediately following President Bush's speech to the nation in early Sept., Nick Spaeth, attorney general of North Dakota, said that alcohol was the biggest drug problem in his state. A week or so later former

President Gerald Ford decried the lack of attention to alcohol as a drug in the midst of the furor over other drugs. A retiring law enforcement man in a northern Minnesota county said recently when asked what he thought was the biggest problem in his county, "Drugs and Alcohol" (emphasis ours).

More attention should be placed on alcohol, while not lessening the spotlight on other drugs. It is true that alcohol is a legal drug, but it is an intoxicant and mood-altering. Many problems are caused by its use, not only for the user, but for those whose lives are touched by him or her, usually in a very close way. In the extreme, and all too frequently, it is the cause of death by illness, accident or personal violence.

Dr. C. Everett Koop, former surgeon general of the U.S., did some things in the course of his administration as the chief health officer which endeared him greatly to social conservatives and evangelicals. He also deeply offended them at some points. But one of the things he said before leaving office, and we wish he had gone after this more while he still had the power, was that the advertising of alcoholic beverages ought to be greatly restricted.

That makes a lot of sense and it is the least that we should insist on in light of the track record of alcoholic beverages among our American and Canadian people. It is quite illogical that something which destroys people and disrupts tranquility should be promoted so freely.

It is amazing that smoking has been put in such an unfavorable light in the last ten years, thanks in great measure to Dr. Koop. It's hardly believable that sentiment could be turned, or built up, so much in such a short time.

May we hope that the same can happen in regard to alcoholic beverages of whatever kind? If you have the opportunity to influence legislators to curb advertising of beer and other alcoholic beverages, please do that.

WE FOLLOW

We are glad to be able to bring you in this issue the story of the death of Miss Ragna Dahle in late 1918. In our reading we came across the account by Rev. Leif H. Awes, a man we knew slightly.

The story of Ragna Dahle's death at a young age and at the beginning of a promising missionary career is a part of our history and heritage. True, she lived, and died, long before there was an AFLC, but her roots were our roots, her mission was the mission of many of us and our forebears. Others in the Association have different backgrounds, different mission fields, and stories of selflessness and self-sacrifice as gripping as that of Ragna Dahle. It would be good if some of them could be shared with our readers at some future date. They are the shared heritage of us all.

The thing is, it is easy for us to forget, yes, to not even know the history that we have. It is easy to be ignorant of

Don't send the clowns into the pulpit

The pastor started with a joke. "There were two Norwegians and a Swede," the preacher explains. He goes on to try to get a laugh. Often the story brings a snicker and the pastor continues without really knowing whether he got his point across. The attempt at comedy or story-telling sometimes does not go over very well with the congregation. The purpose of a pulpit narrative is really three-fold. *First:* A funny story is expected to loosen up a tight audience and get their attention. *Second:* The narrative may very well illustrate a key point in the sermon or at least show the audience a parallel of some sort. *Third:* The preacher secretly hopes that the comedy he has created may show him in a good light and confirm to the congregation that he is indeed a clever person with a good message for the group.

There are great risks in "sending the clowns into the pulpit." The possibility of offending someone in the audience grows with each joke that is told. There is no logical way you can twist a point to provide a laugh without a little risk of offending someone or turning somebody off. There is an even greater moral risk. The Sunday morning worship service is a time of meditation and prayer. As we approach the altar asking God to forgive our sins, we truly confess our faith and earnestly seek our Lord's will for our life in a solemn face to face meeting with our God. We are not in church on Sunday morning to be entertained. It is truly a hallowed

and solemn occasion.

There is nothing wrong with telling a story to illustrate a point or show a clear Biblical truth through an appropriate analogy. Jesus did this on many occasions, but He normally did not include a joke or comic quip even in His every day lessons with His disciples. Jesus used serious parables and examples as a regular teaching tool, but he preserved the dignity of His ministry by refraining from comedy.

Christian entertainment such as

clowns, videos, plays, and other congregation talents are an important part of normal church life, but the real purpose of the Sunday morning service is prayerful worship of our God. Let's send the clowns into the church building at the proper time and place and keep the Sunday morning service a period of worship and prayer.

Allen D. Hanson
Ottertail, Minn.

(Ed. Note: And we don't see any place for clowns in any church program or service)

Thou canst do everything

—J. Danson Smith
(Job 42:2,
Luke 1:37 and Luke 18:27)

"I know that Thou canst do everything,"
No limit to Thee is known;
And the things which seem quite impossible
Just wait till Thy touch is shewn.

"I know that Thou canst do everything," —
Things little as well as great;
Thou never canst know things *difficult*;
Thou never canst be *too late*.

"I know that Thou canst do everything,"
And I am a child of Thine:
What matters although extremity
Should fall on this life of mine —

Since, knowing Thou canst do everything,
And Thou has a love for me,
There never can dawn a day so dark
But Thou canst deliverance be.

EDITORIALS

the experiences of those who have gone before us, to never know the hardships some of them endured not only as missionaries to foreign lands, but also as home mission workers on the primitive U.S. and Canadian scene. We work in relative comfort today. Let us not forget or be ignorant of those who paved the way for us.

We have people in the AFLC who have seen the cemetery at Manasoa, who have seen the graves of Ragna Dahle, Reinert Awes, Dr. and Mrs. Dyrnes and others. The rest of us must only imagine it, even though we may have seen pic-

tures. And there must be hundreds of such mission cemeteries around the world, even thousands.

What does it all mean? It means that many have given "the last full measure of devotion," to use Lincoln's phrase, and that we have a noble example to follow. Few of us will die from the rigors of our work or lack of medical attention. But may we have the will to work and serve, and the enthusiasm that characterized Ragna Dahle's short service in Madagascar. May we say with her, "Now I can begin to give."

(See the article "About Miss Ragna Dahle's Death and Burial" on page 7.)

PSALMS IN THE NIGHT

WMF BIBLE STUDY NOVEMBER 1989

PSALM 100

Memory Verse: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before His presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord He is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations."

(Psalm 100)

Purpose of the Psalm: To show praise and thanksgiving.

This is a psalm of praise, often called "Jubilate" or "Old Hundredth."

Draw a mental picture of a procession of people coming to the Temple singing this psalm — a psalm of praise as they approach the Temple. Verses 4 and 5 could have been sung antiphonally by singers who were in the Temple.

I. Verses 1 -2

What word describes how our singing should be in church?

(See Psalm 95:1) _____

Our faith should be a singing faith, characterized by abundant joy. What do these references say about this?

a) Philipians 4:4-13 _____

2. Summer and winter,
and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars
in their courses above,
Join with all nature in
manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy
and love.

— Chorus

3. Pardon for sin and a
peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to
cheer and to guide,
Strength for today and
bright hope for tomorrow —
Blessings all mine, with
ten thousand beside!

— Chorus

(Please note! This year there will also be a study for the month of December. It will be on Psalm 139. Watch for it in the Nov. 14 *Ambassador.*)

- b) John 15:11 _____
c) John 16:22-24, 33 _____

How are we serving the Lord? _____

Gladly, grudgingly? Do we let someone else do it? _____

Does God's work suffer when we are not willing to serve Him? _____

II. Verse 3

Define monotheism. _____

The psalmist affirms that Israel's God is the one true God. What does Deuteronomy 7:6-11 say to us? _____

The relationship of the Covenant people to the one true God is compared to the shepherd and his sheep.

What do Psalm 23 and Psalm 80:1 say to us? _____

III. Verses 4 - 5

These verses are like a second call to praise and thanksgiving, as we find it in verses 1 and 2.

How should we express our thankfulness? _____

What do Psalm 116:17 and Psalm 136:1 say to us? _____

What words describe the dependability of God's love? _____

How long will it last? _____

Is there a limit to it? _____

How great is His faithfulness? _____

*Let us spend some time
thanking God for His mercies toward us.
It is a good time for sharing!
—Mrs. Amos Stolee*

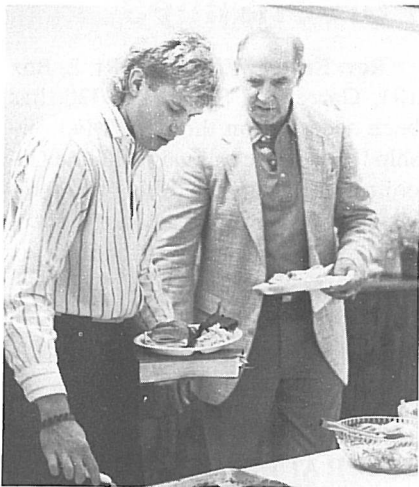
Hymn #98 (Concordia)

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

1. Great is Thy faithfulness,
O God my Father!
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changeest not,
Thy compassions, they fail not:
As Thou has been Thou forever wilt be.

Chorus:

Great is Thy faithfulness,
Great is Thy faithfulness,
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed
Thy hand hath provided —
Great is Thy faithfulness,
Lord, unto me!



Joe Hanson and his father, Victor, Bloomington, Minn., enjoyed the first AFLBS meal served on Sept. 10. Registration began the next day for 103 students.



Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Hovland, Sisseton, S. Dak., join their son, David for the opening workshop service.

photos by S. Hjermstad

Those first hours of the 1989-90 AFLBS school year

Walter and David Lusk, Camarillo, Calif. David is part of the 61-member junior class.



Tina Cherney, Arlington, Wash., checked in with her parents.



Susan Vogsland, Grafton, N. Dak., found a moment to stop her unpacking to get acquainted with her roommate.

Pastor Sidney Swenson



Pastor Sidney Swenson, 88, was called home to be with the Lord on August 31. He was born August 27, 1901, in Chicago, Ill. His parents were from Stavanger, Norway.

He accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior on Nov. 20, 1926.

He married Mary Olson on Dec. 28, 1927. They had three children. At that time he worked for the Chicago Street Car Lines.

In 1943, he received a call from God to go into the ministry. He studied at the Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis. In 1944 he became associate pastor with Rev. Leonard Mastad at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Minneapolis.

His wife Mary passed away in

March, 1947.

On July 23, 1948, he married Emma Andreassen. Shortly after, he accepted a call to the Lutheran Home Rescue Mission in Chicago and served sixteen years as superintendent. He was instrumental in forming the first black Lutheran congregation in Chicago.

In 1965, he accepted a call as lay pastor in Greenbush, Minn., where he served eight congregations.

He later lived in Fergus Falls, Minn., and then moved to St. Paul in 1972.

Sidney and Emma were devoted members of Victory in Christ Lutheran Church in Maplewood. They loved the Lord and served Him with great joy. Sidney often went out on evangelistic meetings and spoke in many churches.

Emma passed away on Feb. 7, 1984.

Sidney moved into Bethesda Norwegian Lutheran Home in Chicago in May, 1984.

He was preceded in death by a son, Sidney, and a daughter, Ruth. He is missed by daughter Eleanore Hanson of Wheeling, Ill., four grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, a brother, Harold Swensen of Des Moines, Iowa, and nieces and nephews.

Services were held at Bethesda Home. Interment — Crystal Lake Cemetery, Minneapolis.

ALL BOARDS' MEETING

The annual All Boards' meeting of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is being held today, Oct. 3, at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis. A report of the meeting will be carried later.

Other activities of the Fall Conference included an Evangelism Workshop for Lay Leaders at Trinity Lutheran Church, Ottawa, Ill., on Sat., Sept. 16, and a morning Bible conference from Sept. 18-20 at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Morris, Ill., taught by Pastor Arnold Stone on the theme "The Work of the Holy Spirit in Acts."

— *Corr.*

Personalities

Rev. Erwin W. Brandt, Rt. 2, Box 181, Garretson, S. Dak. 57030, has been accepted on the AFLC Fellowship Roster after colloquy with the Coordinating Committee. He will be serving Abiding Saviour Lutheran Church, a Home Mission congregation in Sioux Falls, S. Dak. Pastor and Mrs. Brandt are the parents of Rev. Michael Brandt, AFLC pastor in Cloquet, Minn.

THREE GENERATIONS TEACH AT DEKALB

Grace Lutheran, 1121 South First St., in DeKalb, Ill., has three generations of Oslands teaching at one time in the Sunday School.

The three generations are Ruth Osland, her son David, and his daughter, Carla. Carla just graduated from AFLBS and joined the Sunday School staff in September of this year.

Furthermore, David's wife Carmen (Jerde) has served on the Parish Education Committee of Grace for a number of years. She and Leonard, Ruth's husband, support the Sunday School in various other ways.

*Mrs. Wayne Froeming
Christian Education Comm.*

NOTICE

Rev. Robert L. Lee will be continuing as assistant editor of the *Ambassador* until the end of the year when he moves to Newark, Ill. He will concentrate on supplying news of our joint work and from the congregations.

In memoriam

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

ILLINOIS

DeKalb

Mrs. Jessie I. Quetno, 82, Aug. 21, Grace.

Illinois churches host LEM conferences

Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Chillicothe, Ill., sponsored a series of Renewal Meetings, Sept. 17-20. This series was a part of the Fall Illinois Conference of the Lutheran Evangelism Movement (LEM). The Chillicothe meetings were conducted by Pastor Gary Jorgenson from Faith Lutheran Church, Ottawa, Illinois. His messages were based on four parables of Jesus from the Book of Luke: The Foolish Farmer, The Two Debtors, The Prodigal Son and The Shrewd Manager.

news of the churches

from here and there

Canton, S. Dak. — Redeemer Lutheran is taking part in "The Taste of Christmas" in the basement of Home Federal on Fri., Oct. 13, from 9 to 4. Lunches will be served all day and there will be a bake sale table.

Redeemer participated in an area Lutheran Evangelistic Movement conference Sept. 10-12. Preaching at the evening meetings was Rev. Philip Featherstone, Pukwana, S. Dak.

Newfolden, Minn. — Singing evangelist Roy Hope presented a program at Westaker Lutheran on Sept. 8.

Roseau, Minn. — The parish (Spruce and Rose) Fall Festival was held on Sun., Sept. 10 at Spruce Lutheran. Dr. Lyle Mattson, Greenbush, was the speaker at the joint 10 o'clock service.

Dalton, Minn. — Missionary and Mrs. John Abel will be visiting the parish on Wed., Oct. 11, in a service at Zion-Sarpsborg Lutheran in Dalton. It will begin at 7:30 p.m.

Cokato, Minn. — Tim Hinrichs showed slides of a trip to Israel at Good Shepherd Lutheran on Sun., Sept. 10.

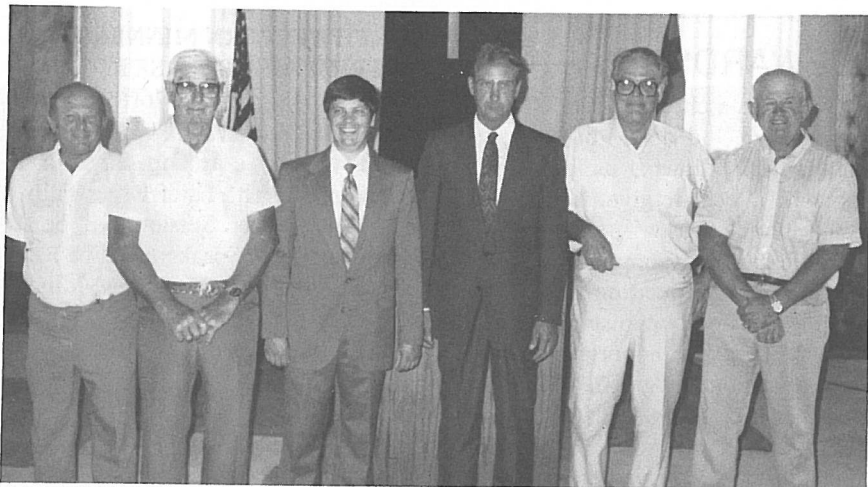
Eben Jct., Mich. — A commissioning service for Bill and Becky Erickson, missionaries to the People's Republic of the Congo, was held at Calvary Lutheran on Sun., Sept. 17, at 3 p.m. A coffee hour followed.

St. Paul, Minn. — Four Twin Cities area congregations sponsor a radio broadcast on Sunday mornings at 9:30 over radio station WTCN-AM (1220kc.). The rotation from first to fourth Sundays is King of Glory, Sunnyside, Victory in Christ and Minnesota Valley. Gifts for anniversaries, memorials, etc., are announced.

Minnewaukan, N. Dak. — The parsonage of Trinity Lutheran is being made ready for the arrival of the new pastor about Oct. 11. Rev. and Mrs. Philip Rokke and family will be arriving from Greenbush, Minn., at that time.



New Members received recently at Calvary Lutheran Church, Fosston, Minn. Pastor Robert Koepp is pictured at the left in the back row.



Wichita Falls, Tex. — Rev. Michael Crowell, third from left, was installed as pastor of Christ Lutheran Church on Sun., July 30, by Rev. Richard Snipstead, AFLC president, third from the right. Others pictured are council members of the congregation.



Stanley, N. Dak. A mortgage-burning ceremony was held at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Stanley, N. Dak., on Sun., May 7. Rev. Elden Nelson, left, Home Missions Director, was present and also brought the morning message. Also pictured are Reuben Fenner, council president, and Rev. Gary Jorgenson, right.

Districts will host Winter conference theme chosen

"Give Yourself Fully to the Work" (I Corinthians 15:58 and John 9:3-4) is the theme suggested for the 1990 AFLC Winter Bible Conferences. The Co-ordinating Committee, at their August 31-September 1 meeting, also decided to pass the planning for the conferences on to the districts, some of which already schedule their own sessions, so that there will no longer be official conferences sponsored through the national office. Districts will be encouraged to combine for regional Bible conferences when distance makes it possible.

STEWARDSHIP

God loves a cheerful giver" (RSV). Remember, God does not need the money. He is allowing us to share in His work. When we give willingly He promises to bless us.

There are many opportunities and needs in our Association today. The building of a new administration building is certainly an important one. As the Association has grown, so has the need for office space. Certainly, everyone is entitled to comfortable working conditions without being cramped and with adequate privacy. This includes the leadership of the Association.

We read in II Corinthians 8:11-12, "But now finish doing it also; that just as there was the readiness to desire it, so may be also the completion of it by your ability. For if the readiness is present it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have."

Let us finish the task of raising the money for a new administration building as the AFLC conference has desired according to God's will. Each of us must prayerfully consider our stewardship position and give "according to what a man has."

*The Stewardship Board
Pastor Roy Johnson, Chairman
Pastor Robert Lee
Dr. Wayne Sletten
Walter Peterson
Matt Myre*

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minn. 55441

Second-class

NORTHWESTERN MINNESOTA DISTRICT MEETING SET

A meeting of the Northwestern Minnesota District will be held next Sunday, Oct. 8, at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Thief River Falls, Del Palmer, pastor. Sessions will be at 3, 4:30 and 7:30. Speakers will be Pastor Martin Christensen, Badger, Minn., and Rev. R. Snipstead, AFLC president. All are welcome.

HOME COMING '89

October 13 - 15

AFLBS campus

Honoring
classes of '69, '74, '79, '84

WMF Fall Rallies

The Illinois District Women's Federation will hold their fall rally on Sat., Oct. 14. The women of Fox River Lutheran Church, rural Sheridan, will be hosting the rally.

The Northwestern Minnesota District WMF will meet on Sat., Oct. 14, at Alma Lutheran Church, rural Argyle, for their fall rally. Speakers will be Miss Judith Wold, Thief River Falls, Minn., and Pastor LeRoy Flickinger, Newfolden, Minn. Theme of the rally is "Be Ye Imitators of Christ" (Eph. 5:2).

Preaching Missions

Newfolden, Minn.

Bethania Lutheran Church
LeRoy Flickinger, pastor
Oct. 8-12

Speaker: Rev. Terry Wold

East Grand Forks, Minn.

Minneapolis, Minn.

Medicine Lake Lutheran Church
Laurel Udden, pastor
Oct. 22-26

Speaker: Rev. Lyndon Korhonen
Culbertson, Mont.

Lake Alma, Sask.

Faith Lutheran Church
Leslie Johnson, pastor
Nov. 5-9

Speaker: Mr. Olaf Friggstad
Frontier, Sask.

Hatton, N. Dak.

Under auspices of Zoar
Lutheran Church
Dale Finstrom, lay pastor
Oct. 15-18

Speaker: Lay Pastor Kenneth Thoreson, Beloit, Wis.

Minneapolis District Couples' Retreat

Nov. 10, 7 p.m. — Nov. 11, 8 p.m.

Association Retreat Center
Osceola, Wisc.

Speaker: Missionary John Abel

For pre-registration contact Brian Densmore, 1025 Burgess, St. Paul Minn. 55103 or the ARC.