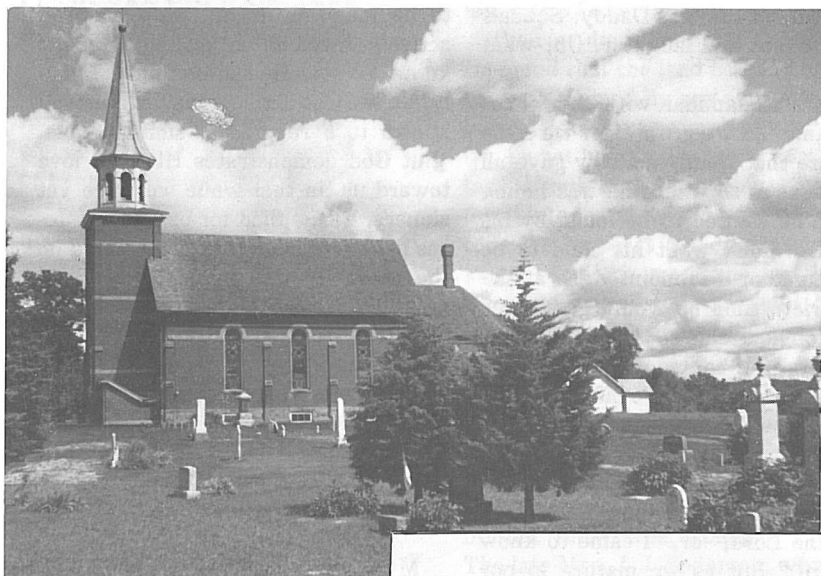


THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

October 4, 1988



The first church, built in 1877;
destroyed by fire in 1962.

**Faith Lutheran
of
Running Valley**

Colfax, Wisconsin

1863 - 1988



The new church, built in 1963.

LIGHT on the WAY

meditations on God's Word

Volume 26 Number 18

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Text: Isaiah 65:1-2.

Daddy, let's play hide-and-seek. I'll count — you go hide. (Daddy goes to hide.) 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-11-14-17-15-12-100. Here I come, ready or not."

"Where's Daddy?" (Mommy joins the search). "Is he behind the sofa?" "No." "Is he under the table?" "No." "Oh, oh, who whistled? I thought I heard a whistle." Everyone listens carefully. Sure enough, another whistle from the hall closet. Everyone runs. The door opens and out tumbles Daddy. Squeals of excitement and laughter. Oh, what fun!

We are all familiar with this childhood game. As we grow older we come to realize that Daddy actually gave all those clues as to where he was hiding because he wanted to be found by his child. He didn't want his child to be discouraged or disappointed, so at the appropriate time he would give some kind of obvious clue so that he could be found. And, of course, he was always careful afterward to give his little child much praise for searching so hard to find Daddy.

There is a sense in which God in His grace does the same. We often say, "I found the Lord," or, "I came to know the Lord." But as we mature in our Christian faith we, too, come to realize that God was seeking us long before we came to faith. Listen to what God says to the children of Israel. "I permitted Myself to be sought. I permitted Myself to be found." What a wondrous God, that He in His grace condescends to the condition of fallen man. He permits Himself to be found.

It is not in a passive way that God permits Himself to be found. He is actively involved in enabling and encouraging man as he seeks and finds God. In today's verse, God says, "I said, 'Here am I, here am I,' to a nation which did not call on My Name." This is the God of revelation. Like the daddy who whistled or called out to make his presence known, so God has been active in calling out to man and making His saving presence known. So intense is this desire that He even appeared in the form of flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. In Jesus we have the clearest revelation of God that is possible. Here

I found the Lord

God clearly shows Himself speaking and acting and reacting in the very same way as man. Yet He does so with this amazing difference; He speaks and acts and reacts, but without sin. To live like man is one thing. To live like man without sin is quite another. No wonder there were those who concluded, "Is not this the Christ?" "Is not this truly the Son of God, yes, even God Himself?"

So we have God permitting Himself to be found. Further, we have God actively involved in making Himself known so that He can be found. Finally, we see God actively making Himself known to a rebellious, sinful people. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." When Jesus lived without sin, and then died on the cross, it was immediately demonstrated that He died for someone else. Only He could do so. Being without sin as a man He could die for a sinner. Being God He could die for all sinners. He could die even for me. There at the cross I find Him, my Savior and Lord.

I traveled alone upon this
lonesome way.

My burdens were heavy and dark
was my day,
I looked for a friend, not knowing
that He
Had all of the time been looking
for me.

Now it is Jesus and me for
each tomorrow.

For every heartache and
every sorrow

I know that I can depend upon
my new-found Friend
And so till the end — it's Jesus
and me.



by Pastor
Ralph Tjelta

WHY DID JESUS WEEP?

When we see someone weep, especially a loved one, we wonder what has caused the tears and we have the urge to find out. It takes a hard-hearted person not to be touched by the flow of tears. We would like to do something to remedy the situation if we can. And if we are Christians, even though we have no solution to the problem in ourselves, we are ready to offer our sympathy and prayer support. The love we have in our hearts constrains us to respond in this way.

Romans 12:15b admonishes us to weep with those who weep. In this way we show that we care and give encouragement. To weep with the heavy-hearted is to share in their burdens and thus make the load lighter. The same is true in our relationship with Jesus.

However, it has been said that no one can really know why Jesus wept after the death of Lazarus and that at best we can only imagine why because the Bible does not definitely state the reason.

But there is much evidence within Scripture as to why He wept. It is a heavy heart that causes one to weep. The Bible clearly states what Jesus' deep concerns were. Surely it was those concerns that caused Jesus to be sad and to shed tears. We do not need a declarative statement to prove a fact if the evidence is there. This is also true regarding Scripture. For example, the Bible does not use the words *triune* or *Trinity* in describing God. Some refuse to believe in a triune God for this reason. However, the evidence which speaks of the three Persons Who make up the Godhead is overwhelming and cannot honestly be denied.

There is much about our Triune God, including Jesus, which the Bible does not tell us. John 21:25 tells us that books could not hold all there is to know. Nevertheless, God has revealed in His Word everything we need to know for the present time. Much truth can be gained by making a deeper, more profound study of Scripture with the Holy Spirit as our teacher. If there is something we need to know, God has promised to reveal it if we ask Him (James 1:5).

The true Christian, who loves Jesus, wants to know why Jesus wept and if He is still crying. Jesus' weeping would have a very limited meaning to us if we did not know or could not find out why He wept. And for this to be left to our imagination would be of little comfort or help. The Christian definitely has a deep yearning to know why Jesus wept, if for no other reason than to share in His concerns and to weep with Him.

**"It is a
heavy heart
that causes
one to weep."**



by Rev.
Gerald F. Mund from
Osceola, Wis.

Those who are agnostics and those who do not know Him personally may not be concerned about Jesus' weeping. It is not like a God of love, who promises wisdom to those who seek it, to keep hidden from the Christian the reason for Jesus' weeping. By searching the Scriptures we can find out.

Why did Jesus weep? We do not find the full answer in one, two or several Bible verses, or even in one, two or several portions of Scripture. We can best know the answer to this burning question by studying the entire life of Jesus and by knowing His purpose for coming to this world and the problems and frustrations He faced in fulfilling His purpose. It is important that we know why Jesus wept; however, the answers may not be quickly revealed to everyone. It may be that God would will to see a deep desire in us, because of our love for Him and our willingness to weep with Him, before revealing the answer as to why Jesus wept. Do we care enough to search the Scriptures for the answer?

Jesus had it good in heaven. Why would He ever want or consent to come into this sin-cursed world? It is because He loved man and longed to share heaven with its many blessings with him. This love and yearning were so great that He was willing to leave heaven and do whatever was needed, even to suffer and die, in order to save man from hell and make it possible for him to be in heaven (John 3:16).

But, then, upon visiting this earth, His great purpose and ambition for man was rejected. Jesus offered the very best to man, but man rejected the very best. Man had an interest in Jesus, but it was for the temporal and not the eternal. People clamored to Him for healing, for physical bread, and they hoped He would free them from Roman rule, but they gave Him only a limited opportunity to teach spiritual truth and often showed little interest in what He had to say. The people's great disappointment in Jesus in not giving them more of the temporal turned to bitter hate and resulted in His crucifixion.

Jesus wept because He was rejected by those He dearly loved. Jesus feared that His paying the great price of dying on the cross might be in vain because so few were interested in that which was spiritual and eternal. He said, "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14; see also 20:16). He also asked, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on earth?", which revealed His great disappointment in man's disinterest in what He, out of love, wanted to do for him.

“... many would apply the spirit of rejoicing to every situation ...”

There are at least two places in Scripture which definitely state that He did weep. John 11:35 says, “Jesus wept.” It is stated very emphatically. Those who divided the Scripture into verses evidently thought it to be so outstanding and of such importance that they counted it worthy of being a complete verse. Lazarus had died four days earlier. He was loved by friends and relatives who were weeping. We might wonder why Jesus did not enter this situation with rejoicing because He had the solution which would soon cause this group to rejoice. He could and would raise Lazarus from the dead.

This is how many are ministering today. They would apply the spirit of rejoicing to every situation, believing that rejoicing is the solution to every problem. But where there is weeping and heartache it only makes matters worse.

Jesus, Who is filled with compassion, meets those He loves where they are. He is most ready to weep with those who weep, thereby proving to them that He cares for and feels with them in their hurts.

But I believe there is still another, more

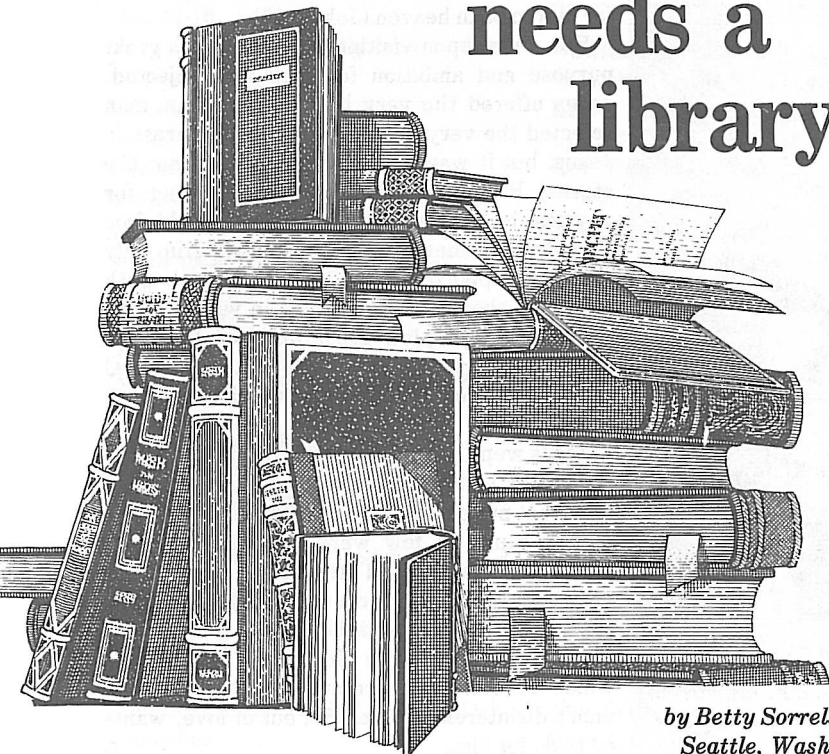
profound reason for Jesus’ weeping here. At this grave, as was the case so often, there were those who were critical of Jesus. “Why hadn’t He come sooner and prevented this death from taking place?” Very likely these people had seen or heard of the miracles Jesus performed. But that is as far as their faith or interest in Jesus went. Like the world, their interest pertained only to that which was physical and temporal.

Jesus wept for those who were so critical of Him. He loved them also and longed to save their souls, but because of their hard, critical hearts He could do nothing for them.

Luke 19:41 says, “And when He was come near, He beheld the city (Jerusalem) and wept over it.” This was on Palm Sunday. Everyone was rejoicing and singing praises to Jesus. One would think that this would have caused Jesus to rejoice also. But He wept instead. He wept because of the hardness of heart of the people in Jerusalem and it was they who had come out to meet Him.

Jesus knew the shallowness of these people’s hearts. He knew their real interest lay not in the spiritual but in the temporal. He had tried to

Every church needs a library



by Betty Sorrels
Seattle, Wash.

Part I

Every church needs a library,” wrote Bonnie Steffen in her article, “How to Raise a Reader,” in the Sept./Oct., 1987, *Christian Reader*. And she continued, “Don’t hide it in a box or closet — breath some life into it.”

At Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Kirkland, Washington, our embryo library isn’t in a closet. It is located in a visible area to the left of the narthex. The congregation has to pass the place before entering the sanctuary. We have a few books that are arranged in a sort of by-subject placement. However, we desire to make our library a viable unit of our church.

At this point you could be asking what kind of authority do I have that equips me to write about forming church libraries? I have none. I’ve decided, however, to share what research and procedures I’ve completed at this time in order that what I’ve found may help other AFLC churches to create libraries with life in them.

It has been several months since I began this research on how to plan, form, and maintain a church library. My local King County Library and the larger Seattle Library, to my surprise, had many books about church libraries and small libraries (See Bibliography).*

Most of the references I studied started with the question — why have a church library? In

teach them but they were not interested in what He had to teach. They didn't really know Jesus, although with their lips they sang praises to Him. It wasn't that they were not sincere. They were sincere in what they hoped to gain from Jesus, but what they wanted from Jesus was not what Jesus had come to give. In a very short time they would become extremely disappointed with Jesus and in anger would cry out for His crucifixion. Jesus who loved them, wept.

Jesus knew He would soon be crucified. Did this have anything to do with His weeping? I believe we can find the answer to this question when we observe what Jesus said to the weeping women who followed Him on the way to the cross. He said, "Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children" (Luke 23:27-28).

What Jesus said then can be construed as a statement also meant for us and for all mankind. Jesus admonished the women not to weep for Him. We can be assured that if He did not want others to weep for Him, neither was He filled with self-pity and weeping for Himself. Jesus gladly went the way of the cross for the good of mankind.

But also on Palm Sunday, Jesus' concern was

for those who were rejecting Him. It was for themselves that people like those women should have wept, because if they did not repent of sin and recognize Jesus as Savior from sin they faced a far more serious situation than Jesus was facing at the cross. They would be destined for hell, which would be far, far worse. It is when we realize what Jesus' main concern was in coming to this world and toward which He put His every effort and paid a great price, that we can realize why He wept. He wept for the lost, whom He dearly loved, but they refused to be saved.

Is Jesus still weeping? Has the cause of His weeping been remedied so that there is no longer any reason for Him to weep? We know it has not. Sins and unbelief and a love for the physical, material and all that is temporal still hold the main interest in the hearts of man.

Do we love Jesus? Do we love Him enough to weep with Him? Are we willing to make His concerns and burdens our concerns and burdens? Are we willing to let Jesus lay His burden on our hearts and let Him use us in bringing the lost to Himself?

Jesus does not want us to weep for Him but *with Him* for the souls of the lost.

**"Is Jesus
still
weeping?"**

Betty McMichael's book, *The Church Librarian's Handbook*, she writes that civilization has had libraries for a long time, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, which has been called, "The oldest religious library;" Paul considered books a necessary part of his ministry, for he told Timothy to bring him his books, especially the parchments (II Timothy 4:13); Bishop Alexander founded a church library in Jerusalem before A.D. 250; and in 1669 Dr. Thomas Bray proposed establishment of parochial libraries in all the English colonies in America, as well as in market towns of England, stating that, "It is the only knowledge which can conduct us safely through the *mazes and labyrinths* of this World to our Rest and Happiness in the other."

Keeping in mind that church libraries are not to be for storage purposes but for circulation in order to enhance our understanding of evangelism and spirituality, that premise should dictate the assemblage of books and materials in a library center for resources, learning and enjoyment. This concept suggests all sorts of ideas, such as a reference bank, helps and aids for Sunday School teachers, and materials for adults, youth and children of the congregation, either to be taken home or to be used right in the church library area.

No matter the size of your library, the books and materials should be arranged in such a way

on the shelves that the same subject themes are found together. With this directive in mind, George H. Bernard, in his book *How to Organize and Operate a Small Library*, suggests keeping in purpose that church libraries should provide: 1) books on leadership and program planning for church workers; 2) materials for youth worship services, parties, projects, clubs, and supplies for vacation Bible school, such as crafts and recreation helps; 3) books to help church members understand other cultures, religions and beliefs; 4) books of inspiration and books emphasizing moral and spiritual growth.

Betty McMichael recommends the following divisions for the church library. I am presenting them in inventory fashion in order to provide a checklist approach as you establish your library.

- 1) Bible helps — dictionaries, encyclopedias, Bibles in paraphrase
- 2) Concordances
- 3) Commentaries
- 4) Archeology or related Bible study
- 5) Bible studies — various types, including surveys, book-by-book studies, topical studies
- 6) Doctrinal studies
- 7) Denominational materials
- 8) Christian living and devotional books
- 9) Helps for establishing and maintaining a Christian home

**". . . church
libraries are
not to be
for storage
but for
circulation . . ."**

- 10) Christian witness and evangelism
- 11) Christian education and helps — Sunday School and vacation Bible school
- 12) Books for youth
- 13) Books for children
- 14) Mission books
- 15) Fiction
- 16) Others

Elmer Towns and Cyril J. Barber, in their book, *Successful Church Libraries*, support a few different subjects:

- 1) How to study the Bible
- 2) How to teach the Bible
- 3) Apocrypha
- 4) Apologetics — defense of Christianity
- 5) Missionary stories
- 6) People problems — youth, courtship, marriage
- 7) Being a church member — pastor, choir members, usher, deacon, staff teacher, educator
- 8) And I add church history — especially our Lutheranism

It is good to have these lists in hand, but how do they translate into forming and having an active library in your and my church? Let us start by using these lists to collect our desired books and materials. Here are some suggestions as to how this procedure could be accomplished: Contributions (except, Bonnie Steffen stresses that a church library should not be a dumping ground for out-dated magazines); group projects; memorial gifts; book shower parties; money donations; and/or special collections.

Who should steer the library project? Again, it is a matter of choice; perhaps a group, a committee, or a dedicated person. I believe that a committee would work the best. If your congregation should adopt the committee plan, besides the pastor and the adults, it must be represented by a member from the youth and children.

What functions could the committee be held responsible for? This selected group should be visible and active in setting up the library in conception, and in collecting and arranging a useful library for every member of the congregation's utilization.

After the location of the library has been determined, the committee then must concern itself with the books that should be accepted.

Elmer Towns and Cyril J. Barber have suggested that a checklist should be used for the determination. From their book, *Successful Church Libraries*, I quote their guidelines:

- 1) Is the book true to Biblical ideals and doctrines?
- 2) Is the price of the book in balance with your library budget, or would its purchase prohibit the buying of other needed books or materials?

3) Is the subject matter fairly discussed, or is the author decidedly biased?

4) Is the material covered factual, accurate, reliable and up-to-date?

5) Will the book appeal to the age or interest group for whom it is written?

6) Is the style of the book attractive?

7) Is the physical makeup of the book satisfactory?

8) Do the illustrations complement the text and give it instructional value?

9) Have the author and publisher established good reputations for books in the field?

10) Has the book been included in recent book lists, or has it been reviewed in contemporary periodicals?

Katha M. Tjelta (Director of Parish Education — AFLC, Minneapolis) in her December, 1987, letter to me answering my inquiry for guidelines for the choices of books and materials for AFLC church libraries wrote: "Perhaps we need to look at the issue of books/literature selections with these two questions in mind: 1) Which philosophies and doctrines should we avoid in the books we read? 2) Which philosophies, doctrines and issues do we want included in the books we read?"

When the time comes to purchase books, the library committee will want to check with local Christian book stores, read book reviews, and attend workshops. In July of this year, at the Lutheran Bible Institute (Issaquah, Washington), the Pacific Northwest Association of Libraries (P.O. Box 12379, Seattle, Wash. 98111) presented a three-day workshop with the theme "Setting the Course." Besides the classes, there were exhibits and displays from bookstores. Perhaps there is a similar program in your area.

After the book and material collection and determination has been agreed upon, the collection needs to be put into the library. How? George H. Bernard, *How to Operate a Small Library*, suggests that they should be arranged in such a manner that readers or users can easily locate what they are looking for. Small libraries may find the *Abridged Dewey Decimal Classification and Relative Index* handy, although homemade arrangements can be used.

The Dewey Decimal Classification System was first developed by Melvin Dewey in 1873. The basic idea behind his system is to analyze knowledge from a human point of view (Elmer Towns and Cyril J. Barber).

Material assigned to 200 RELIGION answers the universal question — Who made us?

(To be continued)

*The bibliography will be given after the second and final installment.

"... the committee ... must concern itself with what books should be accepted."

For 125 years the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been proclaimed through Faith Lutheran Church of Running Valley, rural Colfax, Wis. The congregation hasn't always been known by that name, but it traces its history back to Running Valley Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, which was organized in 1863 and incorporated two years later.

The congregation was split in 1901 in the controversy in the United Church (Forenede Kirke) surrounding Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis. A portion of the church withdrew and organized North Running Valley Lutheran Church. Running Valley remained true to Augsburg and was a charter member of the Lutheran Free Church, organized in 1897.

It took part in yet another venture of faith when it cast its lot with the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations at the time of the merger of the LFC and the American Lutheran Church in 1963. Later that year the church's name was changed to Faith Lutheran of Running Valley.

The old brick church, built in 1877, was destroyed by fire in 1962 after being struck by lightning. A new church was erected in 1963 and dedicated on Sept. 29. The altar painting, now hanging above the stairs to the church parlors, was one of the things saved from the burning church.

Faith Lutheran Church Colfax, Wisconsin

125 years of work for God

These pastors have served Faith Lutheran of Running Valley: L. H. Norem, 1863-65; Amon Johnson, 1865-70; C. J. Helsem, 1870-75; J. H. Grotheim, 1876-80; N. E. Wikre, 1881-94; E. Berntsen, 1895-1902; Nils Halvorsen, 1903-11; J. M. Mikaelson, 1911-18; L. R. Lund, 1918-21; Carl Amundson, 1921-23; Ingel Hovland, 1927-34; Alfred Knutson, 1934-38; Iver Olson, 1939-44; Peter A. Strommen, 1945-46; G. A. Almquist, 1946-54; Elnar Gundale, 1954-63; Alan Hendrickson, student, 1963-66; Connelly Dyrud, student, 1966-72; Philip Featherstone, 1972-78; Gilbert Schroeder, student, 1978; Hubert DeBoer, 1978-86; and Mark Bateson, 1986--.

Three daughters of the congregation married pastors or missionaries. They are Claudina Evenson (Mrs. O. A.) Aasen, Ovedie Evenson (Mrs. Amos O.) Dyrud, and Laurie Dietsche (Mrs. Paul) Nash. Evon Flesberg is a pastor

in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at Waverly, Ia.

The 125th anniversary celebration was held Aug. 12-14. Rev. Hubert DeBoer, Dilworth, Minn., spoke on Friday evening. On Saturday night Rev. Philip Featherstone, Pukwana, S. Dak., brought the message. Rev. Richard Snipstead, president of the AFLC, preached the sermon on Sunday morning. In the afternoon there was a confirmation reunion. Four confirmands and former pastors brought greetings. Special musical numbers were presented at all the services. Rev. Mark Bateson is the present pastor of Faith Lutheran.

The anniversary committee consisted of James Peterson, Wilhelm and Emma Everson, Eldor and Gladys Sorkness, Judy Horn, Gertrude Sparby, Dagny Peterson, Swanhild Rasmussen and Pastor Bateson.

**size not
the most
important**

When a church gets too big, it turns into a kind of religious factory which deals with humanity in the bulk rather than with persons. Our worship of size in the Church has not proved to be wise. The work of the Kingdom is done where the Christian fellowship exists and where personal relationships bind the members to one another and to God. The Church can never speak for its Lord if it speaks for social reform in general but has no precise word for the man with a broken heart or for the woman with a broken dream.

Gerald Kennedy
(Who Speaks for God?)

Questions on creation and evolution

by Craig Gray
DeKalb, Ill.

(This article, in several parts, was written as a class assignment in a class called Creationism at Association Free Lutheran Bible School in the winter quarter last year.)

What are the types of approaches one should avoid? I believe there are at least two of these "problem" approaches. Use of these could be hazardous to your reputation. They are:

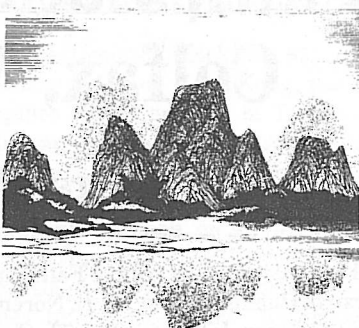
1) Do not use ridicule or "comedy" type approaches. Don't put the evolutionist down sarcastically even though you see the theory as "a bunch of baloney." Don't draw Charles Darwin as half man and half ape. This may be funny, but in the past many good creationists have been discredited this way. Perhaps it is acceptable in private circles but definitely not in the public.

2) Do not say anything to the effect of "I'm right — you're wrong!" This kind of thing only leads to an argument with no end. If you refuse to see his side of the story, he will, unfortunately, refuse to see yours. Good use of the "Yes, but" reply can be effective instead.

What does the Bible say? To begin with, we must accept the fact that the Bible is the inerrant, uncontradicting, holy Word of God. The Bible is the authority and the Bible is creation. At least three things can be seen in the sacred pages of the Bible. They are:

1) Creation is *good*. There is no doubt in the Bible of who did the creating. It was *God*. Since God created it, it has to be good. As the saying goes: "God does not make junk." We see the saying, "It was good" six times in Genesis 1. Once we see, "It was very good." But since God was creating, we know it was perfect, just as He is perfect.

2) Creation is *finished*. There is no evidence of evolution in the world today. There can't be. God finished His



head for the mountains

**Luther League
Convention**

**July 17-21, 1989
Vernon, British Columbia**

work in, I believe, six 24-hour days. Consider these verses: Gen. 2:1-3 — "Thus the heavens and the earth were *finished*... on the seventh day God *ended* His work." Ex. 20:11 — "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and *all that in them is*..." Ps. 33:6, 9 — "For He spake and it was *done*; He commanded, and it *stood fast*." Heb. 4:3 — "The works were finished from the foundation of the world."

3) Creation is necessary for salvation. This is how I see it: If evolution is true there is no God. If there is no God, He cannot have a son. If there is no Son (Christ), there is no salvation (Jn. 1:1-3). Since this is true, I believe there is no such thing as a Christian evolutionist. Also, there is no such thing as "Theistic Evolution." If you don't accept God's Word about creation, how can you accept that Christ died for your salvation? There are two groups: creationists and evolutionists. I see no "middle ground." It is as the difference between saved and unsaved people.

(To be concluded next time and a bibliography will be supplied.)

SEEKING

Trying too hard
Can be as bad
As not trying hard enough;
It makes us sad.

Life isn't always easy,
But there is good reason;
God has a time for each purpose,
A time for every season.

It teaches us faith
And makes us love,
The gift from God
Who stands above.

The way isn't always easy,
But we find one day
Our new faith and patience,
Will stand fast and stay.

All things are possible,
We may this day doubt;
Don't give up hope;
Our hearts will yet shout!

We grow as grass,
We don't quite see,
But the facts are there,
The truth does set free.

Sometimes it's so hard,
We just sit and cry;
God's yoke is easy,
We will one day fly.

It is His promise,
To inherit the glory.
It is His word,
The Bible's true story.

It's in a mystery,
But it's all there:
God's greatest love
Is to share.

Take it from me,
I know this, I see;
I could never have made it:
His grace has saved me.

Carter Bosch
Bismarck, N. Dak.

EDITORIALS

WORK LAID DOWN

Last time, in his report on the Wilderness Bible Camp, Lyle Narveson noted the fact that our congregation in Granite Falls, Minn., Faith Lutheran, had disbanded.

Faith Lutheran had a history of some 23 years. It had a fine church building and was located in a city of around 3500, but never experienced the growth that had been hoped. At times it showed promise numerically but the work was a struggle.

It isn't easy to have a dream die. One of the hardest things in life is to have to close a church, to lay down the organized life of a congregation, to leave a church building standing empty, where once hymns rang out, the Word was preached and people assembled. No, it isn't easy.

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations has a number of congregations which will not see the year 2000, if the Lord tarries. They are dying churches. Not spiritually, we trust, but the numbers aren't there and in some cases, cannot be, because of the demographics which exist, barring miracles which one has no reason to hope for at the present.

This writer serves one such congregation, an independent Lutheran church supporting the AFLC. The congregation will keep on, but we go from year to year.

Most church closings will occur in rural area churches, but they can happen in urban settings as well. Our congregation in Cleveland, O., had to discontinue. Faith Lutheran and Rosedale Lutheran in Minneapolis had to merge, retaining the name Faith in the Rosedale building. Work in Spokane, Wash., and Duluth, Minn., came to an end, although in both places new work has since started again.

The Dakotas especially face declining rural population and this makes it hard for some congregations. At issue are the matters of economics, what is needed to keep a work going and wise stewardship of pastoral services.

AFLC congregations will hold out as long as possible. We're sure of that. In the end, the decision of the people involved will be final. Where Home Mission money is involved, the Committee will have something to say, too.

We lament the decreasing rural population. It is sad to see empty farmsteads. There is a melancholy in coming to a town that has lost businesses and homes because there

aren't as many people anymore. We wish the calendar could be turned back, in this respect, to 40-50 years ago, but we don't know how to do it.

WHAT WASN'T SAID

Not long ago a popular radio speaker and writer made a statement to the effect, "I have never been sorry for something I didn't say, but I have been for things I have said" (emphasis ours).

Surely the speaker didn't mean quite that. It was certainly only a partial truth, although he didn't correct himself in that particular program.

Who can say that he has never failed to say something that should have been said, perhaps that he alone could have said at a particular moment? It seems that the omissions, for that is what they are, come in several categories.

First, there is the word of defense for what is right. Truth is being mocked, evil is defended, a good name is besmirched, by an individual or group and there is no word spoken in opposition. What Christian hasn't felt remorse for having maintained silence when he might have said something.

Second, there is the word of appreciation and encouragement. Someone has provided a service. Was a thank you said? Someone is developing a talent, has accomplished something of note or is struggling in a hard situation. Has a word of encouragement been spoken to help that person keep at it?

Third, there is the word of advice and direction. Unasked for advice may be poorly received. Much depends on how it is offered and the relationship between persons. There are times when advice and direction must be given. If it is spoken in loving concern it must be said and then prayed over. Have there been times when one has failed to speak the directing word?

The reader will think of other kinds of words which ought to be said and perhaps haven't been spoken in due season. Yes, certainly, every Christian has reason to be sorry for *not having said* something. It is good to know, then, that this sin, too, can be forgiven. And then there is the need to grow in daily perception of how one may use his mind and voice to better serve God's purposes in our world.

SOMETHING WAS SAVED

After the Chicago fire three business men were looking at the ruins of their business. Said one of them: "Well, I thank God I put some of my money where it could not burn." The other two looked at him in surprise. "Where had you put your money?" The answer was: "In missions."

Helps... for the Pastor

ASSOCIATION OF FREE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences Feb. 1 - Aug. 31

FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	REC'D IN AUGUST	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL*
GENERAL FUND.....	\$ 178,997.00	\$ 14,284.25	\$ 97,160.78	54
SCHOOLS - (AFLTS)	99,367.00	7,118.81	44,560.52	45
(AFLBS)	156,150.00	7,636.49	60,866.65	39
HOME MISSIONS.....	317,850.00	14,087.37	114,778.81	36
WORLD MISSIONS	280,140.00	14,562.74	103,174.05	37
CAPITAL INVESTMENT	25,000.00	2,281.16	12,303.67	49
TOTALS	\$1,057,504.00	\$ 59,970.82	\$432,844.48	41
1986-87 -	\$1,014,894.00	\$ 45,973.55	\$410,812.85	40

*GOAL 58%

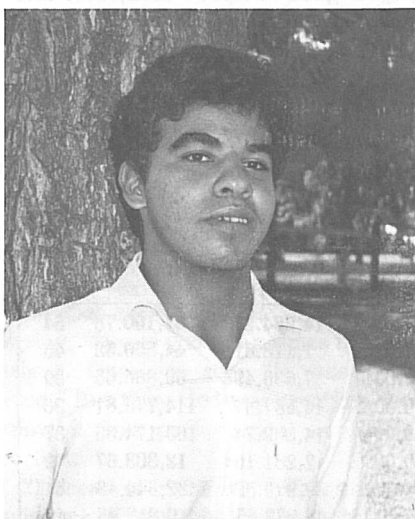
He is with me always

My name is Gilberto Costa da Cruz. I am 19 years old. I was born in Santo Rei, Parana. My family is Christian and I grew up in the fear of God. When I was seven years old my parents moved to Rondonia, a new state opening up, where we are still living.

I was converted in December of 1986, when I gave my life to Jesus. He has delivered me from many dangers and bad situations I would have gotten into if I had continued in my former way of living. Now the Lord Jesus helps me in all things and He is with me always.

At the beginning of this year I came back to the state in which I was born to study at the Bible School (Escola Biblica Luterana Livre). My goal is to grow in my spiritual life and show others my faith in Jesus Christ the Savior, who died for our sins and now lives to guide us.

I am very happy to be here at the Bible School, where I have met other Christian young people who help me in my spiritual growth, and where teachers are very good. I would like to be a lay worker in the church, as God calls and equips me. I am waiting on Jesus because I am certain He will do as He has said, "Commit your way to the Lord; trust in Him, and He will act," Psalm 37:5. This is my desire. I ask for your prayers.



Gilberto Costa da Cruz

Missionary Lenorah Erickson dies

a family tribute

Miss Lenorah Erickson, 81, a missionary in China, Hong Kong, the Philippines and principally in Taiwan, for 30 years, passed away on August 26 in the Roseau (Minn.) Area Hospital.

Her funeral was held at Moe Lutheran Church, Roseau, on August 30, with Rev. Erling Huglen officiating. Among greetings brought at her funeral were ones by a niece, Mrs. Gerald Berg (printed on this page), Mrs. Jerome Elness, once a co-worker in Hong Kong, and Clara Jones, also a fellow missionary. Special music was sung by Mr. and Mrs. Leland Melby. One of the audience hymns used was "O Zion, Haste, Thy Mission High Fulfilling." Burial was in the Moe-Rose cemetery.

Lenorah Erickson was born Dec. 8, 1906, in Turtle Lake, N. Dak., the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sigvart Erickson. The family lived in Osakis, Minn., and moved to the Ross, Minn., area in 1917, where she grew up. She taught school in Roseau County for ten years and attended the Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis, Minn., before entering her mission work under the Lutheran Free Church in 1940. She retired in Roseau in 1973.

She is survived by two brothers, George, Roseau, and Orville, Albert Lea, Minn.; a sister, Mildred Thinglestad, Roseau; and several nieces and nephews.

Blessed be her memory.

(Missions was Lenorah's life. Only God knows the extent of her influence in promoting the Gospel outreach to the uttermost parts of the world. Her funeral service was a stirring tribute to her dedication to the Lord's work and above all to her God. — Ed.)

PAUL ABEL FAMILY TO COME ON FURLOUGH

Missionaries Paul and Becky Abel and children have been approved for a short-term furlough in coming December through August, 1989.

Consultations concerning possible deputation visits by the Abels in AFLC congregations should be made through the Mission Office in Minneapolis.

On behalf of Lenorah's sister, Mildred, her brothers, Orville and George, her many nieces and nephews, cousins, and all their families, we want to thank you for coming here today to pay tribute to a very special lady whom we all loved very much.

Although Lenorah had no sons or daughters, she had a large family, all over America and in many other countries. She loved people and her family was very dear to her. She was especially close to children. She always remembered them at their birthdays and all other celebrations. Even my three sons had hugs and kisses for her when they didn't even hug their mom and dad any anymore.

She also loved her work. She was the best example I know of someone responding to the Great Commission that Jesus commanded His disciples in the Gospels: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

She loved the mission field and the Chinese. And although she must have been homesick or lonesome and discouraged at times, she never complained. I remember many times when I was young she would say, "Maybe you'll come with me to China when you get older and be a missionary." She always made it sound so wonderful. The stories she told and the objects she brought back with her made missionary work very special to us.

Lenorah was a real inspiration to all of us and I know if she had one wish, her prayer would be that we, too, would be missionaries right where we are and that through us many others might know Jesus as their Lord and Savior and want to serve Him as she did so faithfully.

— From remarks given at the funeral service by Mrs. Gerald (Linda) Berg, Greenbush, Minn., a niece. Mrs. Berg is a member of United Lutheran, AFLC.

11. A. Explain the meaning of "beautiful feet!" Isaiah 52:7

B. What should be our prize garments? Isaiah 61:10

C. What does God want your life to be in His hand? Isaiah 62:3

12. What will make us more attractive? Psalm 147:1

*"Let the beauty of the Lord
be upon us."*

— Psalm 90:17

Personal Application:

1. Is there someone you are unwilling to forgive? If you are a Christian and have received God's forgiveness by personal faith in Christ, consider all the charges against you that He has forgiven. Out of love for your Savior, *you* make the first step to mend that broken relationship — for *His* sake, and yours.
2. Instead of letting your mind dwell on your problems and injustices, discipline yourself to think about goodness and beauty of the Lord (such passages as Lamentations 3:22-26, Psalms, etc.) A new uplook will give a new outlook!
3. Have you checked your face lately? The best way to improve your "face value" is to wear a *smile*! Make it a habit.
4. Be positive, not negative. Look for lessons instead of problems. Look for strengths instead of weaknesses. Express praise instead of criticism.

(Last in a series.)

FROM BITTERNESS TO BEAUTY

If it were up to you, which would you choose: a beautiful body or a beautiful spirit? I think we'd all have to agree that there's nothing more unattractive or repulsive than a bitter, hard-hearted woman, regardless of outward looks.

THE TRUTH ABOUT BITTERNESS

"Guilt and bitterness are two poisons that God never intended us to carry. If we harbor them, they will destroy us physically, mentally, or spiritually." (— Bill Gothard)

1. A. What attitudes describe or accompany bitterness? James 3:14

B. Where does this kind of thinking come from? v. 15

C. What are its results? v. 16

2. Most people would probably never admit to being bitter, but in what ways does it show itself? Heed these warnings:

A. Jealousy: Proverbs 14:30

B. Negative outlook: Proverbs 11:27

C. Resentment and depression: Lamentations 3:19-20

D. Revenge: Leviticus 19:18

E. Faultfinding: Matthew 7:3-5

F. Unforgiving spirit: Matthew 6:15

Along with this list, we should also mention *perfectionism*. People with this problem, even Christians, are bound by guilt and condemnation because they feel they're never good enough to please God. So they over-emphasize external rules and become critical and legalistic, even though they are overly-sensitive themselves because of low self-esteem. They soon become bitter about it all.

3. A. What has the person with a root of bitterness failed to accept and practice? Hebrews 12:15

B. What is grace? Ephesians 2:8-9

C. Why does daily receiving and living by grace make all the difference in our attitudes?

D. What must Christians be careful of? Galatians 5:1

GOD'S TRANSFORMING PROCESS

4. Denying bitterness will not take it away. We must begin by being honest: Hosea 5:15

5. Whether our bitterness is from blaming God for our problems or resenting our looks or someone who has wronged us, we need to repent of our selfish response and instead, by faith, view our irritations as *God's tools* to work His ultimate objectives in us:

A. Genesis 50:20-21

B. Romans 8:28-29

6. What is the only way to be free from bitterness toward someone? Colossians 3:13

7. Sometimes God sacrifices outward beauty to develop inward character. Explain II Corinthians 4:16-17 in your own words.

8. Since love is the ultimate goal and beauty of the Christian life, what three things are necessary for it to overflow? I Timothy 1:5

(1)

(2)

(3)

THE TRUTH ABOUT BEAUTY

9. A. I Peter 3:3-4 clearly emphasizes the meaning of true beauty:

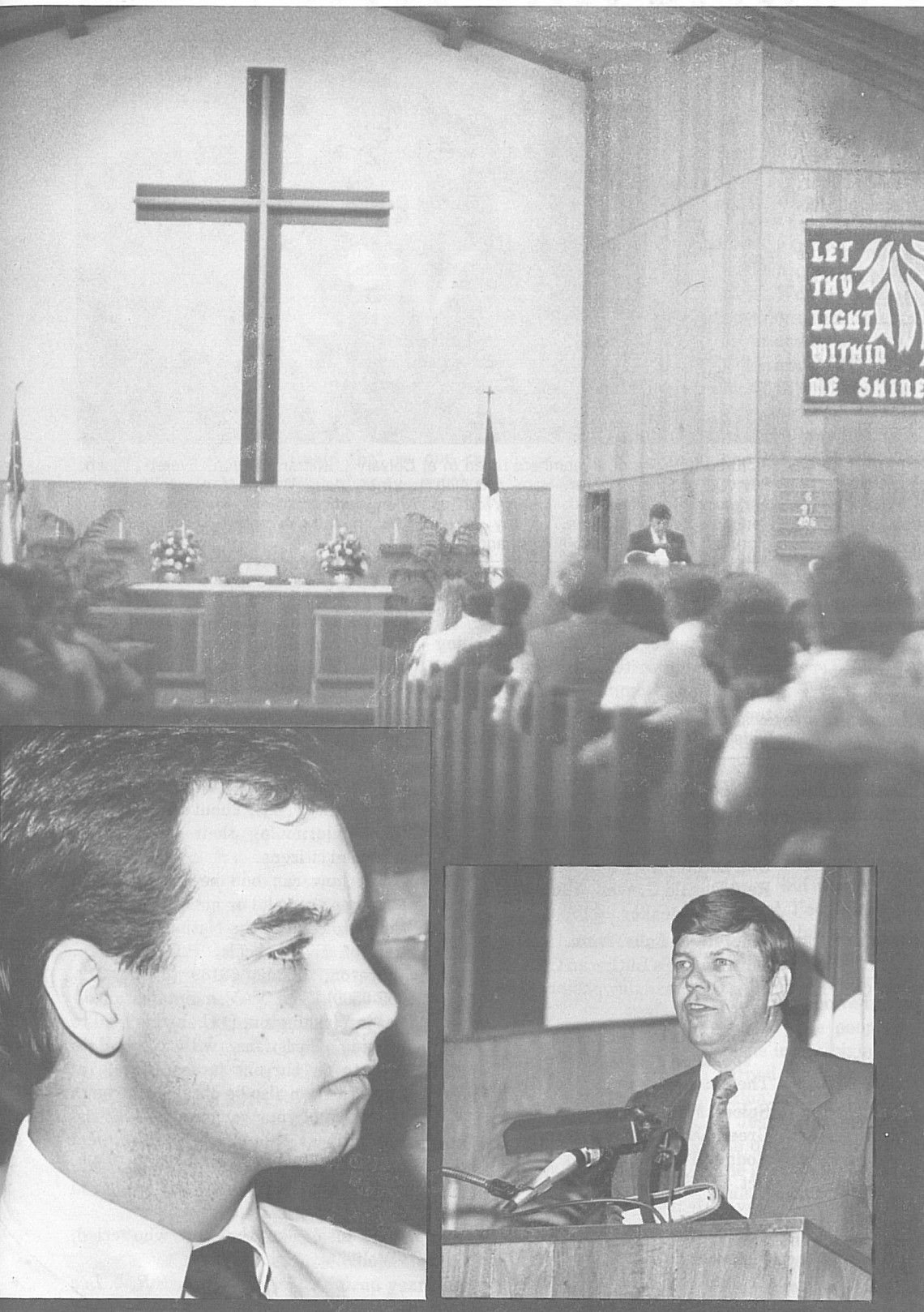
B. What example do we have of holy women in the past? v. 5

10. Proverbs also vividly portrays the surpassing value of attitudes above looks:

A. Proverbs 11:22

B. Proverbs 31:30

CAMPUS NEWS



On September 11, 1988, sixty-four juniors experienced exciting and perhaps somewhat bewildering emotions.

Bible school had finally begun! It was time to learn about . . . roommates, Isaiah, jobs in the city, the Gospel of John, goodbyes to family, Christian Education, different cooking, friends from other nations, Bible Doctrine, personal time management, . . . all adding up to spiritual, social and emotional growth.

For the other thirty-five students on campus . . . well, they have been through this and they came back for more.

S. Hjermsstad

Junior Kyle Skatvedt, Radcliffe, Iowa, listened while Dean Donald Greven opened the AFLBS school year on Sept. 11.

NEWS OF THE CHURCHES

Bismarck, N. Dak.

A farewell fellowship dinner was held July 31 for Pastor and Mrs. Einar Unseth, who started Calvary Lutheran Church in Bismarck, N. Dak., ten years ago. Later in the afternoon a community open house was held and a program presented in their honor. Their labor of love in Bismarck has brought to life Gal. 6:9: "And let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart." — *Connie Johnson, Corr.*

Preaching missions

Walhalla, N. Dak.

Aspelund Free Lutheran Church
Lyle Aadahl, pastor

Oct. 9-13

Rev. Gerald F. Mundfrom, Osceola, Wis., speaker

Williston, N. Dak.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church
Jon Wellumson, pastor

Oct. 9-12

Rev. David Barnhart, Eagan, Minn., speaker

Bagley, Minn.

Grace Lutheran Church
Lyle Twite, lay pastor

Oct. 12-15

Rev. J. G. Erickson, Plymouth, Minn., speaker

Vernon, B.C.

Living Word Lutheran Church
Gerald Gettis, pastor

Oct. 16-20

Rev. David Barnhart, speaker

Minneapolis, Minn.

Medicine Lake Lutheran Church
Laurel Udden, pastor

Oct. 16-20

Mr. Olaf Friggstad, Frontier, Sask., speaker

Eden Prairie, Minn.

King of Glory Lutheran Church
Leslie Galland, pastor

Oct. 23-26

Rev. David Barnhart, speaker

Greenbush, Minn.

United Lutheran Church
Philip Rokke, pastor

Oct. 23-26

Rev. Joel Rolf, Devils Lake, N. Dak., speaker

Everett, Wash.



Pictured here are new members taken in at Calvary Lutheran Church, Everett, Wash., Rev. Del Palmer, pastor. Back row, left to right, Jana Wolff, Mary Wolff, Evelyn Anderson, Ramona Wolff, Justin Wolff and Allen Wolff; front row, Rosie Rubble, Mary Perkins, Kathy Holloran, Tiffany Jellinek, Susan Jellinek and Ethel Moody. Not pictured: Forest Wolff, Bill Wolff and Harrison Wolff.

CRYING "WOLF" AGAIN

Reports have been received that AFLC congregations are again being requested to write to the Federal Communications Commission in Washington, D.C., concerning Petition #2493. This petition allegedly deals with the

efforts of the notorious atheist, Madelyn Murray O'Hair, to remove all religious broadcasting from radio and television. The truth is that Petition #2493 was unanimously rejected by the F.C.C. on August 5, 1975, and Mrs. O'Hair was not even the petitioner.

Yet the sad fact is that Christians have continued to send millions of letters to the F.C.C. about this petition, thus undermining their influence as informed citizens.

But how can one be sure if these petitions are valid or not? One suggestion is to contact the National Association of Evangelicals, P.O. Box 28, Wheaton, Illinois 60189 (phone 312-665-0500). The NAE maintains an office in Washington, D.C., and is glad to provide Christians with up-to-date reports on current issues there. Information can also be obtained through the office of your congressmen. Christian citizens should be *involved*, and our voice needs to be heard in Washington. But Christian citizens also need to be *informed*.

Or else, like the boy who cried, "Wolf!" . . .

R. L. Lee

Unless your money is on the altar
it is not likely that your heart is there.

Personalities

Rev. Richard Long, formerly of Marietta, Ga., has accepted the call to Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Chillicothe, Ill., and has begun his ministry there. He is on the Fellowship Clergy Roster of the AFLC.

NEXT INSTALLMENT

The next installment in Ceta Rude's series "Serving the Lord" will be found in our next issue, October 20. Look for it.

The Editor

LUTHERAN HOUR SPEAKER ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

ST. LOUIS, MO. — Dr. Oswald Hoffman has announced his intention to retire as Lutheran Hour speaker at the end of this year. A replacement speaker has not yet been named.

"My last broadcast will be on Christmas Day," Hoffman said, "exactly 75 years after the day I was baptized. . . . The broadcast will be from mainland China, and as far as I know, that will be the first religious broadcast that has originated from mainland China since World War II."

In announcing his retirement, Hoffman said: "I wish for . . . those who help to support the Lutheran Hour that they will continue to make their resources available, so that The Lutheran Hour will continue to reach out to people all over the world and tell them the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Hoffman has been Lutheran Hour speaker since 1955. His messages are heard over more than 1,200 radio stations throughout North America. They are also broadcast over more than 600 stations in more than 30 other English-speaking countries around the world.

Christ will help you,
not when you are as good
as you ought to be, but
when you neither are
good and holy nor can be
good and holy. When you
are weak, Christ is
mighty to save.

—C.O. Rosenius

Excursion into the Dakotas

by *Raynard Huglen*
Editor

One of the family stories which I heard in childhood was of a brief homesteading venture made by one of Mother's older brothers to a faraway place called Ludlow, S. Dak. He went out there with two brothers from his neighborhood and perhaps several other young men. They shipped their belongings in a boxcar. Uncle Sam had one cow, for instance, given to him by his father.

The cow died. Sam didn't stay long. He found that the land he had hoped to get was claimed by someone else. The barren prairie was completely different from what he was used to in northwestern Minnesota. That may have entered into his decision to return home, too. The brothers stayed considerably longer, but one was shot and killed. The shooting seemed accidental, but to this day some doubt lingers as to whether it was. The other brother came back east to live. They had been out west about two years.

Then some years ago I learned of a brief attempt by the Lutheran Free Church to plant a congregation or two in that same area, Harding County. The late Mrs. J. J. Pedersen, who once lived out from Badger and Greenbush, Minn., told me something about it. By 1914 the one congregation, Box Elder, at least, had to discontinue because too many people had moved out.

Anyway, I wanted to drive out to Harding County to see what I could see and also see some places new to me in North Dakota, and some old.

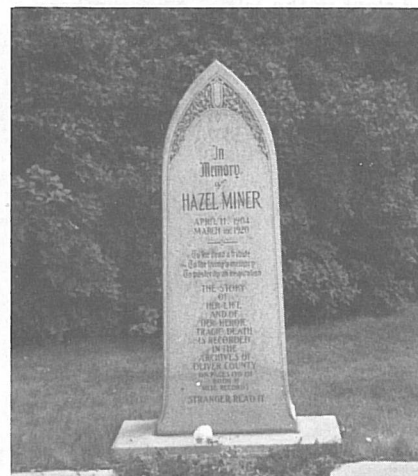
On August 1, driving across North Dakota, there were some light rains. Any rain was welcome there this past summer, as you know. A good many lizards were to be seen on the highways, brought out by the rain. It reminded me of one year when I was shocking grain on a North Dakota farm and on a particular day after rain there were considerable lizards to be found under the bundles lying on the ground. As I drove I wondered why the lizards, some of God's least lovely creatures, were always crossing the road. Why didn't some of them get confused and start crawling down the road?

At Washburn, on the banks of the Missouri, I made inquiry about a monument in honor of Hazel Minor over by Center, across the river, about 25 miles away. Hazel was a 15-year-old girl who lay down over a younger brother and sister during a blizzard as they were on their way home from country school. Her selfless act saved their lives but she perished. The year was 1920.

To my surprise, several I talked to in Washburn didn't seem to have heard of Hazel Miner. One lady had but couldn't give specific information as to where I could find the monument. Again it was proved that just because people live near something of historic importance doesn't necessarily mean that they know about it. The monument, I found out later, is in the town of Center and I got to see it.

From Washburn and on, a new area to me, I saw six giant power generating plants, coal-powered. Some of our readers have toured one or more of these plants, something I didn't have time to do. Beulah and Hazen were impressive-looking small cities and showed influence from the coal and power industries.

I had to swing into Zap, where in 1969 a great host of college students flooded the town in a "Zip to Zap." The National Guard had to be called in to keep order. I found Zap more of a town than I had been led to believe from newspaper reports 19 years ago. But, nevertheless, no small town would en-



The monument to Hazel Minor

DAKOTAS

joy an unwanted invasion as happened in 1969.

Another town along Highway No. 200 is Golden Valley. My fourth grade teacher, Miss Larson, came from there.

My destination for the night was Killdeer, a pleasant county seat town (Dunn County). My motel was appropriately named "Mountain View," for the Killdeer Mountains lie to the northwest.

The next day, Tuesday, I met a man in Belfield who has the same surname as I do, although he spells it with an extra "e." It was the second time I had met a man in the U.S. with the same name as I outside of our immediate family. Interestingly, both men were named Harold. This one runs a large restaurant on Interstate 94 in Belfield.

Not having been in Medora for some years, I noticed great development towards the tourist industry. There seemed to be unlimited motel rooms available for the traveller. I toured again the Chateau de Mores on the west edge of town. A unique place, the chateau was built for a French nobleman and his wife, who used it as a summer home for a few years.

From there I drove southeast of town to the Lutheran Bible Camp, now called Badlands Ministries. I had been there overnight in 1949 when I had driven a group of young people there from Reeder, N. Dak., where I was teaching parochial school for my brother-in-law, Rev. Elmo Agrimson. New buildings have been erected since then, including a boys' dormitory. In 1949 we had slept in the loft of a nearby barn, which was still there.

The camp family was finishing a meal as I came into the main lodge. I talked

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

Second-class

for a while with a pastor who was there for the week. As the campers got into a singalong, he and I moved to the east side of the room. As we continued our conversation, I glanced at a poster to my left. It was a poster announcing the two camp weeks in 1949. I could hardly believe my eyes. I don't recall there being any other posters around. There were the names I remembered, Ellickson, Ellefson, Olsrud, Haaland, Grefthen, Borg-Breen, as well as Agrimson.

Back to Medora, then Beach, and south to Golva. My Uncle Adolph had taught school there in the 1920s for a year. The school is still there, but with a large addition. The town is small but the high school often graduates a dozen or so students. That surprised me because there didn't seem to be the population around for that. Golva has an unusually large town hall (for its size) where the school basketball games are also played.

My course now lay almost due south, destination Marmarth. I knew this would be an unusual drive and it was. Some maps show a road between the two towns, some don't. Five miles out of town the main road turns west to Carlyle, Mont. While the Marmarth road is usually a narrow grade, there are places where it is only a scrape on the prairie. I forded three creeks, two of which were dry. The road traverses a wild and lonely land. For 25 miles I saw no person or animal, although I saw three corrals with loading chutes,

indicating that cattle are run in that area. The road went through some badlands country and wound in and out among those formations and arroyos. At one point a better road went to the east, but I continued south. A few miles on I began to wonder, should I have turned back there? But shortly, in the middle of nowhere, there was a modest sign: "Marmarth — 15 miles." It is always good to know one is one the right road.

Upon completing the trip, I celebrated by having a piece of pie and coffee in one of the cafes.

Bowman is the next larger town east of Marmarth. I also taught vacation Bible school there in 1949. Downtown I stopped in at the dry cleaning plant where I worked afternoons those two weeks. Then on through Scranton, Haley and Ludlow, arriving at Buffalo, S. Dak., after 8 o'clock, which was to be my headquarters for a longer time.

I took lodging at the Tipperary Motor Lodge. I noticed that the local rodeo arena also bore the name Tipperary. Not knowing of any other Tipperary than the one to which it is a long way, I inquired of a local citizen and learned that Tipperary was the name of a famous bronco in the area which no one had been able to ride.

Next time I should like to tell something about Harding County, stops at Reva and Faith and the rest of my trip home.

(To be continued)



The road to Marmarth