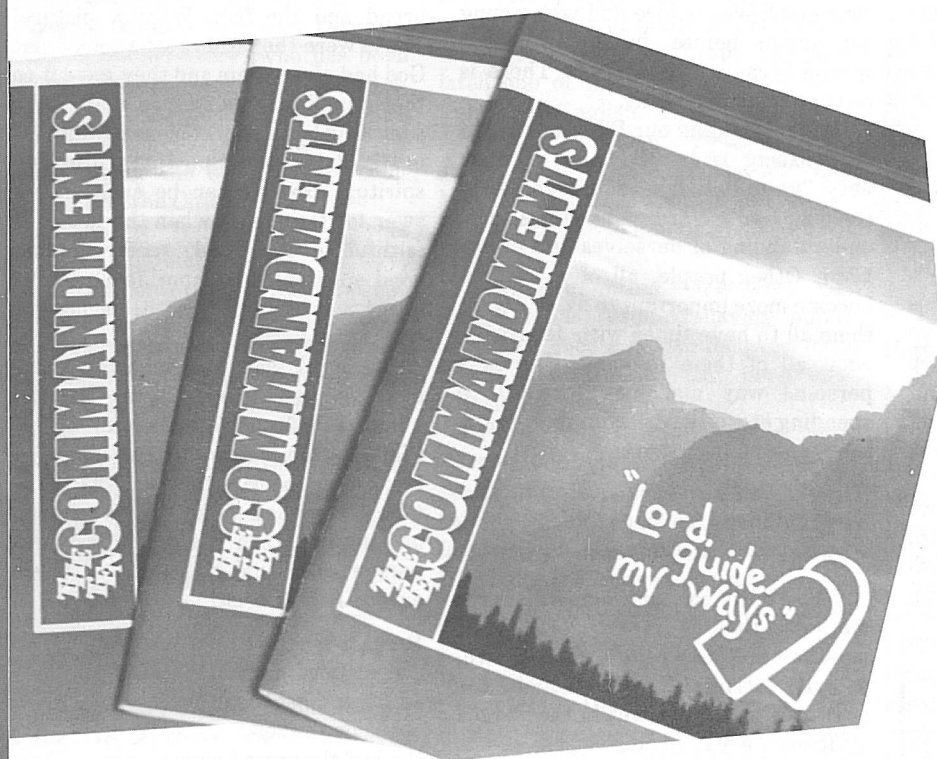


THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

September 8, 1987



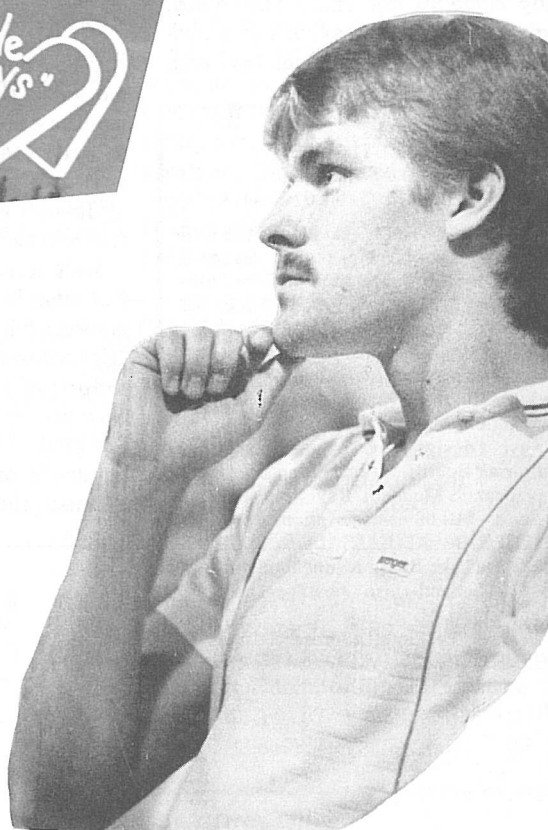
The first
of the
**REVISED
AMBASSADOR**
Sunday School
curriculum
available.

p.4



Luther League
Federation
Convention
Report

p.6



at the MASTER'S FEET

Come with Jesus

"Show me Your ways, O Lord; Teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day" (Psalm 25:4 and 5).

Come, let's go for a walk. Perhaps you will want to bring your Bible and a small hymnbook. We'll want to share together God's Word and then think through the thoughts of "What a Friend We Have In Jesus" or "Beautiful Savior" or "Break Thou the Bread of Life" or "He Leadeth Me."

Might I suggest a place for us to go? How about one where we would see a most beautiful lake and then hillsides with some grazing sheep and the wave of green grass. Here we are at the top of a hill. A good place for a picnic, but where will we get our food. We hadn't really thought of that before. Now, what will we do?

Well, let's get started with what we really came to do: share the Word, meditate, sing and pray. All of a sudden we have forgotten about food and,

in fact, we have even forgotten the time. Our thoughts are caught up in hearing Jesus and sharing His thoughts. We are soon sharing our heart themes in song. They are songs of joy, of prayer, of promise and of praise. There just is no experience like this one. It's special. Oh yes, we've read our Bibles before and we've sung our hymns before, but this time is special because it is current. There is no time like the present.

How meaningful our Bible study and our sharing is becoming. It's really very "up-to-date," wouldn't you say? Reading God's Word gives us a special understanding of ourselves and of our Lord. Other people, all of a sudden, become more important to us. We want them all to have times with Jesus! We want all of them to know Him in a personal way and look forward to spending eternity with Him. *Life* really takes on a new meaning;

Why should He love me so,
Why should my Savior to Calvary go,
Why should He love me so?

Who knows the answer? Well, give me some time to answer: like a few months - or I may need a year or two, or even eternity! Really, though, the answer is not in me, but in the Person of Jesus Christ. Seeing Jesus face to face will be the answer.

Isn't it beautiful here by the lake! But what is the building over there? It is beautiful! Yes, you're right, it is the "Church of the Beatitudes"! In it is the picture of the loaves and the fishes. Now we are not alone in our thoughts. We begin to picture in our minds the hundreds of people who were there because they were following Jesus.

Eventually, they found out that He could solve their spiritual needs as well as their physical needs. All He really needed was the attention and obedience of the people. He needed the willingness of the little boy to share his lunch. He needed the attention and obedience of the men to distribute the bread and the fish. What a picture! These were the fathers who took what God had given them and they gave it to their families. This picture really says a lot. God has a way of blessing families in His divine care. Spiritual truths and spiritual example can be such an answer for the family when the father is faithful to the Lord, receiving that good spiritual food from Jesus in His Word and sharing it with his hungry wife and children.

Our little walk has involved much more than we thought. It was basically a time with Jesus! What's it all worth? Well, for the people of Israel it meant life. For us to share together the salvation of Jesus is *Life* for us. No one and nothing in all the world can answer a person's personal and spiritual needs except Jesus Christ!

Break Thou the Bread of Life,
dear Lord, to me:
As Thou didst break the loaves
beside the sea;
Beyond the sacred page,
I seek Thee, Lord;
My spirit pant for Thee,
O living Word!

Amen

M. A. Lathbury

by Pastor Harvey Jackson

THE LUTHERAN
AMBASSADOR
USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413

is published biweekly (except for the first issue of July and the second issue of August) by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55441.

All communications concerning contents of this magazine should be addressed to: Rev. Raynard Huglen, Editor, Newfolden, Minn. 56738.

Layout design: Mrs. Wayne Hjermstad, Editorial Board: Mr. Sheldon Mortrud, Rev. Francis Monseth, Rev. Robert Lee.

Send \$10.00 subscription to THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55441. Second-class postage paid at Wanamingo, Minn.

Postmaster: Send address changes to THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55441.

Vol. 25 No. 16



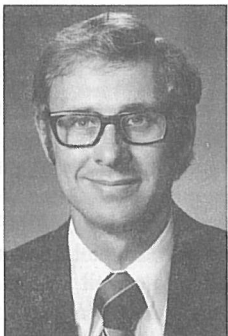
"HIS KINGDOM
IS FOREVER"

Psalm 145:13

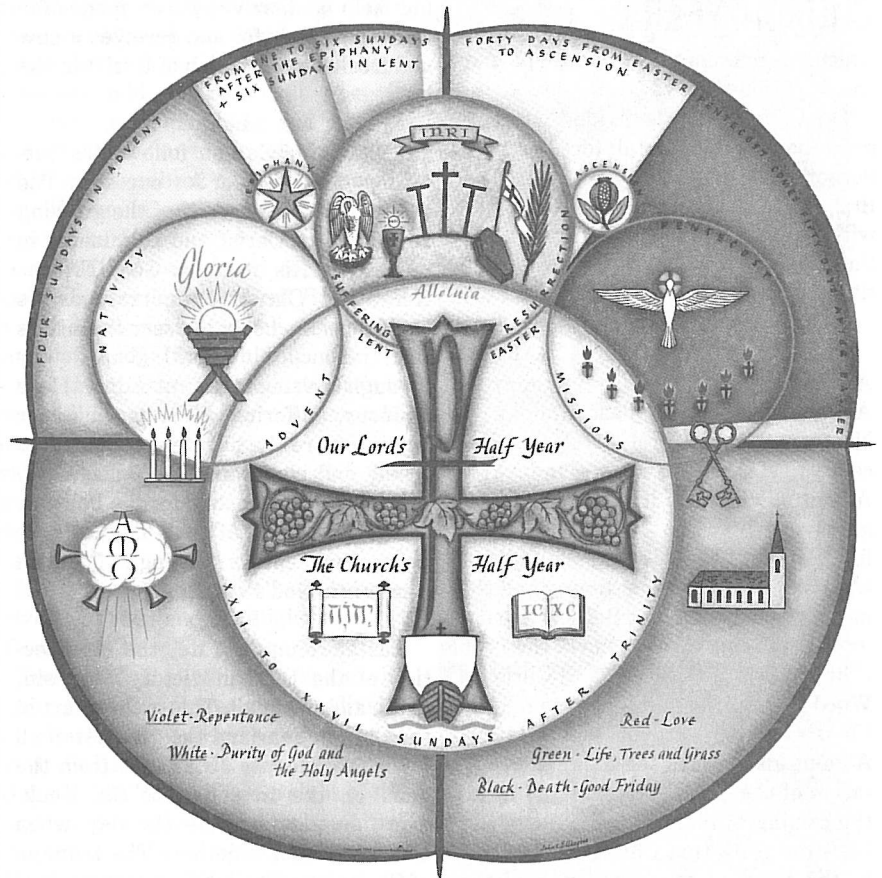
What it is and
how to use it

The Church Year

"The Church Year" is a term used by the church to describe the designation of different days in the year according to the main events and teachings of the life of Christ. Jacob Tanner, in his *Senior Confirmation Book*, says "The purpose of the church year is an orderly meditation upon the principal events in the life of Christ and upon His life and teaching." On December 25, for example, the birth of our Lord is the topic for preaching and teaching, and on Easter Sunday the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the message upon which the Church centers its meditation. In other words, the Church Year is a tool which the Church uses to continually present, in a regular and organized way, the major events of the life of our Lord in order to provide a balanced message concerning all the things Jesus has done for man in providing salvation. It is a means, then, to stimulate Christians to richer worship experiences, to guarantee a balanced teaching emphasis, and to unfold the life of Christ in an understandable



by Rev.
Ralph Tjelta,
Faculty,
AFLC Schools



sequence full of meaning. It connects the individual believer to the Church's life and thought, to the heart of God who has revealed Himself in the person of Jesus Christ, His Son, and to the Christian faith which is rooted in the belief that salvation is a redemptive act of God in history.

Historically, the Church Year has developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit over the many centuries of the history of God's people. Its basis is the festivals of the Jewish calendar which were commanded by God and recorded in the Old Testament. These festivals were not carried over directly into the Christian Church but they served as a type of the Christian observance which was to be the fulfillment. Jesus Himself, in accord with the plan of God the Father, used the Jewish festival of Passover as the time of His Passion and His death was quickly identified as the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb for the deliverance of all men from the bondage of sin. As the Christian Church continued, many of

the Jewish festivals were given new meaning from the context of the resurrection of Christ and the fulfillment found in Him. Evidence of this is found in Acts 20 where it is recorded that Paul was in Philippi for the Feast of Unleavened Bread and hurried on to Jerusalem so that he might arrive there for the day of Pentecost. These were Old Testament festivals but here seen in the context of the New Testament Gospel message. As time went on the festivals of the Church Year were considerably abused. The Reformers, however, purposed to return the Church Year to its original intent. They limited the "Holy Days" to those events which had a Scriptural basis and which related, primarily, to the life of Christ. They removed the aspect of the mechanical, meaningless feasting and returned the Church Year to a remembering of the events of the life of Christ and related the meaning of those events to the life of the believer. They established the Lutheran heritage

CHURCH YEAR . . .

which is presented in many of our congregations today.

The Church Year is divided into two main parts, the Festal (or Festival) Season and the Trinity Season. The first part, the Festal Season, begins with Advent and ends with Pentecost Sunday and contains the following festival days or seasons.

Advent

The Church Year begins with the Advent Season. The first Sunday in Advent falls on the last Sunday of November or the first Sunday of December. There are four Sundays in Advent and in many churches they are given meaning in conjunction with lighting the candles of the advent wreath. Advent means *coming* and the message of the Advent Season teaches us of 1) the coming of Jesus in the flesh (Christmas), 2) the coming of Christ in Word and Spirit, and 3) the coming of Christ in glory at the end of time. Advent also recalls the longing expectation of the Old Testament saints for the coming of the Messiah and reveals to us the truth that Christ comes anew to the heart of the believer, reviving the heart and strengthening faith through Word and Sacrament.

Christmas

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem's manger. Believers around the world rejoice together on this day as they once again hear the wonderful message that God has sent His Son into the world to be the Savior from sin. All that the prophets of old have spoken of is now being fulfilled. God's Word becomes flesh and the believer reaches out in faith to a Savior who now can be seen and heard and handled (I John 1:1), and a Savior who shares men's pain and suffering because He has become as one of them.

Epiphany

Epiphany (January 6) means *manifestation* and on a Sunday early in January the Christian Church meditates on the more abstract side of the Christmas message. On Christmas Day the Church rejoiced in the birth of the Christ Child. Now on Epiphany Sunday the Church ponders the amazing truth that this Child is the actual manifestation of God. The message now stresses

the appearance of God in Christ bringing help and salvation to men. The Christian prays for and receives a new and fresh manifestation of Christ in the heart.

Lent

The Lenten Season follows the sufferings of the Savior for our sins. The message of Lent speaks of the growing resistance to Christ and culminates in recounting His death on Good Friday. Here, the Christian understands, is God Himself who, in the sacrifice of His Son, reconciles a world gone astray through the sin of the first Adam. Here is Jesus, suffering without cause, for *our* sin. Here the payment is made and a holy and righteous God is satisfied. Here the way is opened for the believer to the very heart of God. The believer hears and enters through faith in Christ into God's very presence.

Easter

Easter commemorates the resurrection of the Lord in victory over sin, death and the devil. This is the heart of the Church Year and the greatest of all festivals. Because Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week, every Sunday became the day when Christians met together. The triumph of Christ in our behalf is the message of the Gospel. Therefore on all Sundays, but especially on this one, the believer prays that he can be renewed in the deliverance from sin, condemnation and the fear of death. On this day especially, he receives through the Gospel of the victorious resurrection of Christ an endless life with God which is given to all those who are united to Him by faith in His Son.

Ascension

On Ascension Day (40 days after Easter) the Christian Church bears forth the message of the risen Savior re-entering the glory of the Godhead. There He intercedes for all believers according to the will of the Father. In Him and through faith the believer enters into the glory of heaven. God hears his prayer for Jesus' sake and speaks to him through His Word as the Spirit ministers to his soul.

Pentecost

Pentecost (seven weeks after Easter) is the celebration of the birth of the Christian Church. On that day God, in the name of the risen Savior, poured out His Holy Spirit upon the disciples

cont. on p. 8

Volunteer help needed

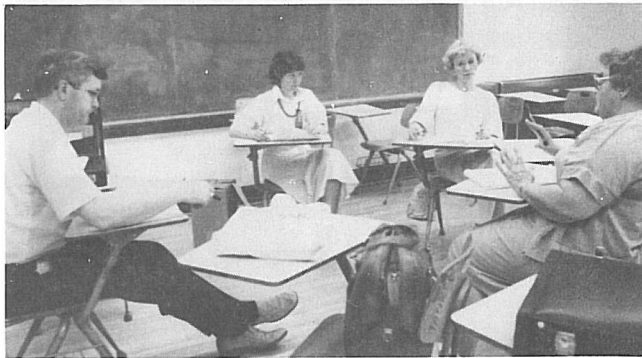
The first revised curriculum off the press

With grateful praise to God, we announce the completion of the revised second grade materials on the Ten Commandments. The fall quarter student books are off the press and ready to be sent out. The fall quarter teacher's manual is in press and will be ready for the beginning of the Sunday School year.

The second quarter lessons have been written and activities and art work are being completed. The third quarter has been outlined in detail and lessons, activities and art work will be developed in due time. Teacher's manuals for the second and third quarters will also be completed for appropriate deadlines. We encourage you to place your orders now if you have not already submitted them.

The Board of Publications and Parish Education suggests that this year some congregations may want to use the second grade materials for grade three also and possibly for grade four, especially if you have combined grades. Other congregations may want to continue with the old series for grades three and four as for other levels. Series I, prepared under the direction of Judith Wold, has good, solid Lutheran content. With the revised series, the intention is to provide more color and more teaching helps.

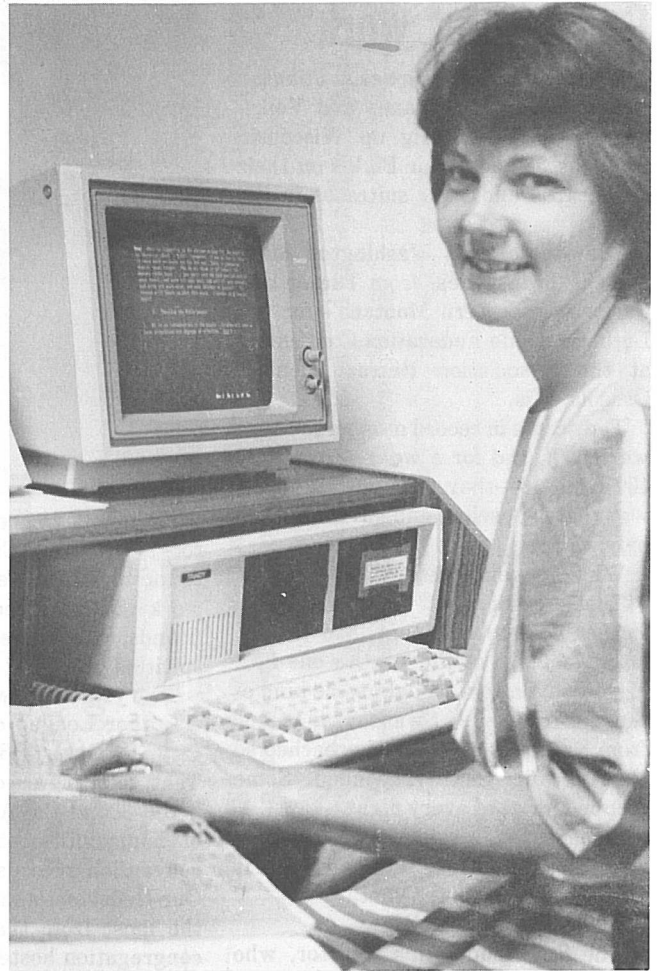
Preparation of materials for grades three and four is also under way. The curricula for grades two, three and four follow the Catechism—the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed, respectively. The Bible lesson and memory work for each lesson are chosen to teach the Scriptural concepts outlined in the Catechism, the commandment and its meaning, for example. We have included Bible lessons about many different Bible characters, some well known and others that are not so well known. Bible memory verses are selected to provide a store of lifelong Scripture



Parish Education Board meeting: Rev. Wesley Langass, Mrs. Ralph Tjelta, Mrs. Kenneth Moland, and Dr. Mary Lindquist.



Mrs. Kenneth Moland and Mrs. Ronald Knutson checked proofs of the second grade book.



Mrs. Ralph Tjelta, Director of Parish Education

photos by S. Hjermstad

passages and are not duplicated from year to year.

The teacher's manuals will include information about child development and general information about effective teaching methods as well as specific teaching helps for the individual lessons, including suggestions for hymns and songs. We suggest that the teacher's manual might be used in teacher-training workshops or sessions conducted by experienced teachers, pastors and/or personnel from the Parish Education Board or our office.

We are grateful for the reception and support given to the curriculum revision and for gifts of God's grace which are being shared by members of AFLC churches. One word of support we have heard most often is that the revision should go forward as quickly as possible. If the curriculum, including

pre-school through high school and adult levels, is to be completed within the next few years, however, prayer support, financial support, and volunteer help will be needed from the whole AFLC.

It has been exciting for me to learn, as I have talked with you, how much talent there is among our members. All these talents are gifts of God's grace and may be used in some way in the project. We will need teachers who are well experienced in teaching the various levels to assist the writers in wording the lessons appropriately for each level, to develop activities, teaching helps and ideas for the teacher's manuals. We will need artists who are willing to share their talents by making illustrations for the lessons. Typists, proofreaders and evaluators will also be needed. Funds will also be needed

for printing the materials. We will need volunteers to help others learn to use the materials effectively.

We ask the local boards of Christian education, Sunday School superintendents and pastors to look for such people who are willing and able to share these talents and to notify us. We need to know the type of help each one can give and the level each would be best suited for. Artists should submit samples of their work—an animal, a cartoon figure, a drawing of people and one of scenery. Send your suggestions to me at 1015 North 39th Street, D-14, Grand Forks, N. Dak. 58201 or to Katha Tjelta, Director of Parish Education, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55441.

*Mary L. Lindquist, Chairman
Board of Publications and
Parish Education*

God was at work

by James L. Johnson

They came in airplanes and Volkswagen vans, shuttling up Wisconsin Highway 35 with their Bibles on their dashboards and their suitcases in the back.

They came from Washington State and the Twin Cities, from Tucson and Fargo and western Montana—for the Luther League Federation Convention at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis.

They came in record numbers. There were 380. And for a week—from July 13 to July 18—they responded in such a way that counselors and advisers could only wonder:

What happened here?

That's what Rev. Curt Emerson, Luther League president, had to ask, after about 75 of the youth—one-fifth of the convention—sought some kind of counsel. Rev. Jeff Swanson, a pastor from Kalispell, Mont., had preached so clearly. And youth responded. Some stepped forward every night.

"Sometimes," said Rev. Emerson after the convention, "I think revival is going to start with the youth."

He had seen so much.

The St. Cloud, Minn., pastor, who ended his term as president after four years, saw things happen from the first night.

For starters:

A high school girl had come to the end of her rope. When the call came Tuesday, she came, too. She's a new Christian.

A 14-year-old from South Dakota "knew something wasn't right." He needed the Lord. And after Rev. Swanson's message Wednesday night, he came, too. Christ bid him to return.

A group of youth from Arizona hadn't been to a convention before. Many had minimal church backgrounds. When the call came after services, they came, too. Six sought and found Christ.

A 16-year-old from North Dakota rededicated his life to the Lord. He wanted "to give all the bits and pieces to Him."

A 16-year-old from the Red River Valley received the Lord. It was time.

Two high school boys from Montana responded. They said they needed to recommit their lives to the Lord.



"I do believe the Lord won the victory," said Rev. Emerson. "It seemed to me that kids were here to do some work—to do some learning, to see friends, to be concerned together about spiritual things.

Two years ago, when the AFLC held a Luther League convention in Rapid City, S. Dak., 318 seemed like a lot. That, too, was a record.

But 380 at the ARC—more than 310 of them youth—set a new standard for convention records. Ten flew in from Our Redeemer's in Kirkland, Wash.—the most from that church since the congregation hosted the convention in 1977. Seven kids came from Ishpeming, Mich.

Living Faith Lutheran in Tucson, Ariz., sent seven. Our Saviour's in Dickinson, N. Dak., sent 16. Amery (Wis.) Lutheran sent 19. Minnesota's Northwestern District (Roseau, Badger, Greenbush, Thief River Falls and others) sent nearly 50.

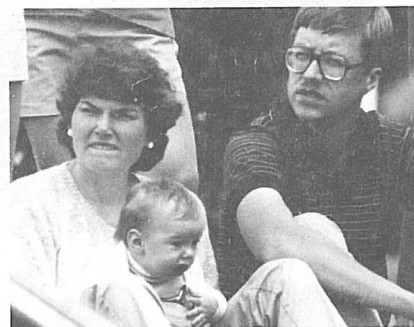
God worked in many of them.

"The convention meant new life to me," said Bill Momerak, 17, of Grafton, N. Dak. "This was the most exciting convention I ever had. People wanted to stand up... I shared with people for the first time here."

Nick Ziegler, 18, of LaCrosse, Wis., felt changed, too. "When I come to things like this, it just strengthens me," said Nick.

Said Jamie Hedlund, 17, of Roseau, Minn., "I learned that I need to witness more. People need the Lord and I need to speak up."

Lydia Moland, 14, of Kirkland, Wash., said she was struck with the sharing at evening afterglows. "People

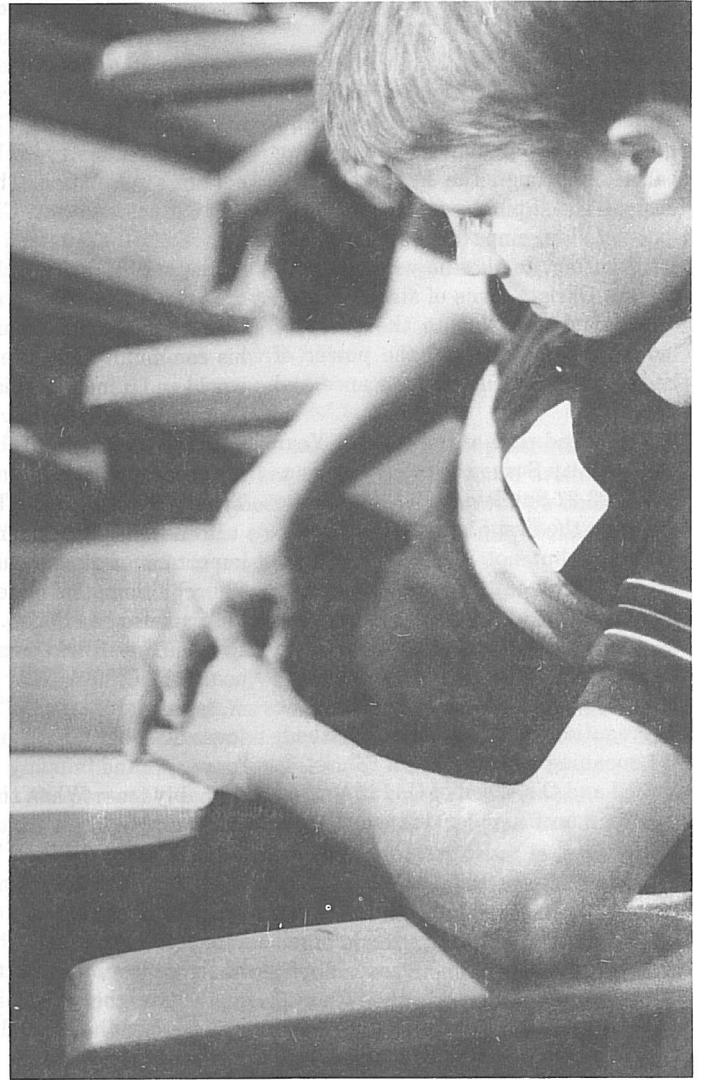
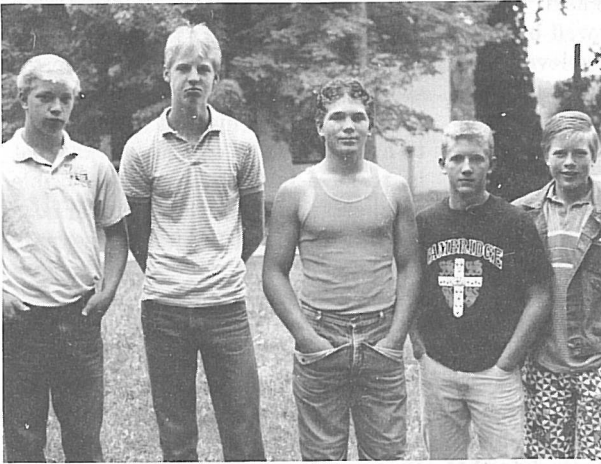


were so free," she said. "There weren't any long, awkward pauses. People weren't afraid to speak up for Christ."

Such boldness turned the heads of Dave and Denise Arnio, Luther League advisors in Kirkland, Wash. "Seeing all these teenagers dedicate their lives to Christ and drop all their fears, live for the Lord... it really affected me," said Dave. "There was no sarcasm. No machismo, no holds barred. It was just really refreshing."

Said Denise: "Seeing all these kids admit their inadequacies and put their trust in the Lord allowed me to admit my inadequacies and put my trust in the Lord."

The convention included sessions with AFLC faculty Ralph Tjelta, Robert Lee and Dr. Francis Monseth. Pastor Gary Jorgenson of Stanley, N. Dak., led the Bible hour. Pastor Swanson spoke during evening sessions. During the Luther League elections held late in the week, delegates elected a new set of officers, including new Luther League president James Johnson, a pastor in Reva, S. Dak.; first vice-president Mark Johnson (Stacy, Minn.); second vice-president Eric Westlake, a youth worker in Tucson,



Photos by Alan Arneson and S. Hjermstad

Ariz.; secretary Naomi Monseth (Rogers, Minn.); and devotional life secretary Graig Kveen (Roseau, Minn.). Treasurer Randy Erickson (Thief River Falls, Minn.) was re-elected.

Something happened here.

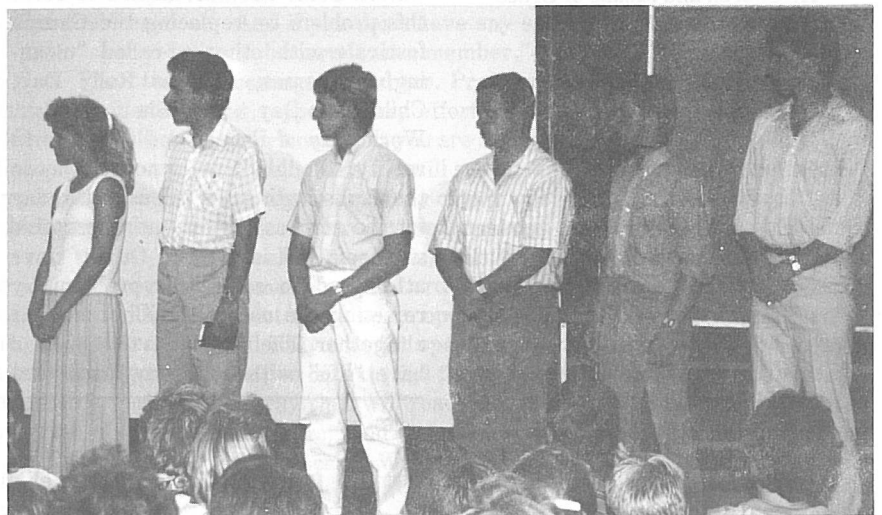
Something big.

Something 380 saw happen.

Eric Westlake, a youth worker who drove his youth in his Volkswagen van all the way from Tucson for 35 hours, saw it, too. He smiled as he thought of it. He saw the numbers. He saw the youth. He saw the changes. "This just makes two thousand miles seem so short," he said.

James L. Johnson is a graduate in Journalism from the University of Minnesota. Thanks, Jim, for this report on the Luther League Convention.

*Pastor Dennis Gray
Youth Resources Director*



The new officers installed are: Naomi Monseth, Rogers, Minn.; Rev. James Johnson, Reva, S. Dak.; Mark Johnson, Stacy, Minn.; Eric Westlake, Tucson, Ariz.; Graig Kveen, Roseau, Minn. and Randy Erickson, Thief River Falls, Minn. All these officers will hold their respective positions until the next National Luther League Convention in July, 1989. Uphold them in prayer in the decisions they make.

CHURCH YEAR . . .

at Jerusalem and the Church was born. As with the other festivals, Pentecost commemorates the past event but also conveys the present and living realities. Through the hearing of the Gospel, the Spirit comes upon the Church today, empowering its witness and granting, to all who receive, faith in Jesus Christ. Lives of sin are transformed and now live to the glory of God. Christ is seen and the power of the Holy Spirit brings repentance and faith.

The second part of the Church Year is the Trinity Season. This season consists of 23-27 Sundays which covers the time from the first Sunday after Pentecost up to but not including the first Sunday in Advent. During this season the lessons of the first half of the year, the life of Christ, are applied to the Christian life. The work of the Triune God through His Word in the life of the congregation is taught and preached. The meaning of the life of Christ is studied and the Word of God is applied to the Church's inner life and outer witness.

One of the most concise outlines of the meaning and application of the Word to the life of the Church is found in *The Concordia Hymnal*, which reflects both seasons of the Church Year. Notice the following main sections of this hymnal:

- I. Worship in General
- II. Church and Means of Grace
- III. The Church Year
- IV. Christian Life
- V. Home, Childhood and Youth
- VI. Missions
- VII. National
- VIII. Last Things

This hymnal, based squarely upon the teachings of God's Word, presents a well-rounded development of the fundamental teachings of Scripture.

The Church is the Church of God because of the Word and Sacraments (Section II of *Concordia*). Believers are taught a correct concept of self and God and an appropriate worship (Section I, *Concordia*) of God in the Word. As the Word is preached, man's sinfulness is revealed and the call to repentance is made clear (Section IV, *Concordia*). The message of justification by faith, of trust and confidence in Christ and of following Him in obedience and sub-

mission are applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit. Faith is followed by aspiration and hope as the believer prepares for death, the return of Christ and eternity (Section VIII, *Concordia*).

But this ministry of the Holy Spirit is not done in isolation. The application of the Gospel and the Christian life involves the believer as he lives in the home, with family and children (Section V, *Concordia*). It concerns his attitude and actions toward his neighbor, his community and the heathen of the world and it includes his stewardship of that which God has given him (Section VI, *Concordia*). All of this is taught and preached by the Church during the Trinity Season of the Church Year.

While the Church Year can be an important and useful tool of the Church, it must be understood that this tool can also be abused. Because of this abuse many Christians look upon the use of the Church Year as an indication of "spiritual deadness" or a tendency toward "liberalism" or even toward "popery," and in many instances this is probably true. When this happens people have begun to *look at* the tool instead of *using* the tool. The emphasis is placed upon the pageantry, the beauty and the meaning of the "form" rather than upon the life of Christ which is to be the center of meditation. The "form" has outweighed the "life" and the result is that the Church Year loses its meaning as a valid instrument for teaching the meaning of the life of Christ. Some have attempted to solve this problem by replacing the Church festivals with other so-called "meaningful" themes, such as Rally Day, Children's Day, Food-Shelf Sunday, World Day of Prayer and the like. In reality, though, this is nothing more than substituting the issues of the day for the emphasis upon the redemptive work of God in Christ. Others have attempted to solve this problem by rejecting the use of the Church Year altogether. Their feeling is that one can have "life" without "form," and that

any "form" destroys "life." This thinking, though, overlooks the fact that the true faith of the Church always expresses itself in some "form" or other to the world in which it lives. It is impossible to have true faith without works, that is, to have faith without some visible manifestation. In this case it overlooks the fact that the Church Year is one of those visible manifestations of the faith of the Church which has existed for centuries. It is the Church's expression of "form," it's providing a tool that expresses faith, strengthens faith and appropriately witnesses to the faith which rests solidly upon the life of Christ. When "life" is overly stressed the individual's own experience often becomes the focus of worship and teaching. As this happens other things can quickly follow as a result. The significance of God acting in history in the person of Christ is often overlooked, the meaning of the Old Testament figures and types as pre-figuring Christ is not recognized, and the outward and visible aspects of the Sacraments are not appreciated and the means of grace are many times neglected or scorned. In the end this extreme misses that which God clearly presents in His Word, that man's faith is helped and strengthened through things which are visible and in the final analysis is again nothing more than substituting the experience of man for the emphasis upon the redemptive work of God in Christ.

The Church Year, then, is nothing more, but also nothing less, than a tool of the Church. If abused it will be a meaningless instrument, yes, even detrimental to the Gospel message. But if used with care, dignity and simplicity, it will be an effective tool to preach and teach the life of Christ and the redemption to be found in Him. The church's prayer to God is that the Holy Spirit would so lead and guide us that this tool can be used in our midst to His glory and honor and to the salvation and nurturing of many souls.

Devotion, not ambition

If the people of the Church could eliminate the spirit of *ambition* from their hearts, and put there the spirit of *devotion*, the prosperity of Zion would know no end and brook no hindrance.

L. S. Keyser

editorials

HARMONIC CONVERGENCE

As we write, the weekend which just passed witnessed two strange and disturbing events. One was the tenth anniversary of the death of Elvis Presley, "king of rock and roll." By the thousands his devotees came to see his grave and Graceland mansion, where he had lived, in a pathetic idolatry. Mr. Presley died of heart disease at the age of 42, his body weakened by drug abuse.

The other event of the weekend of August 14-16, was a bit more high-minded than the pilgrimages to Memphis where Presley is buried, but more disturbing. That was the observance around the world of a "harmonic convergence" predicted to take place at this time by an ancient Mayan calendar. At least one scholar of the Mayas disputes the whole idea.

Nevertheless, thousands of people around the world, some of them at "sacred sites" or "acupuncture points," such as Niagara Falls and Stonehenge, gathered on August 16 in a "conscious bonding of people to support an evolutionary shift from separation to unity and from fear to love." One report we heard by radio spoke of the effort as one to send up "good vibrations" into the atmosphere. A news release from Global Family, sponsors of the observance, called the program one "to create a resonating link between Universal Energies and the Earth." In all, it seems a weird adventure. There was no mention of God, at least not in the sense of God that we understand from Scripture. We were reminded of Paul's experience in Athens where he found a very religious people, even a statue to an "unknown God." The people of "harmonic convergence" were reaching out to forces outside themselves, they know not what. If people from Christian churches took part in this queer exercise, shame on them. They should know better. Certainly no Christian could have a part in something like this.

Think how different it is with prayer to God. Then the soul of a person is lifted to Him and thoughts, desires and emotions are laid out before the Almighty One. Here is a communion with God and when the will of the finite bows before that of the Infinite there is a convergence that really matters. Then forces for good are released which can make a difference in life.

Again, think of the potential to be found in a congregational prayer meeting and in the prayer closet of an individual Christian where men and women of faith, and children, lay hold of the throne of grace, believing in a prayer-answering God. The earnest prayer of one saint surpasses in result all the effort and incantations of a global program of "harmonic convergence" that doesn't take God, the Triune God, into account.

Let us take new heart at the power at our disposal. In a way we don't fully understand, Christ-empowered forces are unleashed when believers sincerely pray. What a blessing this world experiences, without realizing it, because Christians are praying. Who would want to live a single day in a

world where no one was praying to the living God in the name of Jesus? Not even the people of "harmonic convergence," if they really understood the situation.

Believers, keep on praying.

THE FALL SEASON

A month later than planned we are presenting some material from the Board of Publications and Parish Education. But this is a good time for this material to come out, too. September has come; church and Sunday School activities resume full speed ahead.

It is exciting as the congregational activities get into gear. What a wonderful summer it was. The church Conference at Thief River Falls, the Bible camps, the Luther League and Women's Missionary Federation conventions, the visits from the Ambassadors, Majesty and Barnabas teams from our Bible School, the Summer Institute of Theology, the churches anniversaries, reunions, retreats, etc., etc. And all the personal vacations and family things experienced.

But now there is a different pace. Children are starting school again. Bible School and Seminary work is beginning. Sunday School staffs have been chosen. Classes are about to commence. The pastors have, mentally at least, laid out their plans for the next nine months and this includes their hopes for their confirmation classes.

We just wish you well, you who are on the "firing lines" in all of these congregational activities. God bless you and encourage you. Don't be weary in well doing. You will reap, you will see results for good if you don't lose heart or grow faint.

And if you don't have any special job in your church this year but are "just a member," you be a faithful member, an encourager, a backer. Pray for the work that is being done and support every effort in every way you can. Let your pastor know that you are there.

Finally, this fall will see an emphasis on awakening in our congregations. Many of you will be having special meetings. As some have wisely pointed out, we can't "program" revival or awakening. But we pray for it and desire that it come. May the Lord bless your planning for the meetings and let there be an open, seeking spirit as the services are held. Pray that the speaker you've invited will be led in his selection of texts and themes and will have liberty to preach in a way that will reach out to the lost, while at the same time feeding God's people.

A postscript. We trust that every congregation and pastor remembers the resources that are available through the Parish Education Department, the offices of the Schools and Missions, the Stewardship, Youth and Pension boards, the auxiliaries, the Evangelism Commission, the AFLC offices, etc. Where we of the *Ambassador* can be of help, let us know. We are all working together for God's glory.

Methuselah

the procrastinator of the ages

He missed the boat

The most wasted life in a day of greatest need and opportunity for a witness for God and against wickedness! Outside of natural procreation, about all we can say for Methuselah is that he lived 969 years and then died.

Although our longevity would only be a shadow in the light of Methuselah, it becomes quite obvious that about all we can say for many who may live a long life in our day is that they lived so many years and then died, period!

The question: What light; What salt; What testimony have we given or are we leaving in this sin-sick and dying world? What treasures have we laid up in heaven? These are legitimate, Scriptural questions and challenges!

Consider Methuselah.

And remember, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16).

We read in Zondervan *Pictorial Encyclopedia* about the name of Methuselah: "Some felt the name implies *violent man*; suggesting *wickedness of the generation before the flood*." But such a name would also fit "a hunter." Still others feel the element, "selah" is a divine name indicating "idolatry", "warring" or "man of the javelin."

Methuselah was a decendent of Seth. Seth.

May I present a few thoughts that have come to me as I have thought about his man Methuselah?

1) I believe what the encyclopedias suggest as regarding the name of Methuselah, that it gives us a picture of "a man" as part of the generation and society he lived in. The thought of violence, wickedness, a hunter, warring, man of the javelin.

by Rev. Clifford R. Anderson
Buffalo, Minn.

2) God's Word says, in Luke 17:26, "As it was in the days of Noah." Before the flood, how was it? I believe Methuselah was a classic example of the worldly *religious* element of his day. Outside of Noah and his family, there evidently was no real godly sorrow for sin, repentance and calling upon God for mercy and salvation. A striking picture of much of today's religious world, with millions of church members who ape the world at every turn. They seldom or never read the Bible. They possibly do not know a single Bible verse. They cannot give a clear Scriptural hope for eternal life. Alas! many of these poor, lost souls are given false hope by spiritually blind religious leaders who give them the impression that because they were once baptized and *because* they partake in Communion, they are Christians, even though there has been no real conviction of sin, no repentance, no confession of sin with a desire to turn from their sinful and worldly ways, no real conversion or "born again" experience! As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be before Jesus comes again!

3) Remember Enoch was Methuselah's father (Genesis 5:22) who "walked with God." He was translated, never saw death, God took him to heaven. a) Methuselah knew what was right! He possibly was quite religious. b) He certainly lived face to face and in the brightest spiritual light and understanding that was found on the earth in his day, through the life and testimony of this father, Enoch! c) In his youth, when his heart was tender, he must have heard the voice of God in his conscience, through the word and testimony of his father, that he should repent and give his heart to God, but apparently he neglected (procrastinated) his salvation, his purpose in life and hope for eternity!

Let us apply this as we think of our youth today. In Ecclesiastes 12:1, we

read, "Remember *now* thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while (before) the evil days come not."

Think of the many people who have come from good, godly homes where God's Word is read and there has been prayer. Yet *many* who have come from such homes are not saved today! Why?

Like Methuselah, they know what is right, they know what is worldly, wrong and sinful, but they keep on playing with sin. They refuse to repent and seek the Lord. One day goes by after the other and they try to tell themselves, *Some day* I'm going to really seek the Lord; I'm going to become a Christian! I don't want to go to hell; I know what I should do!"

What happens? Days, weeks and years go by! God says, "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts!" Did you hear that? Every time you hear the voice of God and don't do anything about it there is a hardening that takes place!!

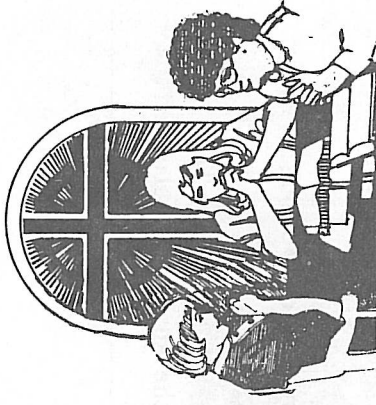
Undoubtedly it was so with Methuselah. He neglected. He was the *procrastinator of the ages*!! He became so used to the awful sin and wickedness around him that after a while sin did not become sin any more!! Do you realize what we are talking about? Why, "*Everybody's doing it!*" "It can't be so bad!" This is the kind of a day we are living in! As it was in *those* days!

Is there one thing that the "world" does today that is not carried on in certain religious circles, even to the sin of sodomy?

Enoch "walked with God 300 years and begat sons and daughters." Enoch was 65 years old when Methuselah was born. What a testimony Methuselah could have been to his younger brothers and sisters! The oldest brother or sister can have a powerful testimony, can carry a powerful influence and so make a powerful impact on the younger siblings! Nothing to indicate that Methuselah was any help to his siblings! The opposite is quite obvious; they evidently perished!

Like the prodigal Son, Methuselah listened to his worldly friends (Luke 15). There is always a progression in drifting away from God and into sin, as indicated in Psalm 1: "Blessed is the man that *walketh* not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor *standeth* in the way of sinners, nor *sitteth* in the seat of the

cont. on p. 13



WMF BIBLE STUDY

Studies in Romans
God's Righteousness by Faith

THE RESPONSE OF FAITH AND OF UNBELIEF Chapters 9-11

Hymn No. 304 (*Concordia*): "God Moves in a Mysterious Way"

The first eight chapters of Romans have presented the theme: God's righteousness by faith. In chapters 9-11, we see that receiving God's righteousness is so clearly by faith alone that only those who believe receive it; those who refuse to believe do not. Time permits only a summary look at these chapters.

I. God's Promise Rejected by Israel, Received by Gentiles, Chapter 9

A. God's Special Blessings upon Israel, 9:1-5

1. What was the reason for Paul's great sorrow? vs. 1-3 _____

2. What warning does Paul give to Gentile believers? vs. 17-21 _____

3. How did Paul's ministry help to complete the remnant of grace? vs. 13-14 _____

C. The Mystery of Israel, vs. 25-32

How do the following apply to the Jews:

partial hardening _____

enemies _____

beloved _____

disobedience _____

mercy _____

D. A Final Word of Praise, vs. 33-36

Why do you think Paul breaks into praise at the close of this section? (chapters 9-11) _____

Hymn No. 395 (*Concordia*): "O Lord Our God, Arise"

2. Why did God bless Israel beyond all peoples? vs. 4-5 _____

B. Promise Implies Faith, 9:6-13

1. Who among the children of Israel were the children of promise? v. 8. Cf. 4:11-12 _____

2. What does 9:11 teach about God's promise? _____

C. Mercy Cannot Be Earned, vs. 14-24

1. How is God's mercy received? v. 18. Cf. Matt. 23:13 _____

2 Why did God have patience with unbelieving Israel? vs. 22-23 _____

Who prepared the "vessels of wrath" for destruction?

Cf. v. 32 _____ How did they do that? _____

3. Who are the "vessels of mercy"? vs. 23-24 _____

How were they prepared for glory? _____

D. Gentiles Attained Righteousness; Israel Did Not, vs. 25-33

1. Why did so many Israelites fail to attain righteousness? vs. 30-32 _____

2. Who were the remnant? v. 27 _____

II. God's Word, Offering Righteousness, Met with Faith and Unbelief, Chapter 10

A. Christ, the End of the Law for Righteousness, vs. 1-8

1. What was wrong with Israel's zeal? vs. 2-3 _____

2. What is the difference between "law righteousness" and "faith righteousness?" vs. 5-8 _____

B. Faith, Which Leads to Righteousness, Produced by God's Word, vs. 9-15

1. What is the relationship between confession and faith? vs. 9-10 _____

2. What part does God's Word play? vs. 8, 13-15 _____

C. Jewish Unbelief and Gentile Faith, vs. 16-21

Why did Israel fail to believe? _____

III. Israel's Remnant Responds in Faith, Chapter 11

A. God Has Not Rejected His People, vs. 1-10

1. What is meant by the remnant? vs. 5 _____

Who are God's people? vs. 1-2 _____

2. Paul lists some examples of the faithful remnant. Who were they? vs. 1, 2-4 _____

3. What happened to the others? Why? vs. 7-10 _____

B. The Gentiles Are Warned, vs. 11-24

1. How did the failure of Israel enrich the world? vs. 11-12 _____

METHUSELAH . . .

scornful." Or like the case of Jonah: he went *down* to Joppa, *down* into the ship, *down* in the sides thereof, *down* into the belly of the fish. Incidentally, Jonah paid his own fare (Jonah 1:3)!

In his youth, Methuselah must have thought often about his father who "*walked with God*." Most people are saved between the ages of 12 to 15. No so many come to know Jesus Christ as Savior after 35 years of age and it is generally accepted by evangelical churches that if a person is 55 years old and unconverted, there is one chance in 10,000 that he ever will be saved! The voice of God becomes more dull, more far away!

Methuselah's grandson was Noah. We read in Genesis 6:9, "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation, *and Noah walked with God*." Methuselah heard his grandson crying his heart out *calling people to repentance*! Methuselah also remembered his father and his holy life. Methuselah knew and saw the obvious contrast between the ungodliness of his day and the life of his father and grandson!! He was without excuse!!

Here I'm wondering if Methuselah had so hardened his heart, through neglect of doing what he certainly knew he should do, so that he had now come to the place of the "*unpardonable sin*" (beyond redemption)!!? Remember Esau as recorded in Hebrews 12:17: "For ye know that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, *though he sought it carefully with tears*."

Let us not "kid ourselves" (deceive ourselves) into thinking that we can continue living in sin, thinking that "*some day*" I'm going to repent and really seek the Lord! God says, "Today if ye will hear His voice!" You do not decide *when* (some date in the future) you are going to get saved!

We wonder about this man Methuselah! How did he die? He *drowned*! You say, "Oh, no!"? Methuselah died in the year of the flood. Oh, but you say, he may have repented before he died! To this it seems we must come to certain conclusions: If Methuselah had actually repented and had been converted, knowing what he knew from his father and from his grandson Noah,

in that wicked day in which he lived, we must say on the basis of God's Word, that if indeed Methuselah had given his heart to God, he would have called out to high heaven calling people to repentance!! To hear and believe what Noah was trying to tell the people in his warning about coming judgment, etc., He would certainly have testified to what he knew and had now experienced "if" he had indeed come into a good relationship with God! But there is no indication of any such experience coming from Methuselah!

One thing is sure, he did not get in to the ark!! If there ever was a man who literally "missed the boat," verily, it was Methuselah! We may catch the next train, plane, boat or bus, but with Methuselah it was "the" boat. There was no other!

How do we apply this text to ourselves and the general religious church life of today?

You recall that we read again and again in the Scriptures about individuals: Baasha "did evil in the sight of the Lord" (I Kings 15:34). Again Ahab (I Kings 16:30) "did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him." The same was said about Rehoboam, also Abijah and Nadab. Then we also read of others. "Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord" (I Kings 15:11).

What about Methuselah? It doesn't say specifically that he did evil or good. What are we to think? He evidently was just a lukewarm, harmless, neither hot nor cold individual *with all the light and knowledge he had*! It seems that Matthew 6:23 would apply here: "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" It's a serious matter to have heard the Gospel, to have been spoken to by the Holy Spirit and then neglect or refuse to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord! "He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Proverbs 29:1). If there is one thing that God hates with a holy hatred it is "lukewarmness," according to Revelation 3:16.

There seem to be many Methuselachs in our churches! Yes, they go to church; yes, they are such nice people; no, they do not carry on as rowdies, living ungodly lives in open sin! But

cont. on p. 16

food for thought

I got up early one morning and rushed right into the day: I had so much to accomplish that I didn't have time to pray.

Problems just tumbled about me and heavier came each task;

"Why doesn't God help me?" I wondered.

He answered, "You didn't ask."

I wanted to see joy and beauty but the day toiled on, gray and bleak.

I wondered why God didn't show me;

He said, "But you Didn't seek."

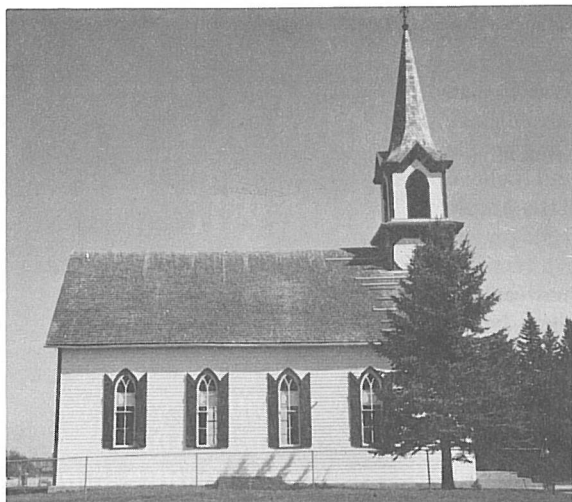
I tried to come into God's presence; I used all my keys at the lock

God gently and lovingly chided, "My child, you didn't knock."

I woke up early this morning and and paused before entering the day.

I had so much to accomplish That I had to take time to pray.

— Author Unknown
Newsletter, Calvary Lutheran
Church, Eben Jct., Mich.



Centennial of founding of Telemarken

We like to remember! With this thought in mind people of the Wallace, S. Dak., community decided to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the beginning of Telemarken Lutheran congregation. The theme for the event was "To God Be the Glory."

We like to pay tribute to the pioneers who came together to form Telemarken Church. In 1949, in January, Telemarken merged with Calvary Lutheran in Wallace. Now services are held in the country church just northwest of town only on Memorial Day and some other special occasions.

Through the years the church suffered some deterioration because of age and restoration was begun in 1967. The bell was removed from the steeple and a separate building was erected, which includes a desk to register visitors. The bell continues to have a significant part as it is rung in honor of loved ones placed to rest in the cemetery. The church was re-shingled and painted this year in readiness for the centennial.

About 250 people gathered at Telemarken on Memorial Day for the anniversary. Pastor Palmer Sevig, pastor of Calvary, gave greetings. Rev. LeRoy Anenson, Seattle, Wash., a son of the congregation, acted as master of ceremonies and also gave a welcome. Willis Tofte, Golden Valley, Minn., son of Rev. James Tofte, who was also a son of Telemarken, spoke briefly, conveying the thoughts he felt his father would have spoken if he were present, and he also read the history of the church.

Attorney Norman Paulson, Bethes-

da, Me., a former resident of the area, spoke about the accomplishment of restoring the beloved church. Over the years his encouragement had escalated plans for preserving the church and through generous and numerous contributions it was possible to do that.

Greetings and memories were shared by families of former pastors who had served Telemarken Congregation and by the pastor sons of the congregation.

Rev. Emil Kallevig, pastor from 1947-53, was our guest speaker. He began by quoting Philippians 1:3: "I thank my God in all remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now." His message was filled with bountiful and positive promises of God. He quoted the third stanza of the hymn "How Great Thou Art": "And when I think, that God His Son not sparing, sent Him to die..." It was through Pastor Kallevig's kind, patient understanding and steadfast belief that the merger of Telemarken and Calvary was effected. We appreciated the Rev. Kallevig's ministry and this man of God could freely say, "To God Be the Glory."

Special music sung in both the English and Norwegian languages was furnished by Mrs. Norris Meland, Florence, S. Dak., and Rev. Fritjof Olderr, Watertown, S. Dak., and accompanied by Mrs. Horace Kasin, organist.

Rev. Stephen Anenson, a son of Rev. LeRoy Anenson, gave the benediction. Following the service a centennial tree was planted in the churchyard. A noon

World Mission position to be full-time

The World Missions Committee has voted to return the position of executive director to full-time effective Feb. 1, 1988. It had been reduced to half-time on Aug. 1, 1986, due to a financial crunch in the AFLC. The action now comes as a result of a resolution passed at the 1987 Annual Conference increasing the World Missions budget for 1988-89 to include a full-time director again. Rev. Eugene Enderlein is the executive director.

AALC to constitute in November

The American Association of Lutheran Churches, an outgrowth of the merger forming the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, will hold its constituting convention Nov. 5-7 in Minneapolis, Minn. Mr. Gene Quist, Minneapolis, has been named convention coordinator.

Congregations of the AALC will have both lay and pastoral representation at the convention.

Congregations which will form the AALC are from the American Lutheran church or newly formed groups from existing ALC congregations. The AALC will be patterned after the ALC as much as possible.

Chairman of the AALC Board of Directors is Dr. Duane Lindberg, Waterloo, Ia. Dr. Orville Heipier, Camarillo, Calif., is chairman of the Clergy Credentials Committee.

Some other ALC congregations, not wishing to be in the merger creating the ELCA, have affiliated with the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

meal was served in the church in Wallace. In the afternoon meeting Pastor Sevig led the devotions. The audience joined in singing "The Old Country Church." A business meeting of the Telemarken-Wallace Cemetery Association was held and the remainder of the afternoon was spent renewing friendships and relationships of kin as coffee was served.

The Telemarken Centennial History Committee

news of the churches

from here and there . . .

Eden, S. Dak.—Buffalo Lake Lutheran will be celebrating its 90th anniversary Oct. 3-4. Theme of the festival will be "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help" (Psalm 121:1). A former pastor of the congregation, Rev. Raynard Huglen, Newfolden, Minn., will preach at the Sunday morning worship service.

Badger, Minn.—Mr. Tom Olson, a senior in the seminary, who has been serving Badger Creek and Oiland Lutheran Churches this summer, will be spending two weekends a month in the parish during the school year, commuting from the Cities.

Fairdale, N. Dak.—Guri Underdal and Mona Julsrud, Eidsvold, Norway, presented a concert at Aadalen Lutheran on Sun., July 19, in the afternoon. Miss Julsrud is a soprano soloist and Miss Underdal a pianist. The two were in Valley Lutheran, Portland, in the evening.

Kalispell, Mont.—Rev. Stephen Snipstead was installed as pastor of Faith Lutheran on Sunday afternoon, Aug. 2. He began his ministry in Kalispell a month earlier.

Eben Jct., Mich.—The AFLBS service team, Majesty, assisted in teaching the VBS at Calvary Lutheran Aug. 10-14. The five team members also helped with recreation and put on a puppet story each day.

Minneapolis, Minn.—Rev. Ralph Rokke, pastor at Faith Lutheran, spent two weeks at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis in early June. As part of his class, "Studies in (Martin) Chemnitz," taught by Dr. J. A. O. Preus, he translated one of Chemnitz' sermons from German to English.

Williston, N. Dak.—New members at Emmanuel Lutheran are Mr. and Mrs. Bill (Jeannie) Sheldon and family, Ernest Schenstad and Leonella Schoelkoph.

Newfolden, Minn.—Westaker Ladies Aid has resumed having public programs once a month followed by a lunch. The practice had been suspended for about a year.

Ortley, S. Dak.—Received into membership in Ortley Lutheran recently were Mr. and Mrs. Bill Paterson and family, Mr. and Mrs. Joel Pies and family, Bill Utne, Tom Utne, Opal Hjellming and Lillian Leavitt.



Hatton, N. Dak.

Some members of Zoar Lutheran Church, Hatton, N. Dak., thought it a good idea to have a float in the town's 4th of July parade since the AFLC had recently celebrated her 25th anniversary at the Annual Conference in Thief River Falls, Minn., in June.

Those involved in making the float were, left to right, Norma Pierce, Marlowe and Thelma Martinson, Palmer Haugen and Lay Pastor and Mrs. Dale Finstrom. Not pictured are Amy and Shaylee Rodriques, Sue Mattern, Diane Balstad, Marlys Rux and Bradley Pierce.

Personalities

Rev. LeRoy Flickinger has accepted the call to serve the Newfolden, Minn., parish (Westaker and Bethania), but will not take up work there until June 1, 1988. In the meantime he continues to serve the Leeds, N. Dak., parish (Lebanon and North Prairie).

Rev. Hubert DeBoer is interim pastor at Newfolden and he and his wife have moved into the parsonage for the next nine months.

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 he held membership.

NORTH DAKOTA

Northwood

Ernest Hegre, 81, Aug. 6, Zoar, Hatton.

MINNESOTA

Dalton

Ole Fossan, 84, July 18, Sarpsborg.

ASSOCIATION OF FREE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences February 1-July 31

FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	REC'D IN JULY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL*
GENERAL FUND	\$208,000.00	\$11,952.28	\$72,696.30	35
SCHOOLS - (AFLTS)	99,834.00	5,330.70	38,564.88	39
(AFLBS)	152,060.00	8,120.05	64,974.74	43
HOME MISSIONS	280,000.00	11,702.25	83,397.04	30
WORLD MISSIONS	250,000.00	13,294.39	91,304.31	37
CAPITAL INVESTMENT	25,000.00	2,750.60	13,902.03	56
TOTALS	\$1,014,894.00	\$53,150.27	\$364,839.30	36
1986-87 -	\$1,084,478.00	\$92,859.37	\$360,876.65	33
*GOAL 50%				

Announcements

The Northern Michigan District of the WMF will hold their fall rally on Saturday, September 19, 1987, at Calvary Free Lutheran Church, Eben Junction, Michigan. Registration and Coffee Hour will begin at 9 a.m. with the Bible Study beginning at 10 a.m. The theme for the rally will be Commitment: "A renewed mind yields a committed heart and life." Our Bible Study leader will be Mrs. Berl Jalonen of Calvary Free in Eben, and the afternoon speaker will be Seminary Intern, Reuben Unseth, from Chassell.

AFLBS HOMECOMING DATES GIVEN

Date: Oct. 9-11

Theme: "Proclaim the Glory of the Lord" (Psalm 96:2-3).

Honored Classes: 1972, 1977, 1982.

A REQUEST FROM THE ARCHIVES

A number of AFLC congregations celebrated special anniversaries this summer and published historical booklets in honor of the occasion. The seminary archives plans to open a file for each of our congregations, to include important historical data, and a copy of all past and present publications would be sincerely appreciated. Please send your material to: Seminary Archives, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55441.

NOTICE: The 25th Anniversary Annual Conference in Thief River Falls recognized those who had attended the first Conference in 1962 with special badges announcing, "I Was There in '62." The supply was soon exhausted and those who did not receive one recorded their names on a list at the registration desk. A new order will be placed to meet the demand and the badges will be mailed to those who requested them. If anyone who was present at the first Conference, but was unable to attend this year or neglected to sign the list would like to receive one of the badges, please contact the AFLC vice-president at the headquarters in Minneapolis.

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

Second-class postage
paid at Waukegan, Minn.

METHUSELAH . . .

they are simply religious benchwarmers! They seldom, if ever, show up and take part in a prayer meeting. It's hard to put our finger on anything terrible in their lives. Nice religious citizens! We believers talk about Jesus, how He saved us, about reaching people for the Lord, having a concern and burden for souls. "Born again" individuals, in love and sincerity, express their God-given discernment and concern about certain individuals as to whether they are really saved or not! It is in such gatherings that these church benchwarmers appear to be on a different spiritual wave length. Somehow they switch to a different channel! The expressions of the Christians seem stifled; the talk has run into a dead-end! God deliver us from being, or becoming, Methuselahs!

There are a few people who make things happen. Yes, some *watch things happen* (in the church as regarding carrying out Christ's Commission).

Most people are satisfied with a *lukewarm status quo*! They are like the Five Foolish Virgins in Matthew 25. They were nice morally, religious, very evangelical, believed in the Lord's coming again, went forth to meet Him and were surprised when left outside!

Much effort and cost is put forth

today in research by medical science and through transplants, etc., to help people live longer. For what purpose? What for? Let us learn from the oldest person who ever lived on this earth, of whom we can only say, he lived 969 years and then died. Rather, give heed to the emphasis of John the Baptist, whose ministry only lasted six months, but of whom Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:11).

Without a doubt, of the approximate 300 questions and answers in the old Lutheran Catechism, question number one is: "What should be our first concern in this life?" The answer is rightly given: "Our first concern in this life is that we are saved!"

Let us be sure that we don't go the way of Methuselah and "miss the boat!" Rather, let us join the redeemed with their blessed hope and sing:

We're traveling home,
we're traveling home!
O, won't you come aboard,
our pilot is the Lord.
We're traveling home,
we're traveling home
to a land of endless day!