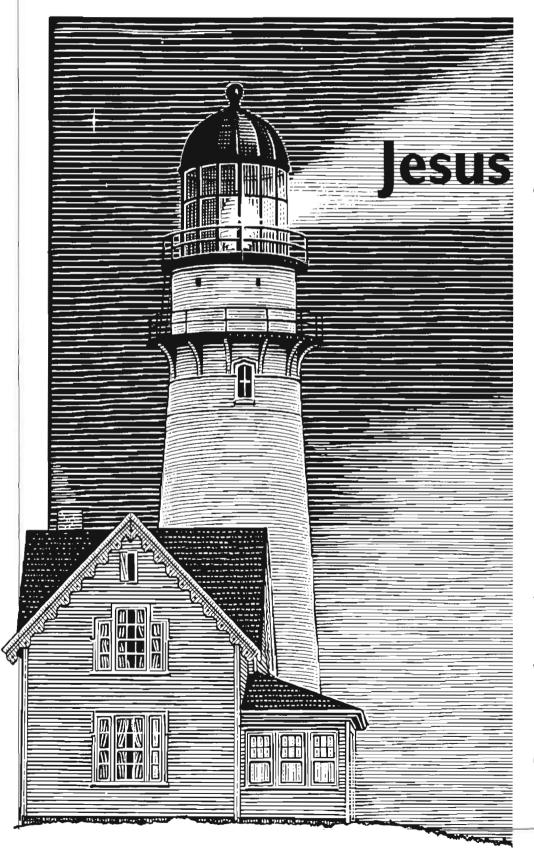
ATHE LUTHERAN APRIL 10, 2001



esus guides us to safety



Yo are invited, so please come! p. 4

What will you give in exchange for your soul?

p. 6

God offers help to parents

p. 8

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

April 10, 2001 Volume 39, Number 5



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CONTENTS

The Lord says you're invited, so please come

p. 4

The value of one soul

p. 6

God wants to help parents help their kids p. 8

Why travel the narrow way?

p. 10

The Lutheran Ambassador

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

A tool in God's work shed

remember the thrill I had as a youth when I was allowed to use some of Dad's tools. I graduated to the power tools only after I had proven my competency with the manual ones. Along the way, there were some painful lessons. I remember hitting my thumb with the hammer, slicing my finger with the window blade scrapper, and nailing two boards together only to discover that the nail had also penetrated the basement steps. Needless to say, I truly was a work in progress! Fortunately, for you, I never took up the carpentry trade.

In spite of my lack of expertise in this area, I am extremely thankful that God saw some potential in me. Like all of His children, God wanted to make something from me and of me. The Bible calls this project being a "light" (Matthew 5:14), a witness (Acts 1:8), and an ambassador (II Corinthians 5:20).

When God saved us, He did so for a purpose. We are not merely a trophy in a display case, but a tool in God's work shed. As a tool, there is also a sense in which each of us is a work in progress. Before any tool is marketable, it is first tested and tried to be sure it can perform the tasks for which it was intended. God is constantly at work within all His children molding and fashioning us into the tools He desires.

Tools reflect their designer. God wants us to be shining examples of what He can do with "works in progress." As His tools, we are witnesses and ambassadors. We are not only witnesses of who our designer is, but also of what our designer can do. Imagine that — we are a living advertisement for God's handiwork. He has entrusted us with that role. Just like Dad allowed me to use his tools, so God allows us to be His

tools. What a privilege! What a responsibility!

God in His almighty wisdom has fashioned each of His believing children to be a spokesperson for Him. You need not be a polished speaker or writer. You need not have an extensive vocabulary. You simply need to be a willing tool in the Master's hand. I can imagine no greater privilege than being used of God to assist another work in progress, yet that is exactly how God wishes to use you and me. The question is, will you let Him use you in this way? It is the greatest work you can possibly be involved with. It is a work that bears fruit for eternity.



Pastor Edward Strom
 Emmanuel and Hauge
 Lutheran Parish
 Kenyon, Minnesota

In the end, only God can satisfy - precisely because we are made to relate to God. and luxuriate in his presence.

-Alister McGrath



Christ calls us not to a place, but to himself. His command is "Follow me," not "Go over there." -Ben Patterson

We need to repent of the haughty way in which we sometimes stand in judgment upon Scripture and

must learn to sit humbly under its judgment instead. ... We must allow the Word of God to confront us, to disturb our security, to undermine our complacency and to overthrow our patterns of thought and behavior.

-John Stott

God is not disillusioned with us. He never had any illusions to begin with.

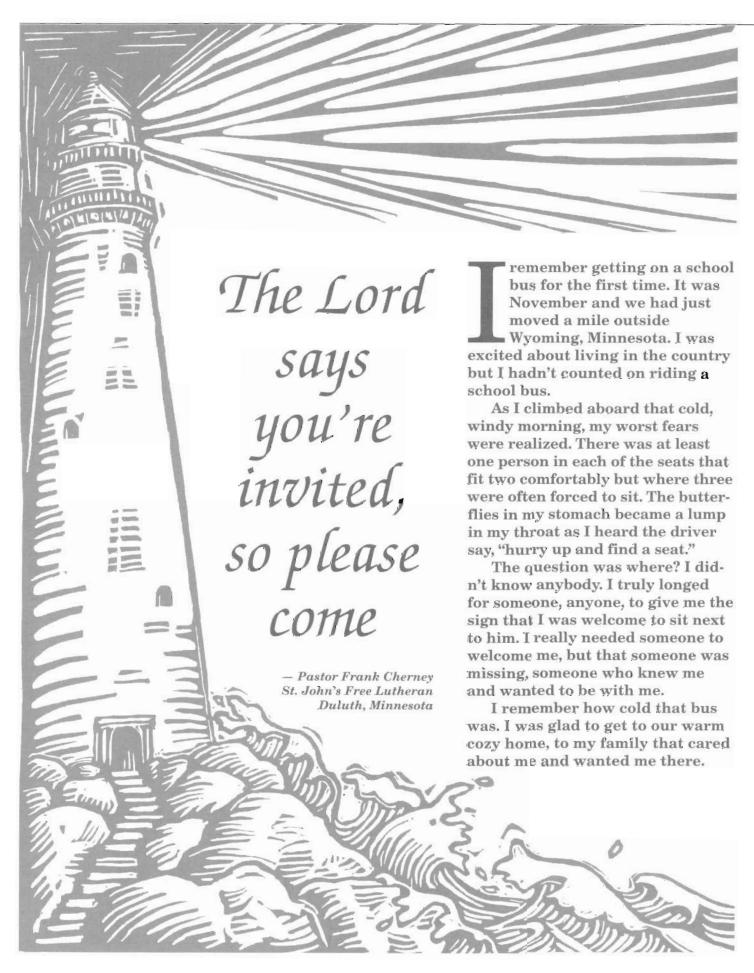
-Luis Palau

Discovering God is a journey beyond all others, an adventure that soars above our highest thoughts and kindles our deepest longings. -David Needham



Good works do not make a good man, but a good man does good works; evil works do not make a wicked man, but a wicked man does evil works.

-Martin Luther



Have you sensed that something or rather someone is missing in your life? That someone is God. We are meant to have a personal relationship with God and be a part of His family for eternity. It is a relationship we don't have by nature, but we can through Jesus.

Jesus wants to lovingly welcome each one to a personal relationship with Him. We are incomplete without this relationship, because at the most basic level of our existence we need the boundless love and fellowship of God. We were created for it.

Jesus has been involved in your life from the very beginning. God's Word tells us. "all things were created by Him and for Him" (Colossians 1:16). It was Jesus who knit us together in our mother's womb. We are no accident. He wants us to know Him. Even though we have had no interest in Him, He is concerned about us. If we have forgotten Him and His rightful place in our lives, He still remembers us. The Lord says, "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See I have engraved you on the palms of my hands your walls are ever before me" (Isaiah 49:15, 16). He knows our thoughts, joys and sorrows. He knows the walls we've built

He knows your heart and how deceitful it is (I Samuel 16:7), and yet He loves you.

we might say and do.

to protect ourselves and what

we really think, no matter what

Christ welcomes you because you have been created for Him and no other relationship can take His place. You can't fulfill the need for a personal relationship with Him in anything else. We may think buddies, family, friends or some kind of success will do it, but nothing can take God's place in your life.

There is so much talk about following your heart today but the Bible says the "heart is deceitful above all things, who can know it" (Jeremiah 17:10). Living for yourself instead of for God, following your heart instead of following after the Lord's, is really a good definition of sin. The Bible says, "there is none righteous, each one has turned to his own way" (Romans 3:10).

Jesus is ready to welcome vou. Because of what He did in dying on the cross and rising again, there is nothing to keep you from coming. First John 4:7, 9 says, "All love comes from God ... This is how God showed His love

among us: He sent His Son into the world that we might live through Him." The one through whom and for whom all things were created (even you and me) left the glory of heaven and became a man (John 1:14). It is only Jesus who could pay the penalty. He could take upon himself the eternal punishment that our sin deserves because He is eternal God. And He could truly experience sorrow, trial and even suffer and die because He was a true man. Second Corinthians 5:21 explains that Jesus loved you so much that though He had no sin. He became sin (our sin) for us and bore the punishment that our sin deserves, removing the barrier that separates us from God.

He now welcomes all that turn to Him in faith, "Repent then and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out" (Acts 3:19). It is through repentance and faith that sins are forgiven. Repentance is a Bible word for turn. It means turning from following your own heart to putting your trust in Jesus Christ alone and what He has done for you and following Him.

God's promise is certain: "To all who received Him, to those who believe in His name, He gave the right to become the children of God." We are acceptable in the world when we wear the right clothes, live at the right

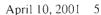
address, drive the right car. use the right lingo. We are accepted as part of God's family because Christ loves us and gave Himself for us.

As a member of God's family you can have a personal relationship with the Person you were made by and for.

No one welcomes us like Jesus. He is different from what anyone could expect. The Jews of His day expected the Christ to be like Elijah, who would burn up the sinners and tax collectors like chaff (Luke 3:17, 18). But Jesus Christ comes

and gives personal attention to individuals. "He eats and drinks with sinners" (Luke 5:30).

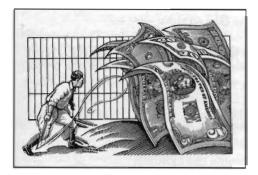
Instead of stoning the harlot, the sinner, the tax collector Jesus takes their place. If you think there is no welcome for you because you know that God said not to do this or that and you have gone your own way, listen. Christ in love calls you to turn from following your own heart and to come to Him. Tell Him now that by faith you receive Him and His love for you and that you will follow Him. As you follow Him, he will melt your heart and mold it after His own. 36



- Roger David

The value of

he ambitious student of business had plans for various stages of his career and life. He talked of his dreams of success and making a lot of money. The professor listened carefully, and his next question was always, "And then what?" The student was eventually led into talking about his retirement and old age. The professor continued



asking, "And then what?" Running out of answers and nearly exasperated. the student eventually blurted out, "Well, I suppose then I'll die!" The professor did not stop the questioning but asked again, "And then what?" The business student's long-range planning fell far short of long range. He

had no answer for the final "And then what?" It seems he ignored the obvious fact that 70, 100 or even 120 years is a much shorter period than eternity.

To completely "write off" soul-related concerns is described in the Bible as a foolish thing. To simply dismiss even the possibility of an eternal soul is, to say the least, a blind disregard for ultimate well being. However, many, while accepting the possibility of a life to come, may allow spiritual resistance to keep them from recognizing the full value of the immortal soul.

A good business person wants to know and appreciate the true facts before investing large amounts of precious time, energy and other resources. The smart investment is made for solid "bottom line" profits - not for illusory and vanishing returns that will be short-lived. Similarly, a wise person will not approach life without inquiring into the truth of what it is all about. It would be foolhardiness merely to assume that the soul is of negligible value, that it could never be in any eternal danger, or that this present life is more important than the one to come.

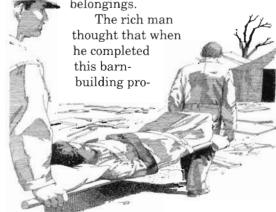
Jesus once talked about a most important balance sheet for profit and loss. "For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul" (Matthew 16:26). He also said, "Do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). Loss of this life is nothing compared in value to eternal destruction of both body and soul.

Danger to the soul and miscalculation of its value results when excessive weight is given to concerns of this life such as money. power, possessions, good times or health. Bickering about inheritance can endanger souls and also threaten family relationships. Once, a man in a crowd called out to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." Jesus responded: "Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?" (Jesus did not say He had no right to judge between the man and his brother, but it was clear that Jesus was in control and was not going to be diverted from His teaching in order to set up court.) The Lord used this remark from the man in order to make a point about what is really valuable.

He said to the crowd: "Beware, and be on your guard against every from of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions." He then told a parable about a rich fool (Luke 12:13-21).

The rich but foolish man in the story had much land that gave him good crops. His "problem" was that he was running out of storage space because the farm was producing so well. He thought about the situation and decided to tear down his existing barns and build bigger ones. Then he would

> have plenty of room to store his valuable crops and all his other belongings.



one soul

ject he could say to his soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

But God had other ideas. His response to the man is recorded in Luke 12: "You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?" Jesus concluded the parable by saving that this is how it is with people who pile up riches in this world but are not "rich toward God."

Along with placing the right value on the soul, how can one be "rich toward God?" Can we work hard to build up credits with Him? No. Every soul has a fatal disease that, unless cured. causes not only death at the end of this life, but also an eternal "death" of separation from God in "outer darkness," where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:42).

To be sure, these are straight-talking, hard words of Christ. They are warnings through His tears for those who turn their backs on Him. This disease, called sin, is a failure to keep God's law. His law does not merely look at external deeds, but examines the depths of heart and soul — inquiring also into hatred. lusts and lies. (See I John 3:15; Matthew 5:28 and 15:19; Ephesians 4:25.) His law is exacting, and there is no grading on the curve. The standard is perfection. The Bible says we have all broken this holy law. When stacked up against this highest of laws, even what we view as our righteous deeds look like "filthy rags." There is no hope of improving a balance sheet through trying to please God in our own strength with our so-called "good works."

You can be rich toward God

But there is good news. God has provided a way to be rich toward Him. The hope for the soul is through Jesus Christ, the only Savior. Forgiveness of sins is offered through His shedding of blood and death on the cross.

Some ignore this offer from God, partly because they do not want to consider eternal questions They have underestimated the value of their souls or have overestimated the value of this life. Perhaps a few take seriously the bumper sticker that reads, "He who dies with the most toys, wins!"

The transparent shallowness of that sticker should be apparent. It should not require a shrewd business manager to figure out that the value of an eternal soul is infinitely greater

than the largest fortune imaginable — worth far more than all the "toys" one could ever want, and far more precious than all the silver and gold ever mined.

Making the wrong "write off" decisions can end in devastating loss on the



bottom line. Writing off God's Law and the consequences for breaking it, writing off His offer of forgiveness through the sacrifice of His Son

Jesus Christ, and writing off the promise of new and eternal life — these decisions lead to worse than final bankruptcy of one's soul.

Through the life, death and resurrection of Christ, God has left for us evidence that cries out to be examined. Jesus. His claims and His teachings deserve to be thoroughly checked out. He claims to be God who has taken on human form in order to get through to us. He claims to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and that no one comes to God the Father except through Him (John 14:6). With Him, there is eternal life for the soul, but without Him the soul awaits eternal destruction. Millions who have given Him honest and open-minded consideration have been drawn to recognize that He is the living Lord and Savior. New life and salvation for the soul are received simply through repentance and faith. This involves being truly sorry for violating God's law, trusting only in Christ for complete forgiveness and then wanting to follow Him in response to the love He has shown. (See Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 10:9-13; Galatians 2:16.)

You owe it to yourself and loved ones to give serious consideration to what Christ and the Bible say about the value of your soul and its eternal well being. The worth of your soul is so great that God came in the person of Jesus to redeem it with a price beyond measure, so your profit with Him can be unlimited and unending.



(The author is a lay pastor serving Good Shepherd Lutheran in Lincoln, Illinois. He also works as an attorney for the State of Illinois.)

God wants to help parents help their kids

- Anne Erickson Badger Creek Lutheran Badger, Minnesota

> ur Almighty God, Redeemer and Creator deserves all our praise. Psalms 118:29 says, "Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His loving kindness is everlasting." I can never praise and thank our God enough for all He has done for us.

As a parent who has a biblical view of life. I can teach our children truth and the meaning of life as God created it. Basics first. I want my children to know that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. He created man in His image. Man fell into sin, which separated him from God. God created us that we would have fellowship with Him, but man made a choice that took away the blessings that our Father had for us.

Yet God had a plan, for His love for mankind was so great. He sent His beloved Son to earth to die for us, to take the punish-



ment for our sins. Jesus suffered and died for you and me on the cross, taking the punishment for our sins, so that we may once again have fellowship with our Father.

It is a scary thought to wonder what my life would have been without Jesus. I am so thankful to have been brought up in a Christian home with Christian parents who taught us about Jesus, brought us to church regularly, disciplined when needed, and taught us right from wrong.

God has blessed Farrell, my husband, and me with four children, along with their spouses, and l4 special grandchildren. (One more is on the way!)

When I was asked to share on how my faith has made a difference in parenting, I felt the Lord wanted me to do it, even though there are people more capable. I am a very simple person, but God made me who I am, and He made me special as He has made you special. He has a plan for each and every one of His creation. His love for you and me is much greater than we can ever know. His love continues through the happy days of parenting as well as the days of trial.

God has given us His Word, the Bible, and in it is everything we need to know to fulfill the greatest plan for our lives. How many of us take a map along when we travel, to guide us where to go? How much more we need a guide for life. It is important not only in our lives, but also for the lives of our children. The life we live is the example they see and learn from.

I was brought up in a home where we had family time in the Bible and in prayer, usually in the morning. As children, we didn't always enjoy these times, especially when a parent's prayers were a little long,

or we wanted to hurry through because the school bus was coming. Yet today, I am so thankful for what our parents taught us in reading His Word, and the need for prayer.

When Farrell and I married, I desired to have similar family times. It took us about 14 years into our marriage before this happened. Our oldest child was 13 at the time, and our youngest was 7. God had blessed us in many ways, and helped us in raising our children. We felt we were doing the best we could, but we were lacking in giving our children one very important example — family time in Bible reading, prayer and worship, called devotions.

Many important decisions were made as we raised our children. School activities were growing in priority in the lives of our children. There was to be a school dance and would our son attend? My convictions were very strong against dancing and Farrell had danced growing up. I am very thankful today for the strong convictions I was taught growing up, but I am also thankful for the Lord giving me a husband, who with his love for me and his family, helped keep us on the level.

We were milking cows during those years, and Farrell and I found ourselves discussing this issue while in the barn. Our hours together in the barn are special memories, but these discussions weren't some of them, as they got us tearing at each other.

It was about this time, that our neighbor's nine-year-old son was taken home to be with the Lord through a three-wheeler accident. We were friends of the family and had a son the same age. The Lord used that young life to touch the lives of many people. It was through this experience that

our family started having family devotions.

We grew in our understanding of our responsibility as parents. Each child is a gift from God and we began learning the importance of loving the Lord with all our heart, soul, and strength, and to share that with our children through word and action. We realize that while each of our children need to have their own personal faith in Christ, it is crucial to be Christ's example to them.

Deuteronomy 6:5-7 says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your might and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you



walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up." Then in the next chapter we are promised, "so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged."

As a parent, are we teaching our children eternal values? Each soul is eternal, and time is running short. This past weekend, a co-worker and friend, was taken suddenly from this world, with a massive stroke. She was only fifty years old. She had lived a life of much stress and heartaches. but her love for Jesus, and her love for her family was strong. She is now home with her Jesus for eternity, knowing no more pain or sorrow, no more tears, no more rejection, but a

peace and joy that no man on earth can possible know. She is singing praises to her Lord and Savior. I know that if I could ask her today what her next desire would be, she would answer, "that my family would one day join me in heaven, to meet my Jesus."

There is a real urgency today, more than ever, to share Jesus with our family from day one. Don't wait till tomorrow, for tomorrow may be too late. The greatest gift we can give our children is to introduce them to Jesus Christ and to build a solid foundation in Him and His Word. Then they can withstand the trials and temptations of this world which pound at their lives.

"The greatest gift we can give our children is to introduce them to Jesus Christ ..." Pastor Gerald F. Mundfrom Osceola, Wisconsin

Why travel the narrow way?

he Bible speaks of a strait gate through which those loaded with worldly luggage are not allowed to enter. It is an unpopular, hard-to-travel, narrow way that leads to heaven, as compared to a wide gate where everything is permissible. This is the popular, easy-to-travel, broad way that leads to hell.

Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there at; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Matthew 7:13, 14).

Many attempts have been made to find an easier way to heaven, which would give more freedom to enjoy the sins, comforts and pleasures of this world, than the old-fashioned, narrow way. Christianity is often pictured as a happy, prosperous, successful life on earth—the extreme opposite of the hard-totravel, narrow way pictured in the Bible. These false prophets would tell us that unless you are experiencing this deluxe train ride into heaven, perhaps there is something amiss with your Christianity.

John Bunyan in *Pilgrim's Progress*, tells of the struggles and temptations Christian faces as he traveled the narrow road to heaven. At one point on this trip, Christian



met Mr. Worldly-Wise, who tried to convince Christian that he was foolish to travel such a hard, narrow road to heaven because there was an easier way to travel; a cross-free way.

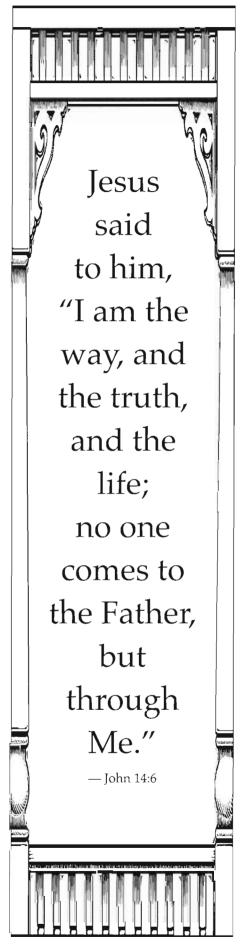
The story goes that Christian forsook the narrow way for the supposedly easier cross-free way. But the road proposed by Mr. Worldly-Wise was not cross-free and it did not lead to heaven. Rather, it came to a dangerous end. Christian almost lost his life and his soul before making his way back to the narrow way; the only sure way to heaven

Jesus told His followers in Mark 8:34, that His way was the way of self-denial and cross-bearing. Christianity is a warfare against sin and evil. Like any other warfare, it is costly and entails hardship and suffering, possibly even death.

Let us not allow ourselves to be tempted away from the truth. Satan well knows that if he can tempt us to leave the narrow way for an easier traveling way and be deceived that we are still on the right path, he will have succeeded in causing us to miss heaven.



taken from The Morning Glory
September 5, 1989
with permission from the author



It's a long ride to school

very Sunday after church, Don Luehring leaves his home in Fairbury. Nebraska to drive 505 miles up I-35 to attend the Monday morning Free Lutheran Seminary class on evangelism. "The Lord laid it on my heart and I have to be obedient," says the 59-year-old owner of an automatic transmission repair shop. He says it so matter-of-fact that one would not even consider that this might just be unusual.

He started the spring semester class on January 29. Midwestern winter weather has not been kind to travelers on I-35 across Nebraska to Minneapolis, "Once when the interstate closed, I just pulled off and opened a book to read. Forty-five minutes later, I saw a truck pull out so I slipped in behind him and away we went," chuckled Luehring. Oh ves, folks at church at times have urged him not to leave due to weather conditions, but he says, "No, I have to go." He quickly adds that it is because of the Lord's help and protection that he has safely arrived each week.

Don and his wife, Diana, have two grown children. They have owned their business for thirty years and following the Lord's leading has not always been so important.

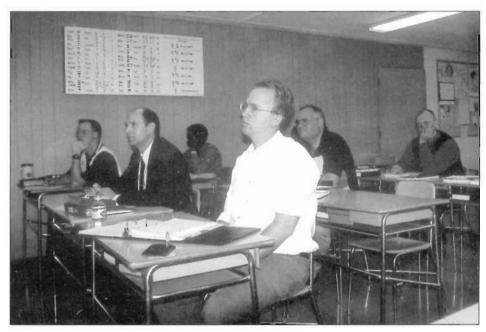
Seven years ago, the Lord

changed Don's life. "Ever since I have desired to be obedient to my Savior. I used to fear death, now I have a sense of peace. I was always a churched man, unless the fish were biting, but I just didn't know Jesus as my Savior." Don added, "I really didn't thank Him like I should. And now especially in the past 18 months, the Lord has given me a real burden for evangelism. That's why I had to take the evangelism course taught by AFLC Evangelism Director, Jim Rasmussen."

For sixteen Mondays, until May

14. Don is committed to attend that seminary class. He changed his work week so that his day off is Monday. After class ends on Monday at 11 a.m., he is back on the interstate headed south to begin his work week on Tuesday. "In fact, when I get home, I'm already looking forward to returning for the next class." Don said, "I don't know where the Lord is leading, but I do know He is faithful. I've seen so many ways where He has shown me just how near He is to me."

-Solveig Hjermstad

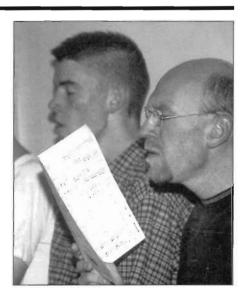


Free Lutheran Seminary classroom at the campus in Plymouth, Minnesota.



Pray for the AFLBS choir and Proclaim tours singing in Eastern **Europe** and western states.

They are scheduled to depart after Easter and return to the campus by May 6.



Out reach and Vision 2004

hat is out reach? When one looks at the words separately you have the word out, the opposite of in, which means to leave or be absent from. Then you have the word reach which means to stretch out, extend, put forth.

When you then put them together you have a statement that is used within the Christian community in relation to sharing or spreading the Gospel to the unsaved. We use it in the sense of evangelism. Using the phrase "out reach" in referring to sharing the gospel, indicates that we are going outside of our selves and extending to others what God has given to us.

Jesus commissioned us to go out to all the nations and make disciples, and to teach what He commanded. Many times this involves stretching out to leave a comfort zone where we normally feel safe. A familiar gospel song gives the challenge, "reach out and touch a life. torn and dirty, a man who is lonely, if you care!"

The concept of **out reach** is what the AFLC seminary and Bible school is all about. We are seeing an

increased desire by men to enter the ministry and young adults to come to Bible school and learn about Jesus Christ. With our increasing foreign students and seminarians our schools have gained a new perspective for out reach. Our schools are stretching out, extending, and putting forth the gospel, not only within our own country, but also nationally. Isn't this exciting? What a great joy it is to be a part of the great commission in making disciples of all nations and teaching them as Jesus commanded.

You, too, can be a part of the outreach for our schools through Vision 2004. Vision 2004 is not just a building project, but more importantly it is about out reach. Out reach in the sense of expanding to house, train, and equip more students from all over the world, enabling them to go out into the world with the gospel.

Dear friends, the need for out reach is great and we at Vision 2004 want to do all we can to make sure that your schools have the faculty, staff, and facilities needed to meet the challenges ahead before the Lord returns.

How can we encourage you to

Summer

outreach

vacation Bible

school

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you: and lo I am with you always, to the close of the age."

Matthew 28:19-20

reach out? Look around you. There are needs right where you are. There is a need to encourage and pray more men into the ministry. There is a need of encouraging more young people to attend Bible school. There are needs of space to handle the growth that is happening at our schools. There are financial needs. How about it? Will you reach out and be a part of our schools through Vision 2004?

> - Pastor Tonnes Pollestad Vision 2004 Project Coordinator

Seminary receives matching funds

Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) recently presented \$5,500 to the Free Lutheran Seminary in Minneapolis through the AAL member gift matching program. The total reflects AAL's matched portion of contributions received from members during the fourth quarter of 2000.

AFLC campus dates

May 25 — Spring choir concert at 8 p.m.

May 26 — Graduation 1 p.m.

May 29 — Summer ministry

team training begins

"Go and make disciples of all nations."



Vacation Bible school can be a wonderful opportunity for believers to grow in their faith and for unbelievers and unchurched to hear the Word of God and learn about Jesus the Savior. Consider sponsoring a vacation Bible school at your church as an evangelism outreach to the community.

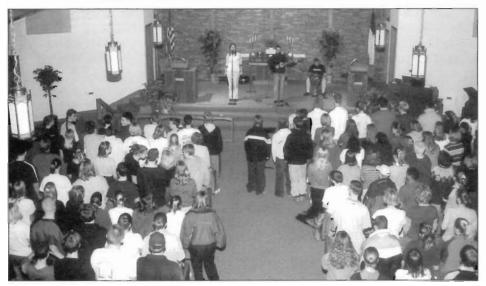
Encourage children in your congregation to ask their friends to come.

Invite families in your neighborhood.

Offer to give rides to children who need them.

Pray for the teachers and the children who come.

A letter has been sent from the parish education office to all AFLC congregations addressed to the VBS coordinator, recommending VBS kits for 2001. Additional information is available upon request. Contact AFLC Parish Education at 763-533-9330 or parished@aflc.org.



Fergus Falls, Minnesota — Calvary Free Lutheran hosted a Community Youth Night on February 21. Three hundred youth and over 50 adults, representing 25 area churches, gathered for the evening which featured "Servants With A Call" from Teen Mania Ministries.



Sioux Falls, South Dakota -Abiding Savior Lutheran voted overwhelmingly to approve an expansion plan pending a successful fund drive, which concludes on April 11. The expansion plan includes two educational wings to the existing facility along with funds earmarked for a new church plant in the Sioux Falls area. Abiding Savior was organized in 1989 and has been at the present facility in the southeast side of the city for the past three and a half years. Pastor Michael Brandt has served the congregation since 1991.

Gordon Newell, 89, Cumberland, Wisconsin, passed away on February 28, 2001. He was one of the early volunteers working on the Association Retreat Center property after its purchase in 1979. Besides wearing out many lawn mowers over the summers, he assisted in the making of the lake and the horseshoe pit. The funeral service was at Hosanna Free Lutheran with Pastor Earl Korhonen officiating. His wife, Doris, and three children, six grandchildren and eight greatgrandchildren survive him.



Linda Odegaard and ladies from Beaver Creek and Norman Lutheran serving at an AFLC annual conference.

Linda Odegaard, Tioga, North Dakota, passed away on February 27, 2001. She was born February 25, 1946 to Reuben and Joyce Guttormson. After graduation from Tioga High School in 1964, she received her nursing degree from St. Andrews School of Nursing in Bottineau, North Dakota. She married Stephen Odegaard on August 24, 1969. She worked in hospitals and nursing homes in the communities where her husband served congregations, which included: Hatton, North Dakota; Winger, Minnesota; Kirkland, Washington; and Eugene, Oregon. They served Norman Lutheran and Beaver Creek Lutheran Parish of rural Tioga since 1987.

She is survived by her husband, Pastor Stephen Odegaard; two sons, Kevin of Seattle, Washington, and David of Redmond, Washington; her parents, four brothers and two sisters.

Spencer Creek Lutheran Newsletter of Eugene, Oregon, included this tribute to their beloved friend and former pastor's wife. "Linda was the quintessential example of great suffering with a godly and positive attitude, and while we mourn her loss, especially for Steve and sons, Kevin and David, we rejoice in the sure knowledge that she is in the very presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, complete and whole and filled with joy."

PEOPLE & PLACES



Shakopee, Minnesota - on February 25, 2001 Faith Lutheran dedicated their new education wing to the Lord. The new wing. which has eight classrooms and additional restrooms, was built to hold the growing Sunday school and Pioneer Club. Most of the work was done by volunteers from the congregation. The members of Faith Lutheran praise the Lord for His faithfulness in making it possible to build the wing without having to borrow money.



Help us with spring cleaning!

Bring brushes/rollers to paint the tabernacle. Start work on the toddler park in memory of Peter Westlake.

> April 20-21 Please call ahead 1-800-294-2877 The Association Retreat Center Osceola, Wisconsin

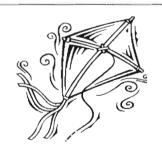


Eastern European Missions Network will again coordinate a trip to Russia this summer for the English language camps that are conducted in Petrozavodsk. For more information, contact Pastor Don Richman at 952-881-3554. There is a great need for teachers, including high school seniors.

FLY convention countdown - July 16-21 the Free Lutheran Youth Convention will be meeting in Estes Park, Colorado, Over 1,100 people have registered but there is still room. (The discount rate has expired.) The convention CD and Tshirt can be ordered for only \$10 each. For more information call 763-545-5631 or check us out on the web

at www.aflc.org/vouth

Binford, North Dakota -Bethany Free Lutheran will celebrate their 100-year anniversary on June 3, 2001. Events will begin at 9 a.m. with a brunch, followed by worship services at 10:30, with Pastor Wesley Langaas speaking. After the fellowship dinner, AFLC President Robert Lee will be the featured speaker for the afternoon program.



Don't let vour estate blow around in the wind. Guard your legacy and make a difference, for Jesus' sake.

Estate planning is not reserved for the very wealthy. Everyone needs to consider estate planning. We have someone available who will give free advice on these matters. Call Mark Johnson at 1-800-950-2109

Pastor Fred Carlson, formerly of Wadena, Minnesota is now residing in a care facility in the Minneapolis area. He enjoys hearing from AFLC friends and especially the pastors. His address is

%Maranatha Care Center 5401 - 69th Ave. N. Brooklyn Center, MN 55429 Phone: 763-549-9600

Senior Seminarian Todd Erickson, has accepted a call to serve on the pastoral staff of Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran in Lakeville, Minnesota where he is completing a year of internship.

Springfield, Missouri -Immanuel Lutheran is hosting an AFLC Southern District Youth Retreat the weekend of April 20-21. Jason Gudim, the youth director at First Lutheran in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma will be the speaker.

> Address changes: Pastor Dennis and Marilyn Gray 19594 350th St. NW

Newfolden, MN 56738-9286

Missionaries David and Sarah **Nelson** have a new e-mail address pastorluterano@netcabo.pt

Pastor Ray and Doris Persson, Astoria, Oregon have accepted a call to minister to the Clatsop Retirement Village which includes conducting a worship service on Sunday mornings. The Perssons are retired and are members of Bethany Free Lutheran.

Pastor Alex Lissow, Laurel, Montana, has accepted a call to serve Bethel Lutheran in Culbertson, Montana, and Faith Lutheran of Brockton, Montana. A graduate of Faith Seminary, Tacoma, Washington, he currently serves an independent congregation. The coordinating committee at their January meeting approved him for call in the AFLC.

Pastor Gerald Gettis, Vernon, British Columbia, has accepted a call to serve Calvary Free Lutheran. Mesa, Arizona, a home missions congregation. He has been a pastor in Vernon since 1980, and is chairman of the coordinating committee for the AFLC-Canada

News you can use

recent newspaper told of weekend flights being offered between Detroit and Bozeman, Montana. Since I live in the Pacific Northwest and don't have any plans to travel to either Detroit or Bozeman, that news is not of much relevance to me. Another article, however, had a headline talking about computers and free web access. That did interest me. That appeared to be news I could use.

The message of the Bible is not merely a message that was of interest many years ago. It is news that is up-to-date and practical for the present. It relates to what is going on this day in my hometown and yours. The good news of what Jesus has done in dying on the cross and rising again is the ultimate "news you can use."

The truth of Jesus' death and resurrection is called the gospel. Gospel means good news. The gospel is also practical, relevant and extremely useful.

The gospel is news we can use in addressing our biggest problems. One of the problems that plagues people is guilt. God created each of us with a conscience that causes us to regret what we have done. We are concerned about what we have left undone. We wonder about the consequences of our actions and our inaction. Attempts to deny guilt's existence don't work. It keeps coming back and eating at our soul.

God inspired a man to write in the Bible, "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away though my groaning all

day long" (Psalm 32:3, NIV). Guilt was getting to him. "Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord' — and you forgave the guilt of my \sin " (Psalm 32:5, NIV).

Our guilt is dealt with when we believe in Jesus because at the cross "he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5, NIV). He paid the penalty in full for all of our sins. Guilt can be washed away because of the blood Jesus shed for us.

Another problem commonly faced is worry. The future scares us. We ponder what might happen and it makes us anxious. The gospel is the best and only real news that can help combat this kind of fear.

The Bible says, "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ... Who

is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died - more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ... in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:32, 34, 37, NIV).

God the Father, who gave Jesus, will certainly give us what we need to deal with whatever may come in the future. He was able to conquer death, and He can tackle whatever challenges will come our way.

A chapter in the Bible that teaches regarding Jesus' resurrection concludes with the declaration, "But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm, Let nothing move you" (I Corinthians 15:57, 58, NIV).

Relationships are another area of common problem. We often have troubles getting along with these other folks with whom we have to share the planet. Nothing is more practical in addressing this problem

than the cross and resurrection.

In describing Jesus the Bible says, "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility" (Ephesians 2:14-16, NIV).

Siblings sometimes have trouble getting along because they are both trying to earn their parent's favor. Jesus at the cross makes us right with God when we have faith in Him. We now no longer have to compete with anyone else to try to get ahead and earn the favor of our heavenly Father. Through Jesus we're equal members of the family of God. That which was creating the hostility need divide us no longer.

The news about possible web access won't do me much good if I don't act on it. Likewise with the good news of Jesus - we each need to act on it. "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12, NIV). We act on the good news by confessing sin and trusting in Jesus.

The message of Jesus' death and resurrection is good news; it's relevant, practical and life-transforming news.

-Pastor Craig Johnson

"The gospel is ... practical, relevant and extremely useful."

SOMETHING TO SHARE

n the context of evangelism, listening is one thing that seems so passive — so useless. How easy it is to think, "they'd be better off if they'd just listen to me!" Yet listening to someone else is one of the primary activities in winning a heart for Jesus.

Listening proves we're interested and we care, and that we're not merely out to fill our quota of souls for the year. And in listening, God may reveal to us an angle by which we might issue truth to an otherwise deceived heart.

Jesus himself modeled this often. Though it's fairly easy – all but the arrogant can listen – we rarely cease striving long enough to know of its worth or effectiveness.

Granted, what the unsaved or unchurched may have to share is often folly. But if folly is all they know, then find in folly the remnant of truth that has been twisted to form the lie. Most people have fallen, willingly or otherwise, for a distortion of the truth. No lie is as captivating as one which bears the likeness of truth.

In listening, we find context.

Notice Jesus at the well talking with
the Samaritan woman (paraphrased
from John 4). Everything He spoke
was crafted in the context of something she at first said or did. See the
conversation unfold like pieces of a
puzzle finding their place.

She comes to draw water.

Care to listen?

"Would you give me something to drink?"

She makes a comment about race, and asks why He (being a Jew) would ask a Samaritan woman for water.

"If you knew who it is who asks you ... you would've asked Him for living water."

She notices He has nothing to draw with, and asks if He thinks himself greater than Jacob, who gave them the well.

"Everyone who drinks this water (i.e. 'the water from the well that Jacob gave you') will be thirsty again, but the water that I give you will well up inside, springing forth to eternal life."

She wants this water to alleviate her workload and not have to keep coming back to the well, so she asks Him for it. Seeing she doesn't yet understand, He steers the conversation in another direction by gently calling her to face her sin.

"Go call your husband and come back."

Here she responds in part, and something happens that we haven't the space on this page to discuss. But she quickly acknowledges her sin, then tries to distance the conversation from her own personal shortcomings with an ambiguous observation that he's a prophet, and by raising a question of orthodoxy and right worship.

Jesus, in response to this, does not continue to press her personal issue of wrong living, but brings her good news (the gospel) within the context of her last statement.

"A time is coming when you will worship ... in spirit and truth."

When she admits to knowing something of the Messiah, our Lord at last "personalizes" this good news by saying:

"I who speak to you am He."

I believe this to be one of the greatest examples of evangelism in the Bible. Although there are, assuredly, some supernatural things occurring here, are we not to be receptive of Christ's promise, "These and even greater things you shall do" (John 14:12)? If nothing else, we can at least gain a greater respect for the place of listening, on our part, in evangelism.

As Christ was patient and enduring in guiding lost souls to Himself, so we too must be when pointing them to our Lord. The writer of Ecclesiastes said it rightly, "There is a time to be silent, and a time to speak." Let us be willing to "put in our time of silence" for those we long to see come to know Jesus. In doing so, God may provide an inroad for the truth, as we depend upon the Spirit's work in their hearts and ours.

Jeremy EricksonBadger, Minnesota