

The Lutheran **AMBASSADOR**

FEBRUARY 7, 1995



**Trusting in God
Through the Seasons of Life**

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

A Clean Slate

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1

In the chapters preceding Romans 8, the apostle has carefully outlined what God has done for us in Christ in order to put us right with Himself. In chapter eight he sums it up with no strings attached.

We tend to equate the new year with a new beginning, new resolve and renewed hope. All too often the hope is more like a deep longing which says, "I wish it **could** be different this time."

The bells of the new year have hardly died away and we are again aware of the same old sins that begin with the thoughts, then all too quickly bear fruit in our words and deeds.

Nor is that the end of it. There are also the sins of omission: the open-ended list of things we should have done. Some of these are real, some only imagined and some may be placed upon us by others. Ah yes, and standing in the "wings" is our old adversary, the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10), who is always ready to make the most of our weak spots. It all adds up to an open-ended guilt trip. Like a row of dominoes, each little failure "kicks in" to do its part to carry on the cycle of guilt.

Breaking the Guilt Cycle

It should not surprise us too much that we find ourselves caught in this web. Even the great apostle Paul knew what it was like. He sums up Romans seven by saying: "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" But there is a way out! Paul says in verse 25, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

The only way out is to be pardoned of all our "crimes" while we are still guilty. That is exactly what Christ did for us on the cross. "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8b). No, it is not fair, it is pure grace!

The "no condemnation" of Romans 8:1 means God has closed the case for every one who puts their trust in Christ as Savior. We are not on probation or obligated to do "community service." All charges are dropped!

Moreover, for all who are in Christ, God not only wipes the slate clean, He **keeps** it clean. As we "walk in the light, as He (God Himself) is in the light ... the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin" (I John 1:7). The thought is of a continuous action, something like a good windshield wiper in heavy rain or snow. The windshield is constantly kept clean.

No Strings Attached

The fact remains, there are no strings attached while we are living under grace. The law is not a whip to make God's people "shape up." It has never worked like that and is contrary to the Word of God. It is **grace** that frees us to serve God. Grace is not the absence of good works but it is the absence of struggle in that work.

*It is for freedom that Christ
has set us free.*

*Stand firm, then,
and do not let yourselves
be burdened again
by a yoke of slavery.*

Galatians 5:1



— by Pastor
Martin Christensen
Elbow,
Saskatchewan



A matter of life or death

It is a cold, threatening January day. You and your siblings have hurriedly gathered at the bedside of your 90-year-old mother. She has been failing for some time, but today there has been an abrupt change and you have been summoned. She does not respond to your greetings. You quickly assess her physical condition and notice that an IV is dripping fluids into her forearm. Together you anxiously await the arrival of her doctor.

He arrives shortly and invites you to an adjoining room, takes a chair and begins to speak. "Your mother has taken a turn for the worse. From her symptoms I can diagnose her situation fairly accurately, but sophisticated tests would be required for me to be sure. I think she is dying. I recommend that no further tests or treatments be given. I further recommend that the intravenous fluids be discontinued. I believe that it would be in her *best interest to allow her to die quickly.*"

A numbing silence settles into the room. The doctor excuses himself saying *he will leave you alone for a time and return later for your answer.*

What do you say? How are you to understand him? His attitude and words seem foreign and incomprehensible to your heart even though intelligible to your mind.

You and your family are facing what is called the **Quality of Life Ethic**. It is foreign to you because you always considered life to be a sacred gift from God.

Since the Roe v. Wade decisions of 1973, two ethical systems have been at war for the soul of America — the Quality of Life versus the Sanctity of Life systems.

The Bible teaches:

1. The eternal, sovereign Father God is the only One who gives life. He gives life because He is love (I John 4:16). He has chosen to create the family of man (Genesis 1:26; 2:7). Each individual is precious to Him (Psalm 139:13-18; Isaiah 43:1-7). He desires companionship with each person throughout that person's earthly life (Psalm 23), and in His own presence forever (John 14:2-3).

2. God has reserved for Himself the right to take life. Deuteronomy 32:39 says: "See now that I, even I am He and there is no god beside me: I kill and I make alive." Then there is Exodus 20:13, "Thou shall not kill."

From these two bedrock principles we understand a third:

3. Life has intrinsic value., Life is not less valuable because the living person is in pain or is retarded, mentally ill, handicapped, in a vegetative state, hated, persecuted, aged or terminally ill. God, who knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:9-10), knew when He created mankind that these horrors would befall some of us, yet He categorically states not only that He loves us (John 3:16) but that the essence of His very nature is love (I John 4:16). He demonstrated His love by suffering our well-deserved eternal punishment Himself on a cross so that He could have mercy on us and forgive all our sin and guilt (Romans 5:8-9).

When Job experienced intense suffering and began to question the goodness of God, He asked Job: "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?" (Job 38:4ff). God was saying, "My dear

son Job, you are the created one and I am the Creator. My wisdom and My knowledge are far beyond your power to comprehend. I therefore cannot explain My actions to you. I ask you to trust Me even though you cannot understand what I am working out for good in your life through this great difficulty.”

In contrast, the Quality of Life Ethic does not accept life as having intrinsic value, but has value only insofar as it meets someone’s arbitrary standard of “quality.” Some say life has insufficient quality if it does not produce goods or services. Others suggest quality is lacking if that life is painful, handicapped, unwanted, expensive, emotionally disturbed, senile or terminally ill. It is this switch in consensus that has brought to Oregon the first law in western history allowing assisted suicide!

The silence in the room is finally broken as these thoughts are expressed. Even if all your brothers and sisters agree that life has intrinsic value, you will still find it a difficult struggle to discern how to rightly apply biblical principles to your beloved mother’s situation!



“
**We cannot hurry
the hour of death
out of some
human sense
of ‘mercy or
compassion.’**
”

Questions need to be asked: What illness is this? Don’t we need a more certain diagnosis? Is Mother indeed dying now? Is it really in her “best interest” to shorten her life by dehydration? If she has irre-

vocably entered the dying process, should she be given any treatments that will lengthen the process?

Euthanasia means that death is caused or purposely speeded up when it is “in the best interest” of the patient. With or without the patient’s consent, this is done by lethal injection, suffocation, or by removing basic and routine treatment — including water and food. This is an integral part of the Quality of Life Ethic.

But God is love! We cannot know what good and perhaps eternal purpose He may have for a life even while that person is suffering. Since our human minds are incapable of such knowledge, we trust God. We believe such a thing as life without purpose does not exist; even if the only purpose is to teach the rest of us how to love and care for the helpless. Certainly God takes no delight in the suffering of man and asks us to do all in our power to relieve it for each other. We understand that God reserves for Himself the right to take life and we cannot hurry the hour of death out of some human sense of “mercy or compassion.”

But can you allow your mother to die naturally? Are you morally obligated to use all of the resources of modern medicine to prolong the death process? No. Dr. Paul Marx in his book, *The Mercy Killers*, states that when a patient has “irrevocably entered the process of dying” we need not use extreme measures that will only prolong that process.

You agree to provide your loved one with good nursing care and love as long as life remains. Food and water are the right of every human being. Intravenous infusions are not “extreme” measures. Even Pedialyte can be given through a fine nasal-gastric tube when the ability to swallow is gone.

There in that quiet room next door to your mother, you realize you need more time before giving your doctor an answer. You need more insight, perhaps more tests, more counsel from your pastor and another doctor who believes in the Sanctity of Life Ethic. You need time to think, to assess, to discuss, to cry and above all to pray and search the Scriptures as you seek His counsel.

God is there with you. I know. I have been there.



— name withheld

Will you miss me tomorrow

On Thanksgiving Day, 1994, our family gathered awaiting our dinner. I took note of the elderly moms visiting together on the sofa. The torch had been passed to me (a bit younger) to make gravy without lumps!

It was special to have the younger gals busy with the trimmings and our eight-year-old granddaughter helping too. As I mentally checked off the list of things yet to do, a four-year-old niece came to me, looked up and said, "Will you miss me tomorrow?" My heart jumped as those words penetrated.

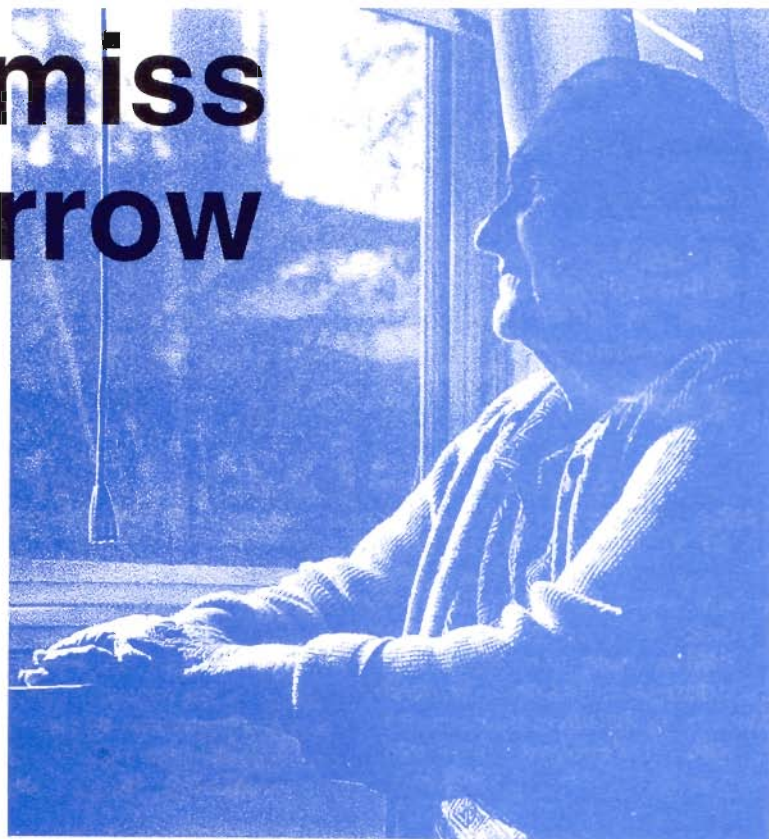
The families returned to their homes and I was left pondering that special, heart-warming question: "Will you miss me tomorrow?"

My thoughts focused on the women who have ministered in congregations at home and abroad. Volumes could be written of their faithfulness, dedication, sacrifice and tremendous service. They have given a godly heritage of values, programs and plans that are blessings beyond description. Thanks be to God for His faithfulness and for faithful servants of all ages!

It is a privilege to be involved in ministry. What a blessing to "sit at the feet" of our white-haired ladies and learn from them, as is the joy of watching our younger women becoming involved like pedals of roses unfolding.

How is it with our congregation's ladies' groups? Perhaps the younger ones are saying: "Yes, we will miss you tomorrow when it is difficult for you to serve or you have gone into the glorious presence of Jesus." Perhaps the older ones are saying: "WMF is tomorrow and it is our hearts' desire that more of the younger women could be alongside of us today."

As we blend together, always sensitive to one another's changing needs, capabilities and schedules, we will experience joy in seeing our sisters in Christ grow in His grace and knowledge. The focus of our



group's ministry will always be on the ministry of Jesus. The vision of ministry, once established will continue. New ideas will enhance our outreach. Our words and actions will demonstrate that we understand the importance of building up one another in the Lord.

As our women's ministry continues to meet each opportunity and challenge, may our lives and prayers include: entrusting, encouraging, encircling and enfolding one another to the end that God may be glorified. Others will observe our conduct and will testify that Philippians 2:2 is evident: "Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

My heart was so touched and torn by that question that I realized I needed to do something to fulfill the longings in the heart and life of that little four-year-old.

In our homes and congregations, torches are being passed. Someday it will be my turn to sit on the sofa. But for today I want to do my part in God's answer: "Will you miss me tomorrow?"



— by Mrs. Laurel Johnson
Cambridge, Minnesota

Ways to get involved in ministry to the elderly

Become a spreader of hope

And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we will reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.
Galatians 6:9,10

— by Cliff Johnson
St. Paul's Lutheran
Cloquet, Minnesota

People in a nursing home experience so many changes, but they still have a Lord that never changes (Hebrews 13:5). Many still enjoy singing the familiar hymns such as "Amazing Grace" and "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." Sing together and further emphasize the continued presence of the Lord.

I never cease to be amazed by the power of God's Word. There have been several times when people with Alzheimer's have clearly responded to the gospel message. We need to remember that all things are possible through God and we are privileged to be the instruments God works through.

— Chaplain Kerwin Sletto
Ottawa, Illinois

His name was John and he was a very tired old man. He was alone much of the time, living by himself in the big house that once rang with laughter. His wife had passed away several years before and his four children were far away. In a month he would be moving to a nursing home. John looked forward to our visits with him when we would read from the Scriptures and pray.

One day I asked him if he knew for sure if he would go to heaven when he died. He said, "No, I don't know that." I then asked him if he would like to know now. Affirming that he would, we prayed and shared assurance verses. It was so precious to hear him ask Jesus to come into his heart. He became a child of God.

Anna witnessed of her faith every time we stopped by to see her. How delighted she was in having God's Word read to her. Her only contact with the church was through personal visitation.

How sad if no one had taken an interest in either John or Anna!

If a man has no faith than neither does he have hope. If a man does not have hope, how impossible to have faith! Faith and hope are inseparable. Yet as one visits the elderly, sometimes we find one who has no hope; one who is pathetically resigned to gloom and doom. There is no greater blessing than to declare the old, old story that is always new: Jesus Christ

can give hope! Some have never personally believed and received the life-giving message of the gospel.

I am thankful our pastor is faithful to visit the sick and elderly. But whether your congregation is large or small, very likely your pastor is unable to visit as often as he would like to. May I challenge you to pray and go out and visit! Untold joys await you in your neighborhood as well as the nursing home.

If you do not know where to start, consider these few tips.

1. Think of your neighbors. If you have not met a particular individual, there is nothing like bringing homemade chicken noodle soup to break the ice.

2. Visit the elderly often. Many short visits are better than a rare long one!

3. Do not assume that the person has personal assurance of salvation. I have discovered that the Christian delights in being asked. Always be sensitive and tactful in how you ask.

4. Always read the Scriptures and pray for them. It is good to ask, "How do you want me to pray for you today?"

5. Do not preach, but share your own faith. Speak freely of heaven and the joys awaiting the Christian. Tell them what is happening in the church.

6. Challenge your young people to join you when you go out visiting. Show them how and introduce them to this great opportunity.

7. Each of us has many ways of conducting our visits as God uses our unique personalities and situations.

Efforts to minister to the elderly and house-bound will bring rich reward both to yourself and to those you visit. It is a great joy to walk into a room and see the countenance transformed to a happy smile. Your own faith will be strengthened because of their faith and witness. Many are veteran soldiers of the cross and bring encouragement and a contagious joy in Jesus. Indeed the keeping, loving power of our gracious Lord is an inspiration to all who will visit these people.

My friends, John and Anna have gone to heaven. Is there a John or Anna whom you should befriend?



Dr. Steven Lombardo to return to parish ministry

AFLC Schools' Professor of Practical Theology, Dr. Steven Lombardo has resigned from the faculty in order to accept a call from Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Morris, Illinois. Dr. Lombardo joined the faculty in 1988, after serving for ten years at West Lisbon Lutheran Church in Newark, Illinois.

In his letter of resignation to the Board of Trustees, Dr. Lombardo cited his growing desire to return to the parish ministry. That is not surprising according to a 1993 AFLTS graduate and former student, Rev. Alan Arneson of Badger, Minnesota. "Of all my professors, Dr. Lombardo's love for the parish ministry was most evident."

Pastor Arneson went on to say, "He is a man that is not only your professor but your friend. He takes the Word of God very seriously and knows how to apply it to daily living. As a classroom teacher his serious concern to see souls saved is always present; yet in the same class hour he is the first to enjoy a good laugh."

Member of the Board of Trustees, Tim Jones of Wyndmere, North Dakota and father of both a 1992 AFLBS graduate and a current Bible School senior said,

Choirs prepare for tours

Once again the Bible School Choir and Choral Club are preparing for their annual spring tours. This year the Choir, under the direction of Mr. Jerry Nelson, will travel East. The Choral Club under the direction of Mrs. Marian Christopherson will sing in congregations throughout the upper Midwest. The groups depart on March 31 and return to the Minneapolis campus on April 14.

CAMPUS



"Pastor Lombardo is one of the kindest and most gentle Christian men I know. He touched a lot of students' lives in a positive way. He taught them wonderful Christian principles and had a real concern for each student. I really think he is a good man to know not just professionally but also on a personal level."

Dr. Francis Monseth, AFLTS dean, said his colleague is most capable and "highly respected" by everyone on campus. He will be sorely missed.

Dr. Lombardo asked the Board of Trustees for permission to begin his new ministry in Illinois on April 15, 1995.

Missions conference scheduled for March

Normally held in February, the annual missions conference at the AFLC Schools has been moved to March 19-22, 1995. Students along with the public will hear Rev. Eugene Enderlein and Rev. Peter Bergstedt tell of the Lord's work in India; Pastor Mike Nelson of the White Earth Indian Mission; Rev. David Nelson of the AFLC mission in Brazil; Rev. Tim Hinrichs of the open doors in Eastern Europe and Rev. Elden Nelson of the opportunities of mission in America.

Grant money received

The Free Lutheran Seminary received \$1,675 from Lutheran Brotherhood's IMPACT/IMPACT PLUS programs. This fourth quarter payment was from 19 gifts of Lutheran Brotherhood members. The IMPACT/IMPACT PLUS programs match members' gifts of \$25 to \$100 per year to Lutheran institutions of higher education.

AFLBS received \$3,980 for the fourth quarter of 1994. This latest payment covers fifty gifts of Lutheran Brotherhood members.

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences - January 1 - December 31, 1994

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN DECEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$256,591.00	\$32,444.35	\$227,610.70	89
Seminary	148,000.00	15,787.78	115,586.94	79
Bible School	232,562.00	39,921.19	174,093.40	75
Home Missions.	319,086.00	34,847.13	238,731.04	75
World Missions.	342,788.00	54,292.43	321,667.18	94
Capital Investment	37,395.00	2,175.21	23,224.28	62
Parish Education	67,868.00	10,872.20	46,459.52	68
ARC	8,600.00	574.13	7,002.70	81
Church Extension	10,000.00	4,696.65	14,156.37	142
TOTALS	\$1,422,890.00	\$195,611.07	\$1,170,523.13	82
TOTALS 1993	1,235,434.74			
1994 Goal 100%				

What do teenagers need from adults?

This morning a friend of mine was telling me about the latest trouble their neighborhood has been having. Some teenagers in their area have been standing at intersections waiting for cars to stop at which point the teens will run up and kick the car doors or jump on the hood and then quickly run. I am sure that if I did a survey of your reaction right now, I would get many different conclusions of the sentence: "What those teenagers need is a good..." Whether you talk to the church custodian, the neighbor next door, or a parent of a teenager, it seems all adults have an opinion on what teenagers need today.

A few weeks ago I surveyed a group of about 50 teenagers to find out from them what they are looking for from adults. As you might expect some of the answers were: "Money, a new Mazarrati (that's an expensive sports car), clothes and other material things." But the majority of the answers had nothing to do with material desires. The top three needs these teenagers desired from adults were:

1. Unconditional love.

No matter how much our youth culture changes, there is one thing that never changes about youth—their need and desire to be loved. In working with youth for a number of years I have noticed that youth are not looking for someone who is perfect, rather simply people who genuinely love them and take an interest in their lives. Some are crying out for Mom and Dad to love them. It shocked me one time when asking a group of youth what has been their greatest family vacation and one young man answered that he had never been on a family vacation! Teenagers need to know that they are loved unconditionally. Spend time with them. Take an interest in their lives. Tell them you love them.

2. Discipline.

Perhaps you are surprised, but teens admit they need discipline. A recent *New York Times* article was about parents allowing their teens to have sex in their own homes. These parents have surrendered to the idea that everybody is doing it so they might as well allow it in their own home. Teenagers need direction from their parents and other Christian adults. They need to know that something is wrong and why it is wrong! They need to know their boundaries and the conse-

AFLC National FLY convention

Estes Park, Colorado
July 17-22, 1995

Dare to Live the Difference.

\$250 if registered before March 1.
\$275 if registered after March 1.
Registration closes July 1.
Send registration and \$50 pre-registration fee to Rev. Brian Davidson
Free Lutheran Youth
3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd.
Plymouth, MN 55441

If you plan on attending the 1995 Free Lutheran Youth Convention this summer, the preparation time is now!

***Send your registration and \$50 deposit before March 1.** Two years ago, more than 95 percent of convention registrations came before March; undoubtedly because of the \$25 discount for early registrations.

***Begin praying for God's provision (and saving money ahead of time!).** If you are like the 25-30 people from our church who are going, raising \$250 for the convention is not easy; not to mention the average of \$125

needed for traveling costs.

***Let young adults know that the age limit has been raised to age 20.** We are doing all we can to meet the needs of an age group that is easily neglected. We have also opened a second Bible study hour for the older teens (16-20) to focus on their needs although we will meet together for the evening sessions. (We're planning for 1,000 to 1,200.)

***Encourage families to come along.** The Colorado convention can be a great excuse for a memorable family vacation! The YMCA Center has room for your

quences of crossing them. Take to heart the words from Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it."

3. Christian environment.

Jay Kesler in his book, *Ten Mistakes Parents Make With Teenagers (And How to Avoid Them)* says: "Above everything else, the one thing that parents can do to help teenagers is to live consistent Christian lives that are predictable and not confusing to young people." Teens need to see adults who are genuine Christians, following Jesus not only on Sunday mornings but also on Tuesday mornings when the car does not start. Parents, one way to help your teenager and illustrate your love for Jesus is to love your spouse. This will be a great model for your teens to follow. Do not expect very much from your teenagers if you have the "do as I say and not as I do" attitude.

Finally, I will add one more thing that teenagers need from adults — a little slack. So often we adults want teens to live just the way we do. We have our own idea on how they should dress, what they should look like, what music they should listen to and how they should respond to various situations. Yet we forget that it has taken us adults many years of mistakes, trials and experiences to get where we are today. In dealing with teenagers please remember

Philippians 1:6 which says, "For I am confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."

Today's teens come in various shapes, sizes, hairstyles, looks and interests. They are not quite adults (even though they might think they are!) but yet they are no longer children. Teenagers are a unique brand of people. They will do things that are really dumb (kick car doors) and yet they will also do some things that you will marvel at — like standing up for their Savior Jesus Christ in their schools. Let's help them through their teenage years by giving them what they are asking from us!



— Bob Halvorson
AFLC Associate Youth Ministries Director
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Free Lutheran Youth national officers, 1995

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New Hope, MN

family on campus, but if you prefer to stay in a hotel, cabin or lodge in the city of Estes Park, you can arrange that by calling the Chamber of Commerce (303-586-4431). And after the convention, the Rocky Mountain National Park (303-586-2371) is "right up the hill."

***Let your adults know that we still need counselors.** Counseling supervisor Dennis Gray (218-782-2246) is looking for growing, mature believers (we're hoping for 125) who have a heart to help young people trust in the Lord. If you are 21 or older and interested, please let us know.

***Prepare for some "inflated" recreation time.** The YMCA has recently given us permission to use inflatable games we will ship from Oklahoma for Thursday and Friday. Can you imagine Sumo Wrestling in an inflated body suit that makes you look 400 pounds? If not, try the Spider Web Velcro Wall, or attempt running, climbing, tugging and rolling through the 38-foot "Tricky Sticky Obstacle Course" while wearing a Velcro vest. (Relax parents, we have insurance!)

***Pray for speakers and attendees.** Add these to your

prayer list: evening speakers Steve Lombardo, Kirk Miltzer, Paul Nash, Tim Carlson and Mike Brandt; workshop leaders Vern Baardson, Bob Halvorson and Betty Horgan; and the 1,000 or so youth (including believers who will grow and many non-believers who need to hear the news of Jesus) who will attend.

Parents, pastors and youth leaders: if you need additional brochures, we just ordered 5,000 more! Contact Bob Halvorson (612-441-0460) or James L. Johnson (218-435-6779).

— by Rev. James L. Johnson
President, Free Lutheran Youth

Rev. Ray Klug, Blackduck, Minnesota will serve as interim pastor of New Luther Valley and Bethany Lutheran in McVile and Binford, North Dakota. He expects to begin his ministry at the end of February and will serve through May.

Rev. Jan Horne, formerly of Mt. Morris, Illinois has accepted a call to serve Christ Lutheran Church, Tulia, Texas. He began his ministry there in early January. Received through colloquy from the ELCA, he is included on the AFLC Fellowship Roster.

Rev. Ralph Tjelta, Blaine, Minnesota is serving as the interim pastor of Morgan Avenue Lutheran Church in Minneapolis.

Camarillo, California — First Lutheran is preparing for their special meetings with a four-week series of Bible studies led by men from the congregation. Guest speaker for the February 19-22 meetings will be AFLC President Robert Lee.

letter to the editor

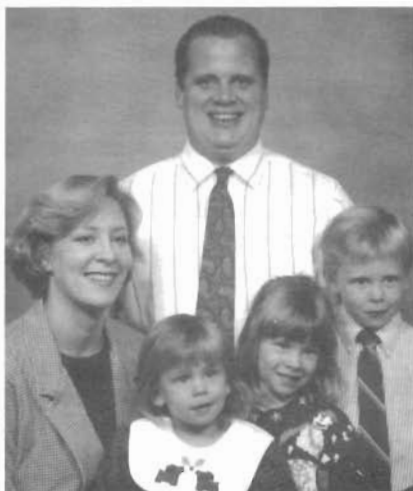
To the Editor:

"Will you not revive us again that your people may rejoice in you" Psalm 85:6.

We experienced blessed revival times in the Newfolden area of Northwestern Minnesota during the spring and summer of 1925. Many were saved through faith in the crucified and risen Lord Jesus. Some of our family, including myself, were in the group whose lives were changed. Parents were praying for their unsaved children; concerned pastors, laymen, parents and others were praying for revival.

By 1931 the revival was seemingly at its height and continued for several decades. Tents were used by different denominations. The Lutheran Tent Mission was organized in 1936 and continued

PEOPLE and PLACES



Eric and Wendy Westlake, Matthew, Laura and Nicole.

Assn. Retreat Center has new director

The ARC Board announced their new director of the Osceola, Wisconsin, Retreat Center. He is Mr. Eric Westlake of Corcoran, Minnesota. He and his wife Wendy are 1986 graduates of AFLBS. They have served as youth advisors at Living Faith Lutheran in Tucson, Arizona, and at Medicine Lake Lutheran in Plymouth. Eric and Wendy and their three children started their new ministry on February 1, replacing interim director Bob Deitsche.

— *Cliff Seldal*
Chairman, ARC Board

ARC Retreats announced

Junior Sno-Daze

March 10-11, 1995

for grades 4-7

Cost \$40. Register by March 1.

Speaker — Eric Westlake

Men's Retreat at the ARC

February 17-19

Speaker — Dr. Craig Jennings

Women's Retreat at the ARC

May 5-7

Speaker — Angie Lombardo

Mpls. District Pastors'

Prayer Summit at the ARC

February 27-28; 3 p.m. Monday

— 5 p.m. Tuesday — cost \$25.

Contact Mel Meyer, (715-268-4330).

for about twenty years. The Tent Mission Board would sponsor special meetings in churches during the winter season.

During this same time revivals were a reality in other areas of Minnesota, the bordering states and Canada.

The outstanding revival in the 1980s was in South Korea where multitudes were being saved and revival still continues.

Fitjar, Norway is located in the northern section or parish of Stord Island on the west coast. In this village ten weeks of special meetings were held before Christmas 1993. Christians were revived and unsaved people received Jesus as Savior. Some who never attended church services came to faith in Jesus. The meetings were broadcast over

radio so that the elderly and sick could hear. Both the church and prayer chapel were filled every evening during those weeks.

Two young men: Thore and Torgeir, one from Fitjar, were the "singing evangelists." Many came through for the Lord.

My wife has first cousins in this area of Norway. One with whom she corresponds wrote, "These were blessed times." This revival was good news for us.

We praise the Lord for willing workers in our local congregations, and our joint work of the AFLC, including the missions and schools. We need much prayer for this work, and for spiritual revival that we may rejoice in the Lord (Psalm 85:6).

— *Harvey Dyrud*
Newfolden, Minnesota

I Enjoy Being a Woman

Every woman is single for some portion of her life. Even those who marry are single about 20 to 25 years before marriage and many spend a number of years as a surviving single following the death of their husband. Others lose their mates through abandonment or divorce. Some choose to remain unmarried while others are specially chosen for singleness.



How a woman responds to this singleness, no matter what the reason, determines her degree of satisfaction or fulfillment with life.

If she sulks in self-pity or fumes in bitterness she becomes frustrated and an unpleasant personality begins to emerge. If she commits this state to the Lord and trusts Him to lead her, she experiences the vibrant, abundant life He promises to all Christians (Philippians 3:7,8).

I Enjoy Being a Single Woman

For you happily married women who are about to fold up your Bible study, it may be well to point out two insights:

1. Even though several of our Bible studies are directed to a specific group of women, there are underlying scriptural principles that apply to all women.
2. It is my aim to build understanding and unity. I hope you will find yourself better equipped to encourage your daughters, mothers and friends after focusing on the needs of the single woman.

I. The Secret of Contentment

1. Prayerfully read I Corinthians 7:32-40. What does the Bible say is the advantage to being single?
2. Last month we saw that all women were created for one encompassing purpose. What is it? (see lesson 2, question 5) Revelation 4:11

The aim of every woman should be to know God and glorify Him. What important ingredient is necessary to achieve this goal in our lives? I Chronicles 28:9

What warning is given if we neglect this ingredient? Proverbs 28:26

3. Jesus proclaims a paradox vital to successful living. Personalize this for the single woman and explain the blessing.

John 12:23-26

Luke 18:28-30

4. What is the question Jesus asks in John 21:15?

Can you answer wholeheartedly with Psalm 73:25,26? Your honest answer will determine your response to singleness.

5. The Bible records two opposing responses. Apply these Scriptures to singleness. Psalm 78:18,29-31 and Philippians 4:11-13



The Lord understands the plans and thoughts of single women. The first step of contentment for the single woman is sweet abandonment to the perfect will of God.

II. Some Specific Needs

Certain needs may trouble all women from time to time, but the following areas may be particularly difficult for the single woman.

6. *Fears* — Some are legitimate for one's own protection. Name a few in your discussion. Yes, sometimes even legitimate fears can grow out of proportion. However, fear that indicates a lack of faith in God is sin.

What does the Bible tell us to fear? Isaiah 8:12-13

Where does fear come from? II Timothy 1:7 (KJV)

How can we get rid of fear? Isaiah 41:10 and I John 1:9

7. *Loneliness* — Coming home to an empty house, meals alone and turning off the last light at night are experiences that can be overwhelming.

What can give assurance to the single woman? John 14:23

Why is Christ able to meet this need? John 1:11



Loneliness need not be overpowering. It may take personal initiative, but the balm for loneliness is recognizing God's expectation for productive use of our gifts.

8. *Independence* — Some of us seem to be natural independents, but most of us were created “leaners.” This is a challenge in an increasingly complex society. What sources can the Christian woman rely on?

Psalms 32:8

Isaiah 54:5

Proverbs 23:22

Galatians 6:10

Romans 12:13

9. *Desires* — We need touch and warmth and love. Our Creator who made us would never willingly frustrate us. We may think we are being deprived and ask, “Is God being fair?”

Find and claim the promises in Psalm 145:8,9,13b-19.

Concerning a lack of physical sensation, what insight does one like Joni Eareckson Tada (paralyzed from the neck down) offer? II Corinthians 4:17,18

III. Plenteous Opportunities

10. Discuss advantages to being single. We'll look closely at three.

Productivity — You are uniquely created and have a particular sphere of influence. What does God expect of you? Romans 12:6a and Colossians 3:23

Friendships — These are a treasured tool for developing important life values. What insights are in Proverbs 17:17; 18:24 (KJV) and 27:17?

Personal ministry — Your obedience in personal ministry will bring you joy. What is the purpose for our spiritual gifts? Ephesians 4:12

You may feel cheated because you are denied children. What does the Bible say? Isaiah 54:1-2 and Psalm 113:9

The statement is sometimes made, “Everything is so couple oriented.” Who will minister to you? Matthew 7:12 and II Corinthians 9:8

What may hinder you from seizing the opportunities God gives you to minister? Psalm 78:41(KJV) and Matthew 13:58

Proverbs 31 describes the ideal woman according to God's standards. Only a few of the twenty-four qualities listed are specifically for the married woman. Are you willing to allow God to build His character qualities into your life? There is no greater honor than to be a woman designed exclusively for the delight of the heavenly Bridegroom.

Next month: I Enjoy Being a Wife

From our president

Intergenerational Growth

The National Women's Missionary Federation (WMF) officers are looking forward to the 1995 Convention on June 14, at the Association Retreat Center near Osceola, Wisconsin with the theme, "Graceful Growth, Youth through Maturity." Our theme this year encourages WMF organizations in our congregations to implement "intergenerational growth."

The source of my life, Jesus Christ, says: "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4). I read recently that bringing happiness to others is like perfume — you can't give to others without getting a breath of it yourself.

The WMF officers suggest that women be paired to encourage each WMF member to specifically learn to know and reach out to one other member of a different age this year.

Some suggestions to help you be creative in your friendship might be: send notes or cards for birthdays and other occasions; call once a month just to visit; share a special need; pray for one another and simply get to know one another. Perhaps a special event could be planned by your WMF to begin this commitment or to celebrate these friendships during the year: a potluck lunch, a brunch, a special outing and a creative program are a few ways to honor those who are guests and to reinforce the friendships.

The WMF Bible studies this year look at the various aspects of being a godly woman based on Titus 2:3-5. Promoting special friendships between women of different ages seems to be an appropriate way to begin.

— by Mrs. Dee Berkas

WMF MINISTRIES

We need mentors

I have been concerned that our WMF organizations, from the local through the national level, tend to attract those of us on the upper end of the age spectrum. What does the WMF of the future look like if we are not reaching out to those who are younger? I believe the most compelling question we can ask ourselves is:

"What am I doing today that will help the next generation to know and trust in Jesus Christ?"

I am a few years too old to be a "baby boomer." I was in Bible school and became a new mother when the Beatles were popular. Race riots, assassinations and the drug culture captured the headlines. A lot of things happened during those years. One of the detrimental results was a generation gap. A generation was put on the shelf. We could not relate to them and we could not understand them. They are a generation of women who desire independence, yet need genuine caring relationships. I believe they need mentors.

I myself am a product of a number of mentors who have contributed to my life these fifty years. I remember my parents being in the same room only once: on my wedding day. My mother was an alcoholic and my father, when he was not in the hospital suffering from tuberculosis, was an engineer on the iron ore ships on the Great Lakes. My grandparents gave me warmth, security and foundations of faith. Later I lived with a loving aunt and uncle who encouraged a living relationship with Jesus Christ.

After the birth of our son, my husband enrolled at the university and later went to seminary. I worked full time to feed and clothe us as do many of the women today. I am grateful for those who mentored me during those years. My needs then were like those of many younger women today.

Who are Christian mentors?

They are those whom God brings into one's life at various stages to help that person grow into a godly person. What do they do? These individuals are committed to help a person mature in Christian faith (Titus 2:3-5; Colossians 1:28-29; I Peter 3:18).

When it comes to reaching out through the WMF, the most important mentor in my life was a woman named Adeline. She visited me occasionally, asked about my children and sometimes helped with them during church services. She showed genuine interest in my life and she invited, invited and invited me to the women's organization. Adeline was about twenty years older than I was but when I got to know her and other older women, there was no generation gap!

Some may say, "I'm too old to do that." The truth is, retirement is a cultural, not a biblical concept. We are never to retire from living the Christian life or from ministry. Oh our backs may prevent us from working in the kitchen and our fingers may be too stiff to stitch a quilt, but we are never too old to befriend a younger woman.

No matter what your age, there is someone younger than you who needs your prayers, encouragement and friendship.

— by Mrs. Cheryl Skordahl
National WMF Secretary

Communicating in the present

"It would be nice if they would all learn to speak English." While a missionary may be tempted to think this, the one who is going to be effective in sharing the good news of Jesus will quickly accept the necessity of learning the language of the people.

Learning the people's language means more than just knowing a lot of nouns and verbs. It means learning how to truly communicate. It involves striving to find out what will make the gospel of Jesus Christ most understandable to the people we are trying to reach. It requires asking not just "what worked in my hometown when I was growing up?" but "what will work with these people today?"

The evangelist Leighton Ford said, "We have to remember that in the late 1940s, when Billy Graham, Youth for Christ, and Young Life were finding new ways to reach the new generation of that time, their new ways were not always accepted. But now we see that if it weren't for the risks they took, we would not be where we are today." Billy Graham himself has said, "When we speak to baby busters or younger people today, I think the older generation has to speak through an interpreter."

In his book *Dying for Change*, Leith Anderson describes what he calls "Yesterday's Church" as the church that "keeps hoping that tomorrow will be 1954. It is not so much that they resist change as that they are nostalgic about yesterday. This is the church that reminisces about a golden age and prays that it will return after the present parenthesis of change concludes. When the building is refurbished, it is in a style befitting the golden era. Music, liturgy, sermon topics, Bible version, literature, social activities, and management are as close to the old days as possible. ... Yesterday's Church has both advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side is the fact that because it is slow to change, this church is unlikely to be caught up in a passing and destructive fad. The major disadvantage is ... the people of the church ... are forced to live in a 1990s world all week and return to a 1950s world on Sundays. This church does not interpret life or equip its people for spirituality amid the stresses and pressures of modern society. ... (The church) becomes an escape from everyday life rather than a resource for everyday living."

We may look back and think it would be better to be living in 1954. We are not to long for the past and neglect the work God has for us to do in the present. The calling the Lord has given to His people is to ask, how can the timeless and unchanging gospel be best communicated to the people of today?

Coming together

Someone once commented that one thing he appreciated about congregational life was the opportunity to be with people of different ages. The rest of his time was generally only spent with people of his own age. He felt he missed out on the wisdom of the elderly and the energy of youth. The congregation provided him with an opportunity to enjoy the blessings that come from contact with people of other ages.

Our thinking can easily get filled with too low expectations. We think because the youth and the elderly often have different tastes and interests they won't be able to get along, so we keep them separate. We do so to the detriment of all involved. We do so often because we are limiting God.

God can bring unity where it seems to be an impossibility. This is not synonymous with uniformity. It will not mean total agreement on things like dress and music, quilting bees and all-night lock-ins. It is possible, however, for the differences to be dealt with in peace. A congregation can and should have elderly and baby busters, youth and baby boomers, worshipping the Lord together, learning from one another and serving Christ as one body. It may seem like an incredible thought but we have an incredible God who says, "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1). May God widen our vision as to how beautiful life in His family can be.

Life Does Have Value

I'm afraid I have to admit it is my state which passed a voter initiative to permit doctors to prescribe a fatal dosage of drugs to certain types of terminally ill patients who make an appropriate request. A majority of the state's voters felt human beings have the right to determine when life can be ended. This is the continuation of the philosophy that believes people have the right to end a life as long as it is in a mother's womb. The value of life in the eyes of society keeps going down.

How thankful we can be that in God's economy, the value of life remains high. No matter what the courts or the voters may say, the words of the Psalmist remain true, "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well" (Psalm 139:13,14). The terminally ill and the unborn, the healthy and the disabled, the strong and the weak; we all have tremendous value to God.

SOMETHING TO SHARE

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Second-Class

Missed opportunities! I cringe to think of all the marvelous opportunities I have missed as a witness for Christ.

Like the time I boarded that old nursing home elevator. It was already inhabited by a couple of carpenters when the doors opened and I stepped in. I was an eager seminary intern at the time, just going about my own business. These two guys looked me over, spied the Bible I was carrying, and offered a curious smirk that made me wish I had chosen the stairs.

When the doors closed behind me, the one closest to the control panel grinned as he asked, "Where 'ya going? To heaven?" Can you believe that? Talk about an opportunity! Unfortunately, I was on the defensive at that point and could already feel my palms getting sweaty as I responded, "No, just to the third floor."

My embarrassed words on that day have echoed through my mind like the chilling winds of January. How often since that time have I stepped into an elevator and been reminded of my past failures! God forgive me! I expect that you have a few "elevator stories" of your own.

Let me share two verses which have been a challenge and help to me. Paul writes to the Colossians:

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone (Colossians 4:5-6).

In our witness, making the most of every opportunity involves two things.

1. It involves being wise in the way you act toward outsiders.

I would understand "outsiders" here as referring to anyone who is outside of the faith—who is yet unsaved. Being wise in the way you act suggests that consistency is important in the way a

believer lives. Does your walk match your talk?

Along with consistency, there is a need for **humility**. Almost nothing can dampen our witness more than exhibiting a "holier-than-thou" attitude. Keep this in mind when the local cult representative comes knocking at your door.

Next, being wise in the way you act toward outsiders speaks of the need for **contact** with outsiders. Think of it this way: Your contacts equal your opportunities! The folks with whom you brush shoulders from day-to-day represent the God-given candidates to receive your witness. Cultivate your personal "mission field" by making contact in practical, neighborly ways.

Finally, being wise in the way we act toward outsiders speaks to me of the need for a **spiritual life that is up-to-date**. A wise and active witness is the by-product of a growing devotional life; a prayer life that is flowing and a willing response — going! If any these elements are lacking, our witness too will be lacking.

2. It involves being gracious in the way you speak with outsiders.

"Let your conversation be always full of grace," Paul entreats. To me, that means humbly keeping in focus the abundance of grace we have received from the Lord.

Our speech is to be "seasoned with salt." What does this mean? I believe our words can be "grace-flavored" only when we are depending on the Spirit of God. He gives us a Christ-like sensitivity to the needs of outsiders with whom we come in contact.

Some people figure the best way to "salt" the unsaved is to remove the cap and dump the entire shaker all at once. That's not my idea of a savory supper!

Perhaps Paul's advice to us here is to choose our words wisely. Use the salt sparingly. Avoid coming on too strong (the preachy approach), cramming salt down a thirst man's throat. Speech which is seasoned with salt brings out (not drowns out!) the flavor of all that Jesus has done to save us.

The result? Paul concludes, "So that you may know how to answer everyone." Maybe you feel at times that you have absolutely nothing to say. Your well seems dry. The encouragement here is simply to remember what Christ has done in your life and to live in that grace which He supplies. As you do, you've got something valuable to share!

May your **words** and your **walk** reflect a winsome spirit which draws hurting hearts to the Savior. **Make the most of the opportunities God sets before you!**

— by Rev. Jerry Moan
Minot, North Dakota