

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

July 3, 2001

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**HE WHO DWELLS
IN THE
SHELTER
OF THE
MOST HIGH
WILL REST
IN THE
SHADOW
OF THE
ALMIGHTY.
PSALM 91:1**

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

July 3, 2001
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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

Blessings from the basics

The next few devotional articles will include a closer look at the confession of sin on page two of the *Ambassador Hymnal* and the Apostle's Creed. Countless souls have found comfort in the truth of these simple words and you too may find an encouraging word.

In the confession of sin we find that we are coming before our Maker. He knows every detail about us. We come before our Redeemer. On this basis only, do we dare approach.

"We poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean" As Isaiah was stricken with the awfulness of his sin when he saw the Lord, so is the penitent sinner. It is sometimes said that such confessions, often repeated, lose their effectiveness because we simply say the words without meaning them and, therefore, maybe they should be replaced. The truth is that such an acknowledgement of spiritual dullness is, in itself, the reason for the confession. When we come before God and then merely "go through the motions," it should startle us to realize just how sinful and unclean we are. Thus the confession becomes even more meaningful and effective as we are moved to confess specific sins.

"... And that we have sinned against You in thought, word and deed." One of the windows to the soul of the apostle Paul is in I Timothy 1:15: "It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all."

By the time you read this Timothy McVeigh will have been executed for killing numerous people. The media tried to find the monster in him which would set him apart from the rest of us, but they failed. This is because we all have the "monster." Our sinful nature is the source of every thought, word and deed which is contrary to God's holy law. You, like Paul, are the worst sinner you know, whether or not you admit it.

Your thought life is carefully guarded from the view of others around you. They would see the "monster" if they knew your thoughts. Your words are carefully chosen so they don't reveal your thoughts in times of anger and the like. When anger prevails, words escape and perhaps action is taken and the "monster" has raised its ugly head yet again. We are never more honest with God than when, from the heart, we confess "I am by nature, sinful and unclean, and have sinned against you in thought, word and deed."

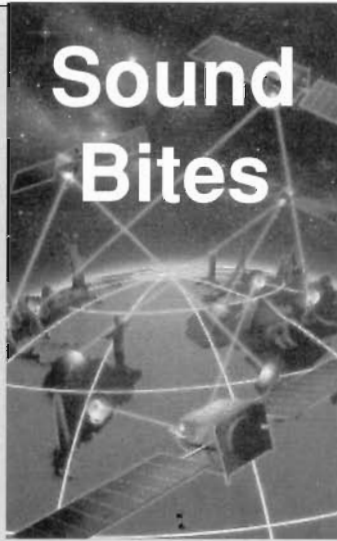
When the media searched McVeigh's past for the "monster," they didn't go far enough or deep enough. To be saved from ourselves, you and I must do both. As a descendant of Adam, we have the nature described in Romans 8:8 "... the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so." Added to the impossible task of obeying God's law is the frightening truth that the fallen nature considers it foolish to do so: "a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised" (I Corinthians 2:14).

You are a far greater sinner than you know. It is natural to resist all efforts by God to expose your sin. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Only as the Spirit of God enlightens you concerning your sin and sinfulness, can you make a true confession.

Before you meet with God at worship next Sunday, you'll need to pray that you could be so enlightened to see your sins. Pray also for enlightenment to see that "Christ has taken upon Himself your nature so that He might fulfill for you the whole will and law of God" (exhortation before communion). Then the words of the confession of sin will come alive for you. "Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer ..."

— **Pastor Dale Mellgren**
Mount Carmel & Trinity Lutheran
McIntosh, Minnesota

Sound Bites



I wonder how much more effective our spiritual leaders would be if we encouraged them to take one day a week as a time of silence for reflection, meditation, and personal study. I wonder how much more effective our churches would be if we made the pastor's spiritual health — not the pastor's efficiency — our number one priority.

—Philip Yancey

For the Gospel, properly so called, does not require our works for making us godly and serving us; yea, it abominates our works. On the contrary, it demands that we believe in Christ, namely, that He has conquered sin, death, and hell for us and makes us godly, quickens us, and saves us, not by our works but by His works and His suffering and dying, so that we may appropriate His death and victory as if we had achieved it ourselves.

—C. F. W. Walther

I truly believe that if you continually clarify what brings you the most joy, what you are born to do, you will have so much more to offer the kingdom!

—Nancy Beach

Some churches keep their members so busy with church activities that little time is left over for them to do real kingdom work.

—Joseph Higginbotham

When people are moving in their area of giftedness, there's maximum effectiveness and minimum weariness.

—Wayne Cordeiro

At least one day a week, we must rest from gathering information, just as the ancient Israelites rested from gathering wood. We must still our racing minds and rest our information-soaked souls. By so doing, we declare that humans cannot live by information alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

—Kevin Miller



Work and rest the way God intended

—Pastor Martin Horn
Calvary Lutheran
Fosston, Minnesota

Investment bankers on Wall Street. Rickshaw drivers in Bangladesh. People who work on busy city streets and those on lonely prairies. They all need rest.

The creation story in Genesis one and two helps us in trying to understand the rest we need and that God wants us to experience.

After each day of creation God declared His work “good.” After the creation of man on the sixth day He declared it “very good” (Genesis 1:31). With these words God demonstrates His satisfaction with the order and perfection of His entire creation, including man. It was not only complete (2:1), it was also free from all imperfection and corruption.

On the seventh day God rested “from all His work which He had done” (2:1). This means, of course, that He ceased from His work of creation. But there is more. Rest describes the *relationship* of God with His just com-

pleted creation. He did not have to continue in toil with an unfinished creation, nor struggle with a rebellious and corrupt creation. He was *at rest* with his creation, and man was at rest with God.

In chapter two, Genesis turns from the relationship of God with His creation, to the relationship of man with the rest of creation. This too was a relationship of rest.

God planted a garden in Eden, and filled it with every tree that is “pleasing to the sight and good for food” (2:8, 9). The Garden of Eden was the epitome of the goodness and perfection of creation.

Then “the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it” (2:15). The word translated *put* can simply mean to place or set, like placing a book on a table. But it can mean more, as I believe it does here. The word often has the sense of giving rest, that is of setting or placing some-

“He was at rest with His creation, and man was at rest with God.”

thing in a place of rest. The verse can read “then the Lord God took man and rested him in the Garden of Eden.” Thus the Garden of Eden was a place of rest for man. The relationship between man and the garden, and by extension his world, was one of rest.

Notice the rest of the verse. “Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to *cultivate and keep it*.” This verse presents a seeming paradox. The garden was a place of rest, but God placed man there for the very purpose of work: “to cultivate and keep it.”

What does this mean? True rest does not simply mean “cessation from work.” Rest could and did properly include work. God intended that man “cultivate and keep” the ground; and the ground, in return, would provide for man (2:9). Man worked in harmony and peace with the world around him, and this work did not destroy his rest in this world.

But the fall destroyed this relationship of rest that man enjoyed between himself and God on the one hand and himself and his world on the other. Genesis three relates that as a result of sin, Adam must hide himself from God and offer excuses for his behavior, “it’s Eve’s fault, she told me to do it!” (3:8-12) As a further result of sin, the land is now cursed and is filled with thorns and thistles. The land no longer easily gives up its produce to man. Work is no longer restful, but work is toil as man must wrest his living from the ground by the sweat of his brow (Genesis 3:17-20).

Since that time, man has lived in a world of unrest. Spiritually, as his relationship with God is broken, man is under the dominion of sin, he is weighed down with the weight of sin and guilt, and he is the enemy of God. Physically, life involves constant toil, laboring to wrest enough from the stubborn soil to survive. Weariness is a constant companion, and rest feels like an impossible dream.

This was not God’s intent. From the beginning He purposed to redeem man and restore the relationship of rest between Himself and man. And not only man, God purposed to redeem all of creation corrupted by man’s sin.

God gave His people a sign of His eternal

“But the fall destroyed this relationship of rest that man enjoyed between himself and God on the one hand and himself and his world on the other.”

rest. In His law He set aside a day of rest, “Remember the Sabbath day to make it holy.”

This was a day to cease from labor, and find physical rest. The Sabbath was also a day for hearing the Word of God, the source of spiritual rest. Through this day God reminded them that he did not intend for man to be constantly weighed down with burden and never-ending toil. One day a week the people lived out a reminder of the perfect rest that they would enjoy in eternity in the presence of God.

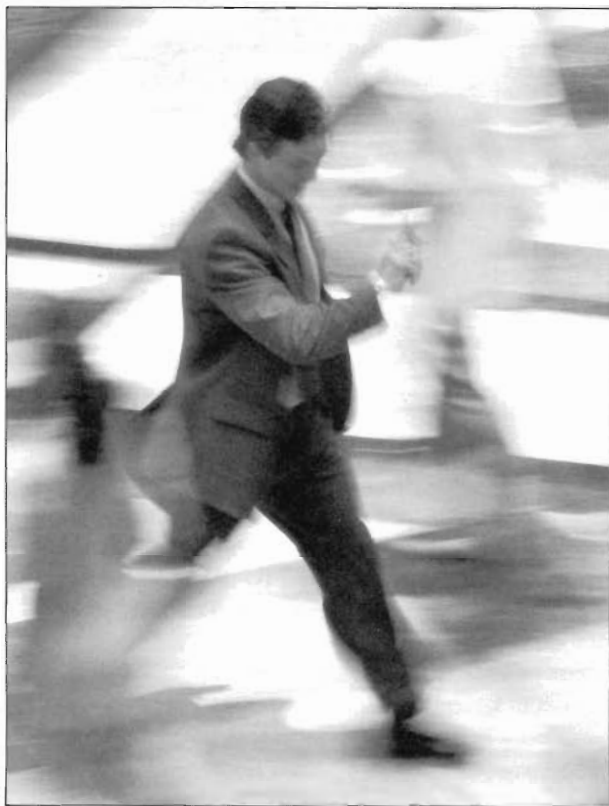
The Old Testament constantly looked forward to the time when rest would be fully restored. The New Testament goes on to reveal Jesus whose death was sufficient payment for sin and thus He redeemed both man and all creation from the effects of man’s sin. He is the source of real rest, both spiritually and physically. He Himself said, “Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

By faith in Christ the Christian is justified and is now at rest. God is no longer an enemy and the oppression of sin and guilt is removed. Yet, rest has not yet been fully revealed. We still live in a world of “unrest.” Sin still clings, the conscience still accuses. Physically, we still must work.

Christians look forward to eternity where God’s eternal rest will be fully revealed. Man will be in true harmony and peace with God as sin is fully done away with. Man will be at rest in the new heavens and new earth. There will be true work and accomplishment, but it will be the work of rest, not the work of toil and sweat that disrupts rest.

What do we do now? We work. According to the Scripture work is honorable and sloth is discouraged. But God is also concerned that we rest from our daily labors. Take a day off. Trust that the Lord can provide in six days what you are toiling for in seven. To those who already have more than enough but are still driven to overwork God says “Rest, take a day off, don’t sacrifice yourself on the altar of greed. Having more will not give you the peace you desire, it will only drive you to accumulate more.” And above all, remain in the Word. There we find Christ, the source of true rest. In Him we find the promise of eternal rest in His presence forever.





Maintaining balance

—*Bonnie Handsaker
Salem Lutheran
Radcliffe, Iowa*

Rest and work are basic necessities of life. We have need of both in our lives and they must be in balance. In Genesis, God set forth an example for rest and work. He labored six days and then He rested. Psalm 23 says, "He makes me lie down in green pastures, He restoreth my soul."

As a mental health professional, I see many lives unbalanced in time spent in rest and work, as well as time for themselves and for their relationships. I encourage people to make a map of several days, denoting how their time was spent considering these four aspects of their lives. Some people are surprised to see how unbalanced their lives have become.

In our spiritual lives, the balance of our work and our rest are both vitally important for a healthy Christian life. The book of James speaks of faith and works as qualities of a living faith. The faith aspect of our lives is nurtured during our "rest time." Rest is a time when the Lord restores our soul and strengthens our faith. Rest from this perspective could include time in God's Word, daily devotions, worship services, Bible

Seeing

—*Dr. Bob Kohl
Calvary Lutheran
Arlington, South Dakota*

Oops! Is this a contradiction in terms, saying secular work can be sacred? Secular means "of or relating to the worldly or temporal," while sacred is defined as "dedicated or set apart for the service of God."

In Genesis 1:28 God gave Adam and Eve the responsibility of being stewards or managers of earth's physical and animate resources exemplified in tending the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15). They had been working prior to The Fall and were in harmony with God, thus the work was sacred, or dedicated to honor God. It was intended to be this way. All things were created by Him (Jesus) and for Him (Colossians 1:16), to glorify Him.

The Fall marred our intimate relationship with God as the sin contained the element of obeying self-will as opposed to obeying God's will. A break occurred between the secular and sacred. With selfishness as our motivation, our work has taken on a secular focus. What is in it for me? When I ask my students at the beginning of the semester what they plan to do after graduation they usually say, "Get a job and make lots of money." That implies a goal to serve the desires of one's self. And how many of us adopt some modification of this goal for our lives?

But God provided redemption as we see in Colossians 1:19-23. It is the Father's desire "through Jesus to reconcile all things

study, prayer time, fellowship time, music, Christian radio. Basically it is time when we receive food for our soul.

This area of life can be seriously challenged by the demands of daily schedules. At times I find myself struggling to attend Bible study, the women's group meeting, even personal devotions because I am so busy. Yet I always return home with a blessing when I have made the effort. It helps me to first consider cutting activities from my schedule before I cut time for restoration of my soul.

Then there are the ministry endeavors we become involved in within our family, our church and our community. That too, is work time. Compile a list of ministry activities of the past month. It might include: Sunday school teacher, song leader, church

sacredness and value in secular work

to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross ... if indeed we continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast." Knowing that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16), our desire should be to do all as heartily unto the Lord (Colossians 3:23). Thus our work should be sacred, having its value in God. This is what brings joy to our hearts.

If we are saints (Philippians 1:1) and address Christ, who bought us with His blood, as Lord we should consider what "Lord" means. The one who is called Lord is "supreme in authority, controller — God, Lord, Master." It signifies that my will is now to do my Master's will. Therefore, all work that the saints engage in should be sacred and dedicated to our Lord. Then we will be the salt and light that brings glory to our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:8-16). Herein is the value of sacred work.

God has had some lessons to teach me over the years. After finishing my formal education, I entered the foreign mission field, gave my savings to the church, and worked hard. I really don't know how often I waited for the Holy Spirit and how often I charged ahead on my own. Not everything was successful in my eyes and I somewhat neglected my family as I look back on that period. My wife's illness prohibited our return to the field and I entered the work force in American higher education.

Seeing people in Africa and Mexico live

on a dollar a day provides a different view of life from what we develop here in the States. It can help us to live modestly, focus on eternal values, and cheerfully give more. Truly, our perspective becomes more focused on stewardship and working as a manager of God's domain

My wife and I could live very comfortable on my retirement income, travel, and enjoy a life of ease. However, I do not believe that is God's will for me nor do I find support for that kind of retirement in Scripture. As long as God provides the health and the employment, I will continue to work. God provides opportunities to relate to students on a one-to-one basis as well as with whole classes.

People, students in particular, are not drawn to our Lord by our conformity to the culture but by our distinctiveness from it. First John 2:15 says: "Do not love the world, nor the things of the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The love of God and the love of the world are mutually exclusive. We are committing spiritual adultery if we love this world. Perhaps we can test ourselves by asking ourselves if we could take Christ with us all day long.

That common saying is true: "If Christ is Lord at all, then He is Lord of all." If Christ is Lord of all, then He is Lord of my life, my family, my work, and my play. Yes, all work is then sacred.



secretary, meals for someone in need, volunteer time in a nursing home, church board member, church janitor, hosting church group activities, hospitality to others, volunteering at faith ministry organizations. It may be surprising. How does that list balance against the other activities of our lives? Are there adequate times of quiet rest?

"Rest, the nurturing and restoration of our souls, fits us to be ready for the work of our ministry activities!"

How we need balance in these

areas. Rest, the nurturing and restoration of our souls, fits us to be ready for the work of

our ministry activities. Without adequate rest we are ill equipped to let the light of Jesus shine through us. Our lamp may become dim, the light may flicker, or sad to say, it may even go out.

My husband and I are very involved in the ministry of our church and sometimes I can truly say our lives are unbalanced. In fact as I write this, I was convicted about my own life in this area of rest. For example, as one of the church pianists, worship service often becomes a time of "work" and sometimes I miss the restoration aspect of worship. I pray that the Lord will clear my mind and heart so that the words of the hymns and the Scriptures may bring me rest even as I work.

Discover true rest

— Jennifer Dryburgh
Trinity Lutheran
Grand Forks, North Dakota

“**M**ommy, I need a drink of water. ... Sure, I can bring a pan of bars. ... 3:00 p.m. on Thursday should work fine for the meeting.” Our heads swirl with requests and commitments. Life speeds by at lightning speed, and we try to fill each second to overflowing. We wake up each morning and keep a break-neck pace until we drop into bed, exhausted. In the few moments before slumber we think, “I need to slow down or take a break and get some rest.” A quick prayer is slipped in and we ask for forgiveness for our neglect and promise to take more time for Him tomorrow. Tomorrow comes and the routine of busyness continues.

Many of us are so busy that we long for rest. But what is rest? Is it a week vacation, a day off from work, a night out, or eight hours of blissful sleep? All of these can be an enjoyable change of pace from the daily routine of work and life, but are these true examples of rest?

Experts have studied stress caused by busyness. They have determined that we must make time for ourselves. They assert that one of the best ways to aid in stress relief is a daily “meditation” time to reduce stress and give us a better outlook, ease our minds and increase longevity. This is not a new revelation.

From the beginning of time, God has instructed us to physically rest. Genesis 2:2 tells us that “He (God) rested.” God shows us by example that we are to rest. Exodus 20:8-11 contains God’s Third Commandment, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” and the instructions that go with it. Jesus invited His disciples to rest in Mark 6:31,

“‘Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while.’ For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.” However, resting is not only a stopping of work, it is a time of meditation.

Psalm 46:10 says, “Cease striving and know that I am God.” Psalm 37:7 tells us, “Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.” This is true rest — to know Him. How do we get to know Him? God implores us to seek Him, by digging into His Word and by fellowshiping with Him.

This type of rest involves stopping our physical activity to seclude ourselves and search the Scriptures. Thus we rest physically. As we sit and read His Word we receive spiritual food which replenishes our spiritual body, and the rest we take to eat this food helps rejuvenate our physical body.

As the inner body and mind are refreshed our physical body is released from the stress and pressures of life because we have laid them at the feet of Jesus. Jesus invites us in Matthew 11:28, “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” True rest is being still and knowing that God is God. When we know God we will receive the ultimate rest which is eternal. Eternal life is our rest, our gift from God, which has been given to us by grace through faith. We rest by faith in the work that Christ did on the cross.

The world says, “Take a little time for yourself. You deserve it.” God says to take a little time for Him, and He will give you rest.



Sitting at Jesus' feet

We equate sitting at Jesus' feet to letting the Holy Spirit teach us as we give ourselves to the prayerful study of God's Word. At Jesus' feet we become acquainted with the Triune God. We experience the forgiveness of sin as we acknowledge and repent of our sin and surrender our life to Jesus. We gain a know-how in living a meaningful life and learn how to cope with problems.

We are taught how to face sorrow, disappointment and setbacks in life, real-

izing that God will work even these things out for good for His children.

We gain courage to press on even when everything seems hopeless. We gain faith to go to Jesus for help in our every need.

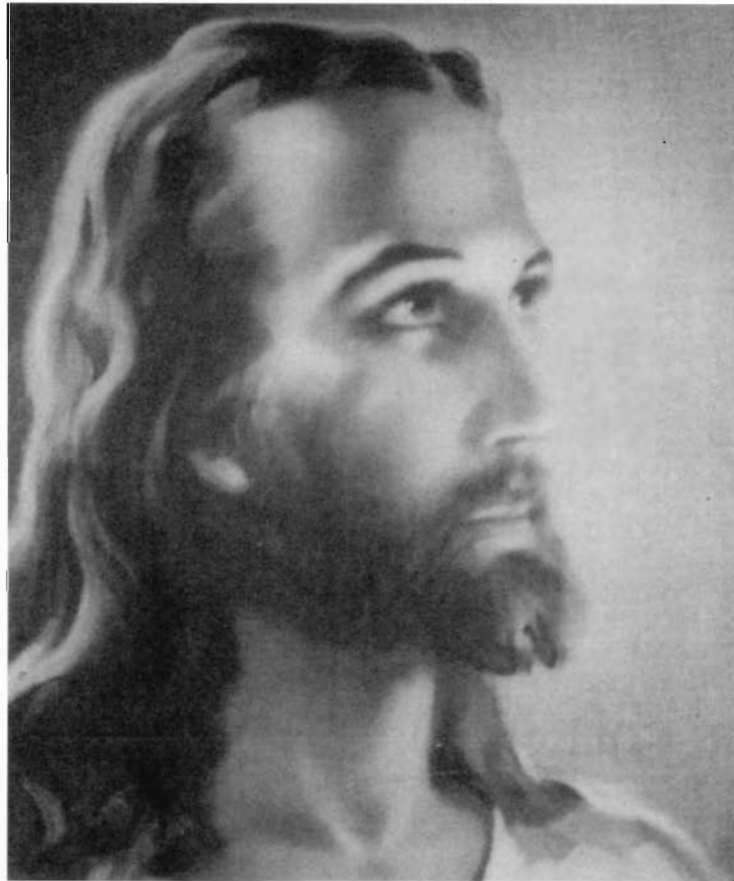
We achieve the ability to work with what we have, and not covet what we don't have. We learn to count our blessings and not be greedy for more.

We ascertain how to keep jealous, envy and hatred out of our hearts and let love and kindness fill us. We become able to love the unlovable and those who envy and hate us.

We become wise in ways to bring comfort and hope and encouragement to those who are depressed, discouraged and without hope. We learn how to speak softly, tenderly and how to remain calm when offended and threatened. We become alert in ways to bring honor and glory to our Lord God.

We acquire a peace and contentment, which tears and a heavy heart cannot take away. We gain courage to face the Christian warfare and calmness to carry on in the midst of it.

At Jesus' feet we become assured of an eternal inheritance in heaven.



— *Pastor Gerald F. Mundfrom*
Osceola, Wisconsin

Finding time for family in a full schedule

— **Pastor Elden Nelson**
Maranatha Free
Lutheran
Willmar, Minnesota

Driving in noon-hour traffic I was trying to find a place to set my can of soda while juggling a fast-food hamburger as my cell phone begged to be answered. The light turned green, but I didn't notice until an impatient driver behind notified me with a sharp blast of his horn. With that last phone call I had one more thing on my "to do" list — and I was running out of time!

My how busy we are in spite of all the timesaving devices we own. It wouldn't have been nearly so complicated seventy or eighty years ago as you held the lines in one hand and a jelly sandwich in the other and sat back in the seat to enjoy the ride home. The faithful old horse knew the way, and you would have had time, lots of time, to think, pray, plan, talk with your family, and enjoy the singing of the meadowlark and the beauty of the little foal prancing next to its mother in the pasture. The result of the hurried pace of our present life is that we continue to see increased incidents of burn-out, physical and emotional breakdown, domestic problems, broken homes and marriages, and the list goes on and on. The world does not offer a balance of work and rest for families; it only offers more timesaving devices and another place to go. Is there a spiritually healthy balance of work, family time, and rest? Yes, there is, and it is clearly stated in the Scriptures.

In the creation account we find the healthy balance of work and rest. Genesis chapter two says, "On the seventh day God rested from all His work which He had done." God established a principle there

which He further declared in Exodus 20:9, "Six days you shall labor and do all your work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God."

It seems that somewhere along the way that verse has been misunderstood by many to mean "the seventh day is a Sabbath to

yourself." It is true that the world does not observe the Lord's Day, but what about those of us that profess Christ as our Savior and Lord. Do we truly make Sunday a day of worship and rest? Have not we at times tried to modify that word "rest" by thinking that a change from the regular work is rest? The lawn needs to be mowed, the house needs paint or we spend long

hours driving, camping, etc., only to come to the end of a busy weekend knowing that our bodies and minds are not



rested, and worship was non-existent, or at the very best, hurried.

In the midst of such busy schedules what place and time do we give to family? How often have we arrived home only to find a note informing us as to the commitments of other family members, when they might be home? "Frozen pizza if you want," the note says. And, oh yes, "if you need me call on my cell phone, but not between 7:00 and 8:30 because I'll be in a meeting at church. See you tomorrow if" Does not this disregard the command of Deuteronomy 6? There we read, "These words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, 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."

How's the balance of work, family and rest in your home? Fathers, as head of your house, are you disciplined to do what the Word of God commands? Does your family know the worship and rest of the first day of the week because you have taught the value of it and because you have faithfully observed it? And on the other six days does your family know the reality of being together, talking, sharing dreams, joys and disappointments, and reading the Word and praying together?

A piano teacher once said, "music is always sweeter after a rest." I believe it can also be said, "Life is always sweeter for the family when there is a healthy balance of work and rest."



AFLBS choir returns from Eastern Europe tour

On April 17, 2001, thirty-six AFLBS Concert Choir members and six chaperones departed from the Minneapolis airport to embark on a three-week outreach in Eastern Europe. God heard our prayers. We started praying in September for this trip and the prayers were being answered. Everyone raised the money needed to go, and that in itself was a miracle. Everyone had his or her passport and visa. We thank God for His faithfulness to us.

The trip took the choir into eight countries with performances in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Latvia, Estonia, and finally, Russia. All of the border crossings went smoothly and the Latvian bus drivers were dependable and professional. No one lost luggage, passport or visa.

The Lord kept the singers safe and healthy during a rigorous schedule. We had the opportunity to sing in two public schools, a prison in Latvia and the University of St. Petersburg where the attendance was at least 500. Trinec, Czech Republic hosted the largest concert of about 800 people. An estimated five thousand people heard our concerts. Many people prayed to receive Jesus as Savior and many others recommitted their hearts and lives to Him.

The Lord touched the lives of the choir members, too. Following are some of their impressions of their time in Eastern Europe:

"The highlight of going on tour was being able to proclaim Jesus in our songs and to be a witness with our words and actions. It was exciting to be able to share Christ in areas where recently it was forbidden by law. My favorite concert was when we sang in a secular university that had been under atheistic and communist rule only ten years earlier. A little girl came up to me after the concert and said, 'Thank you for singing and telling me that Jesus loves me.'"

— Eric Fosland



The choir visited the historic all-wooden church in Russia.

"There was one instance that God answered prayer in a mighty way at a church in the Czech Republic. Another choir member and I talked to a lady named Ludmilla, who really just wanted someone to talk to. God led us to her. She came to our next concert and accepted Jesus as her personal Savior. We have her address because it was her desire that we not forget her. She really touched my heart."

— Emily Forness

"The thing I am most thankful for was God's reminder to me of His unfailing faithfulness. While traveling I often felt that the trip was just too difficult and that I could not continue. It was during those times that my Lord wrapped His arms around me and comforted me with His Word. It was just when I felt most alone that He reminded me that He will never leave me or forsake me. It was also when I felt the most weak that the Lord reminded me of His promise that His strength is made perfect in weakness."

— Debbie Holmquist

"God increased my desire to reach the lost and renewed my passion for helping people to find the hope I have. My heart goes out to the people of Eastern Europe — that they would find Christ and that He

would be their everything even when they don't have much else."

— Erika Johnson

"I think the way the choir members talked to people after the concerts was the biggest way God used us. It showed them that we were really there for ministry and not just to give concerts."

— Mike Borg

"I was blessed when I gave my financial concerns to the Lord. I praise God because He provided for everything so that I was able to go. It was a blessing to my mother (who is not a Christian) to see the power of God and His provision through prayer."

— Kevin Subbert

We are thankful for the vision that Dr. Francis Monseth shared with us four years ago regarding taking the choir to Eastern Europe. We praise God for Pastor Don Richman of the East European Missions Network for making the contacts. We praise God for the powerful Word-centered preaching of Pastor Jim Johnson and Dr. Monseth that pointed people to Jesus. We are grateful for all who assisted us financially and prayed for us.



— Jerry D. Nelson

AFLBS Choir Director

(Taken from "The Emmaus Light," June 2001)

East African Lutherans host AFLC leaders

On May 1, 2001, AFLC World Missions director Eugene Enderlein and FLAPS director Lavon Bohling departed the U.S. to Nairobi, Kenya to begin an information gathering trip to Uganda and Tanzania. In recent months, the AFLC has experienced increased communication with Lutherans in the East African region surrounding Lake Victoria. Following is an interview with Pastor Enderlein.

Where did you visit first?

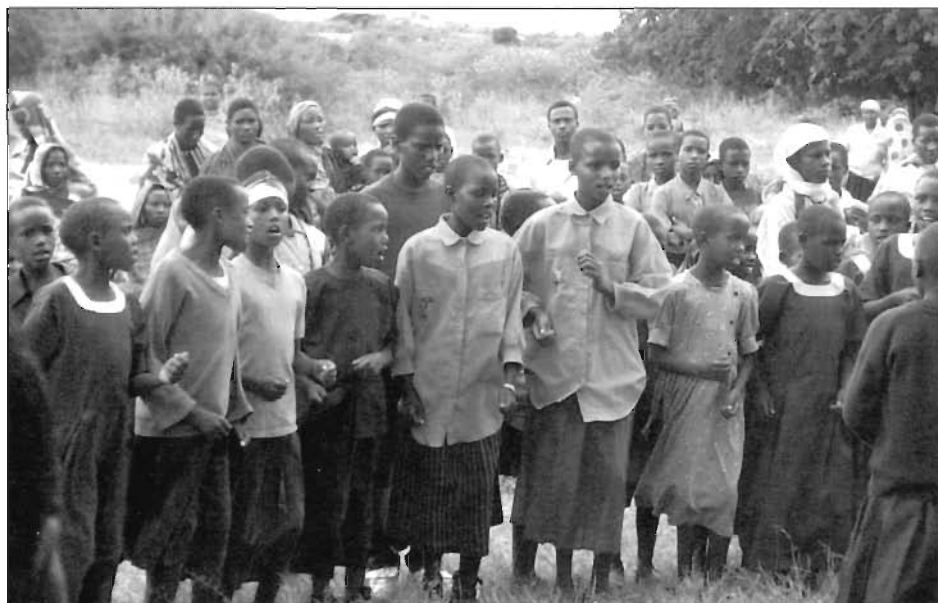
Pastor David Natema, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Uganda hosted us

during the first week of our time in Africa. He had visited our AFLC headquarters just last September.

Pastor Natema heads an indigenous church group that began in 1995. Today they have about forty preaching places. The evangelical churches in Uganda are young because during the reign of Idi Amin, only Islam, Anglican and Catholic religions were permitted in the country. But since 1980, the English-speaking nation has enjoyed peace and cooperation with its neighbors and with the United States.



Pastor David Natema (center) with James Musenza and Michael Tatumwire, the two Ugandans planning to attend the FLS this fall.



Some of the crowd of about 400 who attended an outdoor singspiration on Sunday afternoon in the Rift Valley area of Tanzania.

What were your observations of the country and people?

I have never seen or tasted such delicious fruit. They have a beautiful tropical countryside. In the cities it is very western in clothes and culture with tribal languages found in the villages. We saw many influences of Christianity. For example, "Jesus is the answer" was painted across the wall of a downtown building.

I was refreshed with our visits with the leaders. They are well educated, goal-oriented and reflect a strong influence of the British. We visited with the minister of communication (similar to our presidential press secretary) who is a Christian and a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Uganda. I was thrilled to observe a free and open sharing of Christ that seems to exist in their government and public institutions.

How did this group become acquainted with the AFLC?

Pastor Natema originally was Anglican. As he studied their church history, he was troubled with the origin of the Anglican Church, namely the conduct and motivation of King Henry VIII. He then began reading Luther's writings and found fellowship with his neighbors, the Tanzanian Lutherans. His convictions regarding God's Word grew to conform to Lutheran teachings and in 1995, he and a few others formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Uganda. Communications were begun with the Lutheran Church of Tanzania.

After you left Uganda, where did you visit?

Lavon Bohling and I went to the Mbulu District in Tanzania where the Haydom Hospital is located. Dr. and Mrs. Norvald Yri spent that week with us along with Pastor Zacharias, one of the Lutheran church leaders in that region. He attended our seminary in 1989-90. (Dr. Yri is the new co-director of the



Dr. Norvald Yri (center) and Zakayo Malekwa with some of the villagers in the Rift Valley of Tanzania. Malekwa is one of the students expecting to begin studies at FLS this fall. He is a three-time Olympian and was the all-Africa champion javelin thrower in 1985.

AFLBS Ministry Training Institute and will be teaching at the Free Lutheran Seminary this fall.)

The Tanzanian Lutheran church is about three million strong, originating from German colonial influence. The Swedish Lutheran missions later worked in the northern area and they invited the Norwegian Lutheran Mission to come and assist in the work. This is how the Haydom Lutheran Hospital began fifty years ago. This northern region represents an area that is remaining faithful to God and His Word and is searching for fellowship and conservative theological training for its leaders.

What evidence of spiritual life did you see in Tanzania?

There is revival in the remote areas of this nation. We saw it and our hearts were thrilled. Only about 25 kilometers from Haydom is the area known as the Rift Valley. It's a National Geographic photographer's paradise. They estimate 15 tribes in this area remain unreached by the gospel. The Datooga tribe just now received the Gospel of Mark in their own language. This is a result of the growing revival and ongoing ministry in Tanzania.

What are the needs in East Africa?

They certainly need our prayer as they share the gospel. There is a need for more workers. But I think I can point to three big areas of concern for this developing church. The first one is their need for biblically conservative theological training. This fall, our FLS expects two men from each country to begin classes. The next area of concern is for more medical diagnostic facilities and personnel. They have doctors but have limited testing capabilities outside of the urban areas. The third significant need is for clean drinking water in rural communities.

What would you love to see in the future in that region of the world?

I could see perhaps a facility in one of those countries where these needs could be addressed. A strong conservative Lutheran school could serve that region as well as reach across the Indian Ocean to India and Sri Lanka where we have already conducted short-term classes to help them in such a vital area of ministry.



—Solveig Hjermstad

Missionaries Dan and Debbie Giles, Jerez, Mexico celebrated the wedding of their son, Danny and his bride Marcela, in Aguascalientes on June 23. It was the first visit to Mexico for many of the Giles relatives. After the wedding, the Giles plan to attend Debbie's parent's fiftieth wedding anniversary in Wisconsin. The Giles and Missionaries Todd and Barb Schierkolk serve two congregations in Jerez. One is a small English-speaking congregation of mostly retired Americans and the other is conducted in Spanish.

Please do not use the old Aguascalientes address for the Giles. They are now at Apartado Postal 535, Jerez, Zacatecas, Mexico 99300. E-mail at giles@jereznnet.com.mx.

Missionaries Todd and Barb Schierkolk, Jerez, Mexico are thanking God for the lasting effects of the work done by the Medicine Lake Lutheran Academy teens from the Minneapolis area who joined them this past April. The Schierkolks wrote: "We probably made as many good contacts in the week the team was here as we did in about three years of door knocking in Aguascalientes. Please pray for our follow-up efforts as we work to bring these families and individuals into the kingdom of God."

The Schierkolks use the same mailing address as the Giles, but the e-mail address is different: aquadevida@jereznnet.com.mx.

Lutheran Bible Translators have developed their first vacation Bible school curriculum for use this summer. "While You Are Going ... Make Disciples" is a curriculum designed to help children see missions as an adventure in which they play an important part. In learning how they can make disciples, they focus on five disciple-making verbs: *Listen, Pray, Care, Tell, and Send*. It is adaptable for use in Sunday schools as well. The AFLBS summer ministry teams are using this new curriculum and it is available through the AFLC Parish Education office at 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441.

Minneapolis congregation joins the AFLC

Hope Lutheran of Minneapolis, Minnesota, was placed on the AFLC Congregational Roster at the May coordinating committee meeting. The approximately 800-member congregation is served by Pastor Tom Brock.

Pastor Richard Anderson, Elk River, Minnesota, has founded the Richard D. Anderson (RDA) Ministries with the purpose to capture the passion, skill, resources and imagination of people and organizations to help them turn their God-given dreams into reality. He offers services in many areas of congregational life, plus other areas, including estate planning.

Pastor Alvin Magnuson, Reva, South Dakota has resigned as the pastor of Slim Buttes Lutheran where he has served since 1994. His future plans are currently unknown.

Pastor Jim Winters, Lake Alma, Saskatchewan, has resigned as pastor of Faith Fee Lutheran and plans to rest some before considering other possibilities.

Lutheran Bible Ministries, Minneapolis, Minnesota, has launched a Bible literacy campaign in which its nationwide faculty will deliver Bible Adventure seminars to congregations throughout the United States and Canada. Over the past decade, LBM has conducted over 700 Bible Adventure seminars that have reached an intergenerational audience of 100,000 in nearly 40 states. Each seminar lasts for five hours and participants memorize the major people, places and events of the Old or New Testament. LBM is an outreach of Lutheran Bible Institute, the former Bible school in Minneapolis. For more information call 1-800-778-7616.

Missionaries David and Sarah Nelson have moved to a community outside of Lisbon. Their new address is : Av. Nossa Senhora do Rosario 575, Bloco 2, 6A, 2750 Cascais, PORTUGAL. E-mail: pastorluterano@clix.pt

AFLC Memorial Gifts

April-May 2001

Department given to...

In memory of...

World Missions

*Dorothy Pentti
David Jacobson
Henning Hoseth
Clara Johnson
Bert Floan
Lee Quanbeck
Albert Windingland
Sheldon Mortrud
Donald Hitterdal
Mary Haugen
Linda Odegaard
Ruth Holmstrom
Shawn Haug*

Home Missions

*David Jacobson
Ellen Hamaker
Burton Olsen
Fred Cink
Marvin Johnson
Helen Hetletvedt
Lee Quanbeck
Walter Klubberud
Mary Haugen*

Vision 2004

*Josephine Gruesner
Iona Fish
Bert Floan
Linda Odegaard
Grace Rustebakke
Orrin Nyhus
Art Vlitersch
Bertha Koester*

*Sheldon Mortrud
Betty Jacobson
Grace Erikson
Edgar Anderson
Edna Folden*

Evangelism

*Sheldon Mortrud
Lee Quanbeck
Art Erickson, Jr.
Albert Windingland*

AFLBS

*Otto Forde
Linda Odegaard
Lee Quanbeck
Bernice Fedje
Henning Hoseth
Erling Hoseth
Christian Hoseth
Gordon Rugland
Randy Strand
Edgar Anderson
Pearl Normand
Sheldon Mortrud*

AFLTS

*Lee Quanbeck
Marge Glendenning
Mary Haugen
Linda Odegaard
Lillian Brown
Joseph Rehling
Ross Haufschild*

General Fund

*Lee Quanbeck
Sheldon Mortrud*

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (5 months) – January 1 - May 31, 2001

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN MAY	TOTAL REC'D	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$267,241.00	\$25,580.05	\$115,973.49	43
Seminary	126,462.00	10,124.70	60,766.52	48
Bible School	162,545.00	14,833.13	72,881.00	45
Home Missions	242,838.00	19,067.82	105,799.46	44
World Missions	206,762.00	14,464.64	89,034.67	43
Capital Investment	9,490.00	450.78	2,840.08	30
Parish Education	78,302.00	8,161.18	32,188.72	41
Church Extension	26,119.00	1,703.90	12,563.70	48
TOTALS	\$1,119,759.00	\$94,386.20	\$492,047.64	44
TOTALS 2000	\$1,147,510.00	\$95,731.45	\$442,694.29	39
Goal 33%				

The Evangelism Department received \$4,837.85 in May.

Working the right way

By now we should have entered the age of leisure. Advanced technology has provided all these timesaving devices to make our lives easier. We shouldn't have to work so hard. But according to Harvard University economist Juliet Schor, author of *The Overworked American*, work hours have increased significantly since the 1960s.

The timesaving devices aren't bringing us more rest. Instead, those with the timesaving devices often feel they work more and have higher levels of stress. The Families and Work Institute, in a study on overwork, reported that those who use technology such as cell phones, pagers, computers or fax more frequently during off hours are more likely to say they feel overworked.

Rest isn't found in getting the latest computer or owning a cell phone. Rest is found when we are doing the work God has called us to do, in the way God wants us to do it.

The title of a recent news article stated, "Americans working longer hours, enjoying it less." Some of those Americans who are working hard with little enjoyment are working in churches. They are in positions for which they are not gifted nor called.

The Bible says, "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us" (Romans 12:6, NIV). We have different roles to play in the body of Christ, and each one is important. We are to serve in the place God has for us, and not another. We are to be working in the area for which God has designed us. When doing that we find joy and fulfillment.

Imagine someone who is skilled and trained as a mechanic joining the army. Instead of using his mechanical abilities, he is ordered to be head cook for a unit. He will probably become frustrated in this position and experience very little success. He — and the ones forced to eat his cooking — will wish he was in a position more suited to his abilities.

Are you a soldier in God's army, working in a position different than the one for which you are most gifted? In our congregations are we encouraging people to find the role for which they are best suited, or are we just filling slots?

Too often we approach service in the congregation by getting the list of offices that has existed in the past and looking for names to put down for the vari-

ous positions. People's joy in service and the congregation's effectiveness will increase if we look first at the people in the congregation and consider what work God has for them, before looking at the slots we think must be filled. This may result in some jobs that were done before not getting done. Some new positions may be created. The important thing is that people are doing the work for which God has made them.

God has unique and meaningful work for you to do. He put you on this planet for a reason. Find that reason, work in the role for which He has made you, and you will find joy.

Some are working with little joy, because they are working out of wrong motivations. They are trying to make up for bad things they have done. They think hard work will soothe their troubled conscience.

It is not doing good deeds that brings rest to the soul. It is believing the good news. Our work is to be motivated by the good news of what Jesus has done in dying for our sins and rising again. "Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the Lord has been good to you" (Psalm 116:7). It is God's goodness, not our goodness, that brings rest.

Many think they cannot really rest until they work hard. That may be how it is on the job site but to find rest for our souls, the order is to be reversed. We first rest in Christ, then we work. "This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: 'In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you

would have none of it'" (Isaiah 30:15, NIV).

Salvation is not found in our achievements or our accomplishments. It is found in resting and trusting in what God has done. We then, because we are resting in Him, are freed to work in ways that are purposeful and bring joy.

Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:28, 29, NIV).

Working in order to impress or earn makes one "weary and burdened." The Lord invites us to work because we have received, because we are resting in Christ and His cross and resurrection.

Working in the right place, for the right reason, brings just the right kind of rest for our souls.

—Pastor Craig Johnson

**"Rest is found
when we are
doing the
work God has
called us to do,
in the way God
wants us to do
it."**

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Periodicals

THE ASSOCIATION RETREAT CENTER

Come away and rest awhile at the Association Retreat Center

One can only know how to appreciate resting, when they have experienced the fullness of what it means to work. The ARC staff delights in the work before them. Uncertain many times how the endless tasks will be accomplished, but confident that God, who is faithful, in His perfect timing will carry them out to completion.

When you check in at the ARC, you will notice the office building has had a makeover. The laundry room has moved to the backside of Tadmor and will be better equipped to accommodate the large volume of laundry.

Interior painting is now completed on the inside of the Tabernacle with hopes to finish spraying the ceilings, painting the exterior, and re-carpeting the entrance and the Tabernacle's back meeting room by summer's end. This building is wonderful in the summer, with its thick concrete walls. It provides its own cool air throughout the hot days.

The new fenced-in toddler park, Pettie's Park (in memory of Peter Westlake), with rubberized ground should be completed in July. This will be a welcome feature for busy feet and parents of small children.

Work has been done recently on clearing and preparing a sight for a five-bedroom house that will be located behind the director's house on the

west side of the camp. This has been a gift from God to help meet the increased lodging demands of the ARC. It will be a wonderful meeting area for small groups of up to 30 people. The goal is to have it available by July 29, 2001 Family Camp.

The projects listed above are made possible by generous donations to the retreat center. We want to thank those who support the ARC with faithful giving. The goal for the next two years is to retire the debt that was incurred with the remodeling of the many buildings and the



Karen Johnson.

Join Karen and
others who keep
coming back year
after year.

construction of the gymnasium.

A "Chair Fund" has been started. Contributions will go toward the purchase of 250 new chairs for Manna Inn. The goal is to have enough money saved to purchase them in 2002. Each chair costs \$25. Perhaps you and your family would like to purchase a chair or a set of four or six? If you would like to make a donation to the ARC you may do so by sending it to: ARC, 2372 30th Ave., Osceola, WI 54020.

It is the purpose of the ARC to have a prepared place for a weary soul to come away and rest awhile. As registrar of the camp, I see many people sign in, beginning their camp experience; some excited, some in tears, some giddy, some just wanting to collapse, worn from the work they have left behind. It is such joy to see the transformation the Lord does while they are here. Some become more mellow, some content, some renewed and others strengthened for the work God has before them as they return home. We invite you to be a part of the many camps and retreats offered at the ARC ... a place has been prepared for you ... come away and rest awhile. After resting, you'll appreciate the work much more.

Hope to see you!

Family Camp, July 29-August 4

Classic's Retreat, October 5-7

Family Retreat, October 26-28

— Pam Olson, registrar
1-888-748-3969