

The Lutheran AMBASSADOR

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Living in the reality of the Resurrection

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Resurrection power

If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

— I Corinthians 15:17-20 (NIV)

We don't understand nor can we comprehend in any way the power that raised Jesus from the dead. However, the Scriptures tell us we are to experience that same power in us. Paul shares the personal desire he had, "I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain the resurrection from the dead" (Philippians 3:10-11).

Paul extends his desire beyond himself when he prays for the church of Ephesus. "I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and His incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 1:18-20).

It is God's intention and desire that the very same power that raised Jesus from the dead live in us. It's hard to imagine what would happen if we in the Church today allowed the Holy Spirit to freely flow through us with this resurrection power. Just think of the broken hearts and lives that

AN ENCOURAGING WORD

would be mended, the reconciliation within families, the repentance of sin, the death of critical spirits, the lost hope restored to our youth, the high priority of prayer, our filled sanctuaries, the joy and enthusiasm in our worship services, and coming of a great revival resulting in a great harvest of lost souls. Will you let it happen?

We must not forget, however, that in addition to this resurrection power experience, suffering comes for the sake of Jesus. Paul readily reminded us that we are to share in His sufferings. Self has to die, the cross must be taken up, and we are to follow Jesus. Doing so means a constant spiritual battle with the devil, the world, and our own flesh. Are we willing to pay the price?

We may know all this, but to have it only as knowledge stored in the brain is not going to make an iota of difference unless it is moved into our heart and acted upon through faith and works.

May we be vessels willing to be filled with His power and used by Him in the ways of His choosing until that Day when the final manifestation of resurrection power takes place. We who believe shall be raised up to meet Jesus in the air and see Him as He really is, and live with Him throughout all eternity with a new and glorified body that shall never die. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!



— Pastor
David Skordahl
Dalton,
Minnesota

sound bites

1 “If indeed Jesus was bodily raised, that is the most important fact of human history. It establishes the deity of Christ, validates what He taught, and demonstrates that He was and is the only true God. The Resurrection is not just an event we celebrate at Easter. It is the heart of Christian evangelism — the message for all seasons to a needy world.”

—Charles Colson

“No one in later years seems to have gone to Joseph’s garden, and looking at the rock-hewn cave, to have said, “This is the place where the Lord is buried.”

No hostile investigation seems to

have been made to show that the martyred remains of the great Teacher still lay where they were deposited some days, weeks, or months ear-

lier. ... From the moment the women returned from the Garden, the tomb of Jesus passed, historically, into complete oblivion.”

—Frank Morison

2 “But the grave was not sealed! Their hopes were not crushed! The sun rose that Easter morning over an open grave!”

—Fredrik Wisloff

“If it can be shown that Jesus of Nazareth rose from the dead, it is beyond dispute that He was a unique figure. It is not a question of His spiritual survival, nor of His physical resuscitation, but of His conquest of death and

His resurrection to a new plane of existence altogether.”

—John Stott

“When the train goes through a tunnel and the world gets dark, do you jump out? Of course not. You sit still and trust the engineer to get you through.”

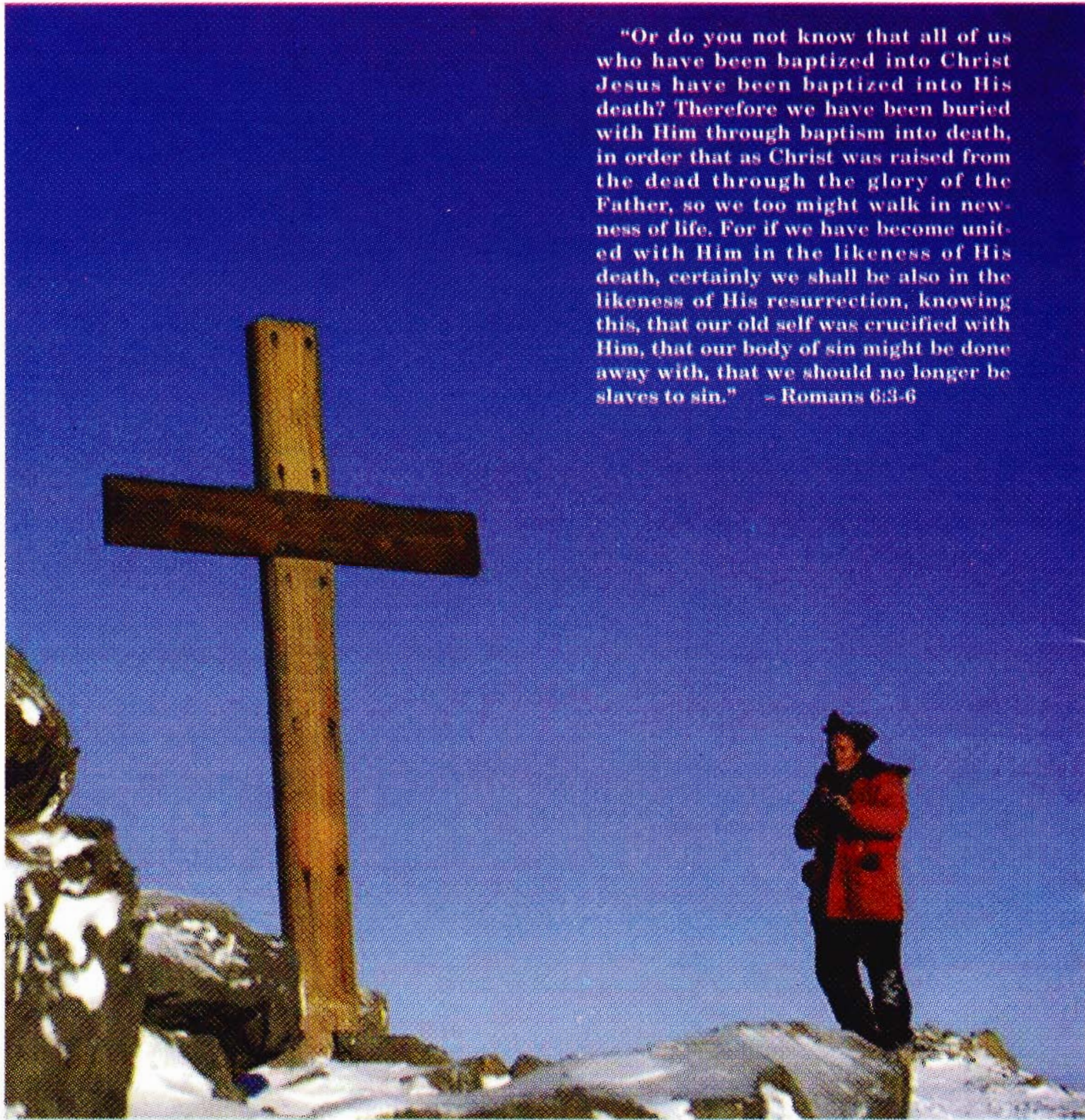
—Corrie Ten Boom

6 “Dead people don’t sit up! Dead people don’t talk! Dead people don’t leave their coffins! Unless Jesus shows up. Because when Jesus shows up, you never know what might happen.”

—Max Lucado

Rejoicing in the source

"Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin." — Romans 6:3-6



Our resurrected Savior — Oh the joy that wells up in the heart of the believer at this thought! Whether a convert of the first hour or a weathered old saint, the truth of the completed work of the Lord is indeed our source of untouchable joy, confidence, hope and freedom.

—Tim Berntsen
Grace Lutheran
Valley City, North Dakota

Our source of confidence

Scripture teaches that, as believers, we are crucified with Christ and that through the power of His resurrection, He now lives in us. This completed work of Christ, as He rose from the tomb on the third day, truly becomes our anchor in the depths of uncertainty, our candle in the darkness of doubt, and our island of rest in the tumultuous sea of life.

It is so easy to become discouraged in this day when the things of God seem so disdained by those around us. I find it quite difficult not to fear for my little boy growing up in a world that despises God and will hate him for the faith that I pray the Lord will preserve in him. It is in the midst of this fear that youth and parents alike must look upon the empty tomb and grasp the truth of the resurrected Savior. Jesus lives to calm the seas and chart the waters of our lives as we look to Him and to the compass that is His Word. The work of our salvation which Christ completed in His resurrection is the Christian's sustaining strength and joy as we take our pilgrim's journey through this world.

Our source of hope

Our Lord's resurrection is our great hope. Not only do we find comfort and joy for each day in the completed work of Christ but we also have the hope of future glory with Him. As Jesus was resurrected into glory, so shall we also be raised on the last day unto His glory. Our resurrected Lord is now preparing an eternal home for His children. Oh what a great hope that is! The hope of a future with our Lord in His glorious heaven! We do not have a hope that lies in the corruptable things of this world but in the incorruptable perfec-

tion of the life to come. May we respond with Paul, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

Our source of freedom

The resurrection is also our source of freedom. "Our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin" (Romans 6:6). We are no longer in bondage to sin. Through the atoning death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ the believer is freed from the shackles of a bound will. Although the sinful flesh remains with us while we are in this world, we are no longer controlled by its lust for sin. "Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature, the old things are passed away, behold new things have come" (II Corinthians 5:17). Jesus has won the victory over sin and death, bringing us to new life by His grace through faith in Him, liberating us from the imprisoning power of sin.

What difference does the resurrection make? It is our joy and comfort. We can rest in the completed work of Christ when fear and despair threaten to overtake us. He has saved us and He will preserve us until He takes us home to be with Him. The resurrection is our hope. We wait expectantly for the glory that is to come when we shall be "in the likeness of His resurrection: with Him in glory." And the resurrection is our freedom. We are no longer bound by sin if we are in Christ but are freed by His fulfillment of the law through His death at the cross and glorious resurrection. Praise be to God for our risen Savior Jesus Christ who is our joy, comfort, hope and freedom. May He receive all glory and honor.



The clear definition of the Resurrection by Christ Himself in John 11 stands without need of explanation. While there are so many others in Scripture, this one seems to address the subject at hand.

To live in the Resurrection means that one is a Christian. It means that, like Martha, we believe that Jesus is the **Christ**. But how does this hope of heaven, a promised secure assurance for the Christian, impact one's experience of grief?

And Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." — John 11:25

LIVING IN THE RESURRECTION:



RNS photo

On one hand this assurance has a profound, positive effect on those who mourn. On the other hand it has no effect at all. Let me explain.

During my over 20 years of parish ministry, and now these years of chaplaincy, I have observed scores of Christians and non-Christians alike as they have mourned the death of someone they loved. My own life has been so touched. Where

and when there has been some assurance that the one who died was a believer, the family of believers who mourns almost always point to this as a source of comfort and help. In this sense, death is seen as a coronation of sorts.

Statements such as: "Well, now they're at peace ... We know where he is" often reflect deep comfort and reassurance. I recall one summer day when, in the midst of almost unbearable grief, God brought Isaiah 53:4 to mind, "Surely he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows." I recall how I began to weep, and audibly said to my Savior, "How could You do that?" In that moment, the power of the cross and the resurrection wasn't only my salvation, but a promise that there Christ had visited the depths of my pain as I mourned. He saw it in eternity's future. He entered it. He "bore" it with and for me. There is no greater gift to the believer who mourns.

You might ask, having said all that, how I can also say that the Resurrection makes no difference?

A great part of grief is not so much about where people are, but where they aren't.

Some years ago I read a true article recounting the unexpected death of the wife of a missionary. At the funeral, a close friend and fellow missionary said to the grieving husband, "Well, you do know where she is."

The missionary friend was surprised at the angry outburst: "I know where she is. It's where she isn't that bothers me."

Walking with friends who have experienced the death of a loved one, a divorce, or any other significant loss can be difficult at best. Comments like that above

dead in Christ shall rise. So then, what is her grief, and that of her sister, Mary, about? It is about where their brother "isn't." It was His observing this grief that moved Jesus to weep as well.

It is neither uncommon nor abnormal

the difference it makes to those who mourn

— Rev. John C. Rieth, Chaplain
United Home Care's Hospice
Grand Forks, North Dakota

are sometimes unconscious attempts to answer the question, "Why?" The truth is, we aren't all that comfortable looking death in the face. And, it's not uncommon for fine Christians to second guess themselves and their faith. At the time of death the attention is on the person who died, where they are, i.e. heaven. Later, the focus shifts to where they aren't. This becomes the larger focus of grief.

Some months ago I spoke to a friend whose father had died. I asked how she was doing. She responded, "You know, I was so glad when my father died, that his pain and suffering were gone, and the cancer was gone. Yesterday it was a month since he died, and all of a sudden," she tearfully continued, "I realized my father was gone." That, in a real sense, is the grief that is there, resurrection or not.

In visiting with Pastor Robert Lee recently, I was reminded of a conversation he had some years ago with a mutual friend of ours. This Christian man's wife had died. He said something like this: "Pastor, don't ever tell someone whose loved one has died that they're not alone if they have Jesus. I used to do that, and it's not true. I am alone." This man went on to talk of coming home to an empty house, eating meals alone. He was alone, in every sense of the word. He said that his relationship with Jesus made the aloneness bearable.

If you notice in the text we began with, Martha states that she believes in the Resurrection. She believes in the hope of every believer, that on that last day, the

for Christians to experience guilt, doubt, anger, depression, feelings of abandonment by God, and ask "why" in a hundred different ways, as they move into the weeks and months after a loved one has died. I find it interesting that one expression of Christ on the cross was, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" God had not, but it seemed as though He had. So it can feel for the child of God at times.

Living in the Resurrection does make a difference for Christians as they mourn. The knowledge that the loved one who died was prepared for death serves as the foundation of comfort and assurance. But it is likewise true that the Christian's grief stands alone. The Resurrection doesn't change that, but it provides the basis for grace and comfort in the midst of suffering.

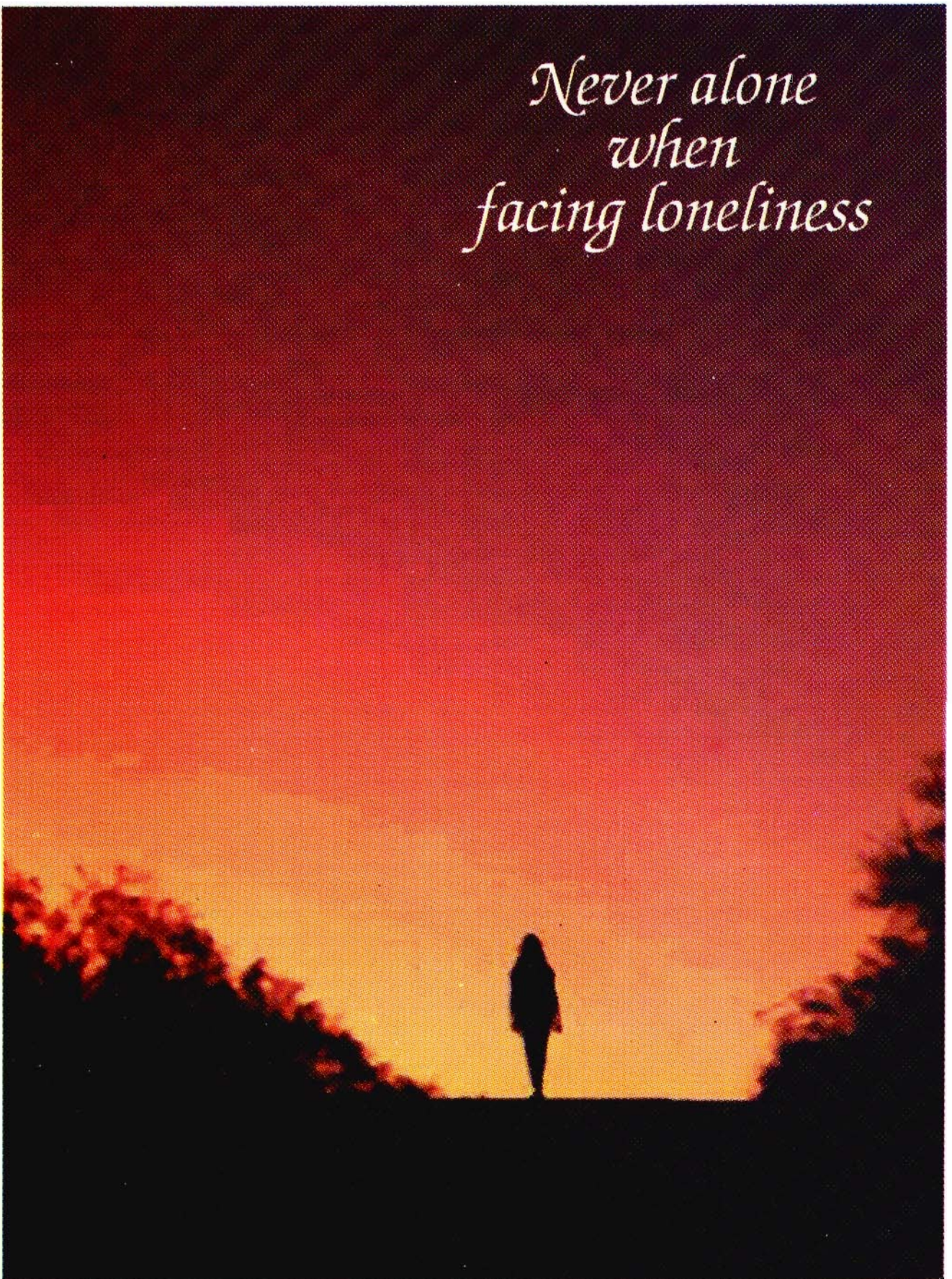
Brothers and sisters, your Christian friends who mourn the death of a loved one are just as alone as any non-Christian. ***It is the hope of the Resurrection that makes that aloneness bearable.*** Be kind, take time to listen to your grieving friends. Ask about the source of their grief, whatever it may be. Any genuine attempt to really listen and ask about their grief is more often than not appreciated.

God be praised for the foundation truth and promise in the Resurrection. On that Day, as Revelation 21:4 tells us, "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

A blessed Easter to you all.



*Never alone
when
facing loneliness*



Have you felt all alone even though you had Christian friends and family around you? Maybe you were the new kid at school or started a new job and wondered what your boss would be like, and if you would last a week?

I have been privileged to travel around the world. God has led me to new friends and places I never dreamed were possible. In obedience to my dad's request, I attended the Association Free Lutheran Bible School. It was there I heard my heavenly Father call me to full-time ministry. In obedience I went to college and seminary. In obedience to my Uncle Sam, I heard the call to go into the Army National Guard and later to active duty. Because of obedience I have learned the great joy of walking with Jesus, even when walking through lonely paths with many questions unanswered. During each step of this journey God has placed in my life Christian friends, a caring church and a praying family.

My situation in life is not unique. Many of you can identify with the things I have encountered. I'd like to relate one incident that changed my life forever.

While serving a congregation in Bemidji, Minnesota, I felt the call to serve the Lord as an Army chaplain on active duty. On my desk were orders to go to my first active duty assignment at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. I also had a handwritten letter from a general to go to Honduras for nineteen days. I was to go with soldiers I did not know. They were from the greater Chicago area and were without a chaplain.

With much prayer and deliberation, I went, however reluctantly.

A military conflict was going on between Nicaragua and the Contra rebels. The Contras would do their damage in Nicaragua and then flee to Honduras for refuge. The U.S. presence in Honduras was controversial. The mission assigned to me was to provide chaplain support to U.S. soldiers who were building roads and giving medical assistance to the remote mountain people in northern Honduras. Though I was only away from home for a few weeks, I soon began to get lonely. I felt sorry for myself and began asking, "What am I doing here?"

One morning, as we had done several times before, we flew by helicopter to a remote village. Medical doctors, dentists and their staffs were attending to the people. Several children sat next to me in the doorway of a small building. They would read a passage I would select from the Spanish Bible I brought for the village. Their parents would stand nearby and smile to see their children read. As one child read, another would stand to take a turn. A 13-year-old girl read the passage I had chosen for her, and then she touched my arm and said in Spanish, "Please Pastor Marcos, may I read my truth?"

There was a passage she desperately wanted to read, and I needed to hear the message. She read from John 14:

Let not your heart be troubled, believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (NASV)

Her simple testimony spoke volumes.

It is only God's Word that can dispel loneliness! His message for us is clear. This world is only a temporary dwelling place. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the reality of eternal life. He has defeated death for all who will trust in Him. There is no place we can go without God. He has promised to be with us until the end of the age.

Friend, if you are in a lonely place today, remember these precious words of Jesus. The same power that Jesus used to defeat Satan is offered to you. We can choose to be lonely or we can choose to ask the Savior to be with us and fill us with His resurrection power.



*Jesus
lives!*

Teaching us what really counts



"Sometimes I can't sleep as I think about the Resurrection. I think of all the people who have gone before me and all the little ones that are to come."

— Leona, 85



— Chaplain Kerwin
Sletto
Ottawa, Illinois

Blessed be the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

— I Peter 1:3-5

"The Resurrection means Jesus is coming again. Then there'll be 'no more sorrow or pain.'"

— Clarice, 86



"We'll all be together. I keep dreaming about the Resurrection and I wonder what I'll be like. In the past the Resurrection was more of a formality — something that is a part of church like going to Sunday school. Now it's a reality. God gave Jesus as a sacrifice so that we can be resurrected. I'll be with Christian people."

— Merle, 93



The Resurrection means that we will be judged for the good and bad we have done but Jesus died for my sins."

— Pearl, 89



"The Resurrection means the real truth and hope and comfort to know that He died for me."

— Mary, 100



And so were some of the responses of the residents at Pleasant View Luther Home in Ottawa, Illinois, when I asked them what the Resurrection meant to them. I noticed a common thread of hope and anticipation in their answers.

When people enter a nursing home, they give up so much. For many, they have lost a spouse. They have given up their homes and the joy of visiting friends around their community. Perhaps they no longer see their families as often as they used to. Activities are limited. In many respects, they are starting life over.

But one factor of life that is often strengthened is their relationship with God. The Resurrection becomes more of a reality. They anticipate a time when they will be free from the physical and emotional pains of this life. Being reunited with loved ones who have gone before is cause for joyful hope. All these hopes are based upon the foundation that Jesus died for our sins and rose again.

Learn from our elders. Things seemingly so important are put into proper perspective. The things of this world will change and pass away but Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and, yes, forever. As our lives change we can depend upon God to help us endure and adjust. The elderly teach us what really matters: our relationship with God and with those we love.

*Great is thy faithfulness Lord unto me.
To God be the glory.*



GROWING IN DEPENDENCE

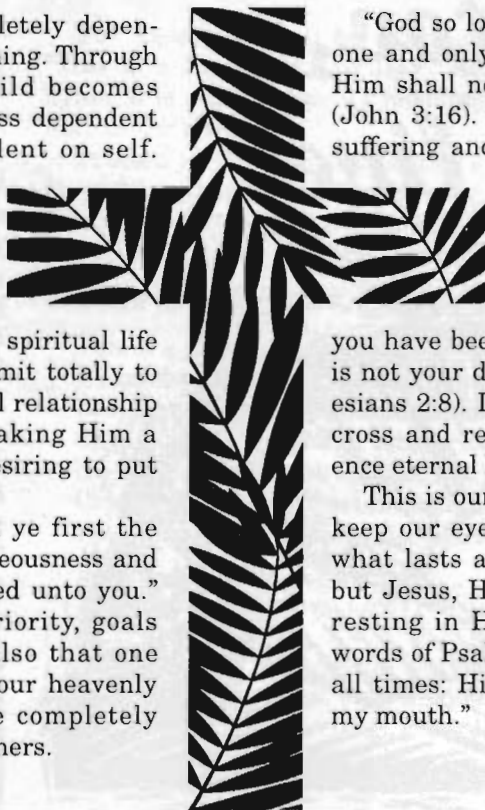
Facing seemingly impossible demands?
The commuter "fast lane" simply is not
fast enough in spite of working
the cellular car phone?
The newest and biggest machinery still
doesn't cover the ever increasing
acreage before bad weather arrives?
The cost of orthodontics and tennis shoes
devastate the family budget?
Church meetings, family and school
obligations add to already
fragmented and stressed lives?
Where is one's focus to be?

Mel Fischer, a Minneapolis area
businessman and chairman of
Faith Lutheran in Shakopee,
Minnesota, shares his testimony.

As an infant, one is completely dependent on others for everything. Through age and maturity a child becomes physically and emotionally less dependent on others and more dependent on self.

While growing up in the church's Sunday school, youth group and Bible studies, one develops a craving to feed on God's Word. The point is then reached in one's spiritual life where the need exists to commit totally to Jesus; to experience a personal relationship with Him which includes making Him a part of one's daily life and desiring to put Him first.

Matthew 6:33 says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." With Christ as your first priority, goals change. It is at this point also that one becomes more dependent on our heavenly Father, just as children are completely dependent on their earthly fathers.



"God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). This is possible through Jesus' suffering and death and, yes, having power over the grave — His resurrection. Jesus was born and died for you and me that we may have life and have it abundantly. "For by grace

you have been saved through faith: and this is not your doing, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). It is only through Jesus and His cross and resurrection that we can experience eternal life with our heavenly Father.

This is our focus and purpose. Let us each keep our eyes on the cross. Let us see that what lasts are not the things of this world but Jesus, His Word and the souls that are resting in Him. Let us press on with the words of Psalm 34:1, "I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth."



I'm going on a trip to a place I've never been before. I've read about it and how wonderful it is ever since I was a little boy. I decided then to make my reservation so I would have a place to stay when it's time to go on the trip. I don't have to pay anything. Someone has already paid for the trip and the room. Now let me tell you where I'm going.

I'm going to heaven to be with Jesus. I'm going to see Jesus face to face. I made my reservation by

asking Jesus to come into my heart. I wanted Him to be my Lord. I wanted to live the way Jesus would want me to live. But we all sin and in heaven there will be no sin, so how could I get there? No matter how good I was or did wonderful things for others, it still didn't help. There was only one way I could get there, and Jesus took care of that. He paid for my sins by dying on the cross and taking my sins on Him. He paid my way and now I am

free to go to heaven. Jesus became my Savior, meaning He saved me from going to hell with all my sins. I became a saint, a forgiven sinner.

Now that I have cancer in my bones, I know Jesus will be coming for me soon, maybe in a few weeks. I look forward to God taking me to heaven. When I die, God will take my soul, the part of me you can't see and which loves Jesus, home to be with the Lord.

Now if you happen to come to my funeral, you will see me in the casket and after the funeral I will be buried in the ground at Green Acres cemetery. Then comes the best of times! Jesus is coming to earth again and when He comes in the clouds, He will open all the graves and all those in the graves who loved Jesus when they died will go through the air to meet our souls and be with God. We will have glorified bodies and they will be perfect. My hands won't shake, my back will be straight, and all the cancer will be gone. That's a Praise the Lord!

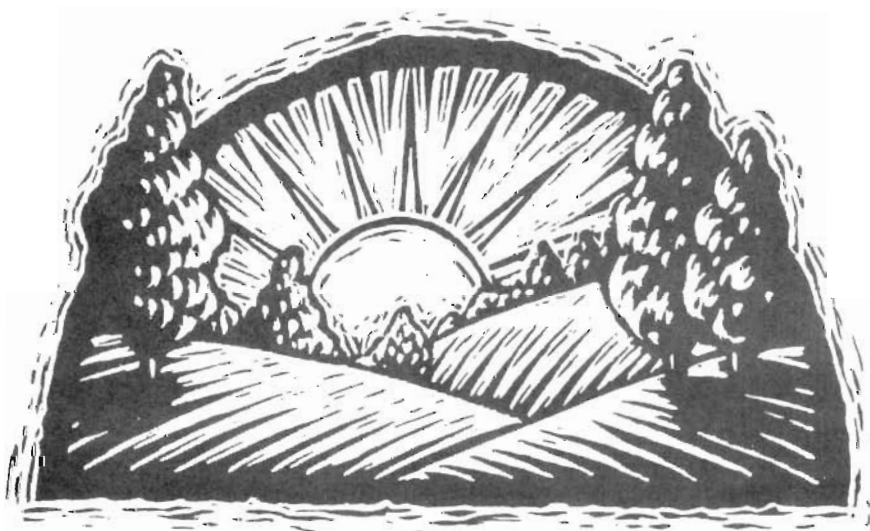
You, too, can make your reservation for heaven by asking Jesus to be your Savior and Lord. You need to repent of all your sins — that means being sorry and not wanting to sin again. Then Jesus is your Savior. Some of you have already asked Jesus to come into your heart. But there may be some of you who would like to bow your head and fold your hands and pray: "Dear Jesus, I love you. I want You to be my Lord and Savior. Please forgive me for all my sins. Help me to always live for You. Let Your Holy Spirit guide me, and when I die take me to be with You in heaven. Thank you, Jesus. Amen." Now go tell someone you made your reservation.



— Al Glimsdahl
Triumph Lutheran
Ferndale, Washington

The author shared this testimony with the children during the February 9, 1997, worship service.

Because my Redeemer lives, I, too, will live!



Hymns for Lent and Easter



At St. Mark's Lutheran in Indianapolis, Indiana, we are trying several new approaches in worship for Lent and Easter that are new, yet traditional. For Lent we will sing a Psalm paraphrase instead of saying a Psalm antiphonally. Psalm 43 provides the basis for "O God, Our Defense."

Singing a Psalm stimulates and enlivens. Singing stimulates different senses so that we hear the message in a novel fashion. Singing enlivens because we use our body more fully when we sing.

I always imagine the Hebrews, in the days before the Temple was built, seated on a hillside responsively using the Psalms; their voices filling the silent day with resounding chants and responses! Our use of the Psalms should reflect that picture.

O God, Our Defense (a paraphrase of Psalm 43)

1. O God, our defense, the world is not just,
we're orphans in life, we're lost, we're not loved;
send light and your truth, lead us back to your way,
please bring us to you, to your altar life.
2. We stand before you with happy new hearts,
you give us full joy, you heal us with love;
you give strangers hope, you adopt us as heirs,
we tell of your work, we again sing your name.
3. Sing joy to our God, the Father of all,
sing joy to his Son, who died on the cross,
sing joy to the Lord, for the Spirit of peace,
sing joy to the Lord on this day, for all time.

Tune: Hanover 10,10,11,11 — LBW#548

Text: R. L. Tappert, copyright 1974, revised 1997

For Easter we will be using a different approach; we will sing "This Is a Joyous, Happy Day." Although written to be a baptismal hymn, it is much more — a doxology, Psalm-like text! The words summarize the gospel.

Printed in the Missouri Synod's Hymnal for Children, *All God's People Sing*, the hymn is being sung in worship by many congregations as an introduction to worship, as a bridge between the lessons and as a Communion hymn. The one verse format makes it very flexible.

This Is a Joyous, Happy Day

This is a joyous, happy day;
We celebrate Your gift of life.
Christ is with us, joy surrounds us.
Christ takes our sin and sets us free;
He fills our lives with endless life.
Christ is with us; Christ unites us.
Praise our Maker, Praise the Spirit, Praise Christ Jesus.

Text: copyright R. L. Tappert, 1971

Tune: Lasst uns erfreuen. LBW#143

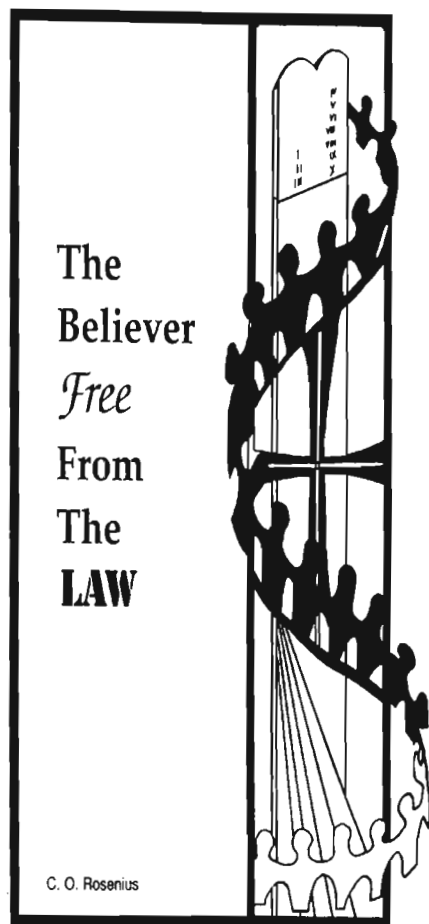
Try something different in worship this Lent/Easter season. If you try either of these texts, I am anxious for feedback. How did you use it and how well was it received? E-mail me: RLTAPPERT@MSN.COM.

— R. L. Tappert
Indianapolis

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Book review

Carl Olof Rosenius was born in Sweden, February 3, 1816. At a young age he was thoroughly gripped by the power of the gospel through the means of grace as he saw his own total depravity and the glorious sufficiency of Christ's perfect completeness for him.

Intending to go into the ministry of the Lutheran State church in 1838, he entered the University of Uppsala. His health weakened along with increasing doubts as he confronted the theological rationalism of his day.

He became a private tutor, at which time he met an English Methodist pastor named George Scott. Through the guidance and council of Scott, Rosenius' life in Christ was renewed. He began to preach the central truths of the Lutheran Reformation, rooted firmly in a sound insight into sin and grace, law and gospel, Word and Sacrament.

Most of his work was carried on in Bethlehem Church in Stockholm where large crowds gathered to hear him. He soon edited a periodical *Pietisten* (The Pietist), which was spread over Sweden. These articles were soon organized by others into various books and also found favor in Denmark and Norway.

Many Scandinavian immigrants along with their Bible, Catechisms, and hymnals also

brought the writings of Rosenius to America as treasured possessions. Like Hans Nielson Hauge and Gisle Johnson in Norway, Rosenius steeped himself in the writings of Luther and, like them, was used mightily of God to bring spiritual awakening, stability, and new life to many. On February 23, 1868, he was called home to be with his Savior.

Unfortunately little from the pen of this man has been translated into English. A significant exception is the book entitled, *The Believer Free From the Law*. Only 71 pages in length, it is not meant for rapid skimming. It strikes at the very heart of the human condition as it relates to God. Rosenius clearly shows that when the law is rightly preached, it is used to crucify all human abilities so that Christ alone remains as our sole sufficiency.

In this day when so many preach the law to work righteousness or human response rather than crucifixion, this central theme of the Scriptures and our Lutheran Reformation needs to take hold of us again. Without it I am convinced no genuine awakening in the Church will come. May God bless this short book of Rosenius that it may be used by God's Spirit to this end among us.

—Pastor Christian Oswood
Minneapolis, Minnesota

EVANGELISM

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for the saints.

— Ephesians 8:18

The Commission on Evangelism is in the process of calling a full-time evangelist. According to commission member, Pastor Tom Olson, "We sense a stirring of the Spirit of God in the AFLC to put evangelism on the front burner of concern. We have formed prayer triplets (three people willing to pray one hour a month on behalf of evangelism). Leaders of these prayer triplets will pray for more urgent and confidential concerns." If you would like to be a prayer triplet leader or a prayer partner, contact Pastor Olson at 20648 Co. Rd. H, Barronett, WI 54813 or call (715) 468-4415.

This is the Life!

I'm smiling as I reflect on some of the Scriptures in this month's WMF study: Come to Jesus for Life. It's not that I find the Word so humorous. Rather I see the Lord's sense of humor as He has worked in my life and the lives of many others who have so generously shared with me. One of these passages that He has worked out in so many of our lives is Romans 8:12-14:

"Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."

Yes, she who has the Son of God has life indeed (I John 5:12). But so often we fear the gift of abundant life that comes when we deny our own selfish desires and allow the Holy Spirit to be totally in charge of our plans and decisions. I have been one of those fearful ones; no doubt, so have you. Yet here I sit, smiling, as I consider the way our gentle Lord has worked with me these past 20 years.

"This is the life," I will think to myself on occasion as I sit in my small-town Iowa home, looking at my four beautiful children and my pastor husband, and feeling the tiny kicks of my pre-born child within.

If I knew at 18 what I would be doing now, no doubt I would be shocked and rather disappointed. Live in Iowa? We native Wisconsinites thought of Iowa as just a place to make fun of. Marry a pastor? Sounds a little crazy! Be a stay-at-home mother of five? Impossible for the young, opinionated feminist I once was. Home school? What's that?

Again I smile as I see the gentle hand of a God whose love for me is so vast I will never comprehend it, how He turned little circumstances into big lessons, molding and shaping me, calling me from a life lived for self to a life of His choosing, bit by bit making me more and more HIS.

As a new Christian, I had big goals of being a great and godly teacher, discipling many. Now my main disciples are four children, ages 3-10!

These days, it is hard for me to find a quiet moment for personal devotions. All those verses I memorized in college are often fuzzy or without a Bible "address" still attached. However, occasionally I have a moment to converse with one who is seeking the Lord, just beginning their walk with Jesus, who will confess to me that it is hard to entrust their whole life to Him. Perhaps their earthly father was undependable, abusive or absent.

Even without these valid reasons to doubt, we are all born with a sinful nature that wants to call the shots, make its own way. I recall many times of questioning the Lord, but it is a joy to share with these seekers that I have never regretted following Christ, giving it all to Him. The road has not been the easiest or the widest, but has always been paved with joy underlying all the circumstances. Yes, this life as a daughter of God is the life!

I smile as I remember a friend who said, "I will never be able to pray aloud in front of others." Now she and her husband lead a Bible study where they teach others how to pray. Or, I think of another who said she could never stand in front of the congregation and share a testimony. Just a few months ago her sharing brought

tears to many eyes in our congregation. Have you told God, "Never"? I have, but I warn you that is a "dangerous" challenge for a believer to give to the Lord. He wants to be Lord of the whole of our lives, to use us as vessels for His glory. Not until we are fully His in obedience will we find the peace and joy we all desire.

Don't worry, He'll never force you to give up lordship of your life. He'll be so gentle, you won't know all He is working in your heart until, like me, you look back and smile. Yes, now more often than before, my delight is to do His will. He has even changed the desires of my sinful heart. As we so often pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." We will see His glory here on earth as well as in heaven as we yield our lives to Him. Come to Jesus for LIFE!

For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

— Romans 14:7-8



— Mrs. Rose Carlson
Christian Free Lutheran
Wheatland, Iowa

The Eastern North Dakota District WMF will have a Spring Retreat at Cooperstown Bible Camp on April 4-5, 1997. The theme will be "By Wisdom a House is Built," from Proverbs 24:3-4. The speaker will be Mrs. Betty Nelson. The registration fee is \$26. All ladies are welcome. For more information, call (701) 239-8244.

Youth Notes

Sure Jesus was raised from the dead, but what about me?

Scott doesn't remember his birth father. On the outside you might never notice, but inside a part of him feels dead. Inside he is searching for his identity. Questions plague his mind. Who am I? Why am I here? Why did he leave? Will I ever meet him? The thought is always in the back of his mind, "If my own father didn't want me, why would anyone else?"

Heavenly Father, you raised Jesus from the dead, bring life to Scott. Be his Father. Be his source of identity and his answer to life's questions. I pray that Scott could know that You will never leave.

Katie is an all-American kind of girl. She is involved in every activity possible: sports, band, choir, drama and a club or two. She tries to fit church and youth group in on the side but really it is impossible to make it all fit. Everybody knows her and thinks that she has got life together. But

inside she is dying. She feels like she is on a merry-go-round going really fast. She can't get off and she can't hold on much longer.

Oh Jesus, I pray that You would bring new life to Katie. I pray that she could know that she doesn't have to do anything to please You. I pray that she could find the peace that You have to offer.

Mike wishes he could be like Katie. He doesn't feel like he can do anything well except play Nintendo. He is lonely and wondering if anyone cares about him or notices him at all. He feels like he has been left to die on some abandoned island. Will anyone ever find him? Will anyone ever get to know him?

Jesus, I pray that Mike could know that You desire a relationship with him; that You came to earth to restore the broken relationship and offer him an eternal friendship. I pray that he could find a part of the family of

God that will accept him and welcome him.

Laura has rejected everything around her. Rebel is the closest term that would fit. Her teachers annoy her, her parents are constantly getting down on her. She is angry at the world and not exactly sure why. What she does know is that life seems hopeless and pointless. She has made some mistakes and feels like a failure.

O Lord, I pray that Laura could hear Jesus' words from the cross, "Father, forgive her, she knows not what she is doing." I pray that she could understand that even though we hated You, You loved us in return.



—Pastor Kevin Olson
AFLC Youth Ministries Director

Prayer Rallies

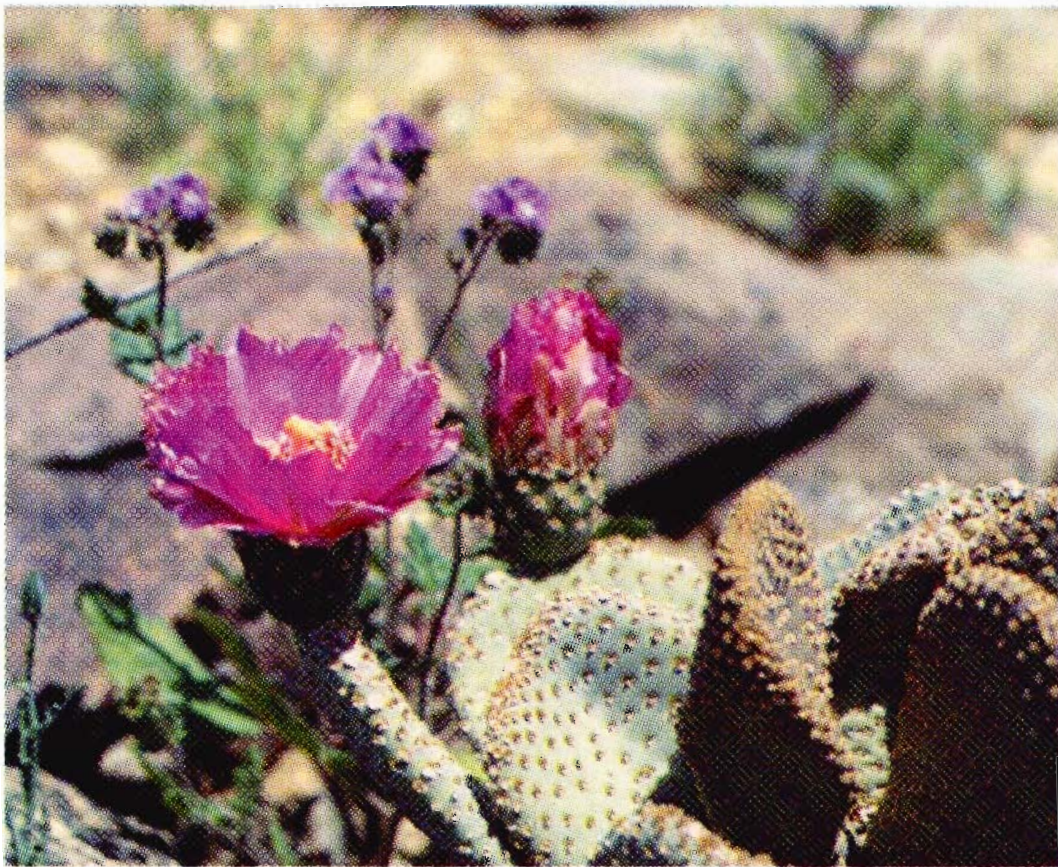
Three districts have had prayer rallies this year: South Dakota, Eastern North Dakota and North Central Minnesota. These have been very encouraging times together as the youth spent hours in prayer and learning about prayer. Pray that this could be a growing part of their daily lives and a part of their youth groups. Groups that pray together will be more likely to stay together.



The Youth Board met at the ARC last fall. Pictured are (L. to R.) Pastors Kevin Olson, Alan Arneson, Lloyd Quanbeck; Marshall Nessa and Jeremy Larson.

**Bring new life with a
word of encouragement
to a young person!**

1. Notice them
2. Be real and sincere
3. Find out about them
4. Hug them
5. Send them a letter
6. Show them some random act of kindness



Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that the dead has been;
Love is come again like wheat arising green.

In the grave they laid him, love by hatred slain,
Thinking that He would never wake again,
Lain in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen;
Love is come again like wheat arising green.

Forth He came at Easter, like the risen grain,
He that for three days in the grave had lain;
Raised from the dead, my living Lord is seen;
Love is come again like wheat arising green.

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
Your touch can call us back to life again,
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been;
Love is come again like wheat arising green.

— John M. C. Crum
Ambassador Hymnal #112

Furlough home under construction



The missionary furlough home, next to the ARC in Osceola, Wisconsin, is being reconstructed. Weekend volunteers of skilled and unskilled workers are needed. Call the ARC at (715) 294-2877 for more information. The national WMF has gathered approximately \$14,000 for household furnishings, including carpet, window coverings, appliances, and furniture. The project is scheduled for completion in May when the Dan Giles family returns from Mexico for their furlough.

Vehicles needed for summer teams

Do you have a mini-van you would be willing to give to the work of the Lord? The Barnabas and Majesty teams planned for the summer of 1997 are in need of dependable transportation ("Barnabeasts") capable of carrying a group of four or five youth plus luggage and equipment. Gifts in kind of vehicles will be received by AFLC Home Missions or AFLBS and receipted for tax deduction. Contact AFLC Home Missions at 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441, or AFLBS at 3120 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441.

Cesky Tesin, Czech Republic — Missionaries Tim and Renata Hinrichs continue to see more opportunities of ministry as they experience greater mastery of the language. On the last Sunday of November, Tim preached and conducted the entire worship

service in Czech. They live near the Polish border. About five miles away in southern Poland, a new Bible school is scheduled to open next fall. They are praying for God's wisdom and guidance concerning this school.

Correction: The correct address for Janice Baldwin, ("Hungry for books," *The Lutheran Ambassador*, 2/4/97, p. 18) is 9210 Market Pl. #B104, Everett, WA 98205.

Meet the BFLC pastors in India

My home village is Kattuvripalem at Chandle in the Gunter district of India. I am the only son of my parents. My name is Adam, and my wife's name is Avamma (Eve). Nine children were born to us and passed away. Now we have only one son whose name is Davasahayam. He is studying in the fourth class in school and is eleven years old.

Before I joined with the BFLC (AFLC in India) my wife and I used to go to work on farms and earned daily wages. One gospel worker named Buwhamam came to our village and ministered there for one and a half years. During those years he conducted Bible studies in our church. I and my wife attended these Bible study classes. There we came to know Jesus personally. A few years later my wife and I decided to serve the Lord. Then through

the recommendation of Pastor A. Paul, we joined the BFLC organization. I am presently serving at Pandrapadu.

Thank you for your prayers.

— Adam Chettupalla

Along with Pastor Adam Chettupalla, my home village is Kattuvripalem. I am the oldest son of my parents. My father was a witch doctor, and he would take me with him wherever he went. He suffered from a dangerous disease. We were very poor at that time. Since I am the eldest son in my family I had to take care of my family while my father was ill. I was only twelve years old at that time. I was able to get a job helping a farmer. I also helped my two sisters until they got married. After my marriage I developed friendships with some

wicked people and started drinking liquor. Eventually I lost peace of mind. This drinking habit spoiled my life.

One day a young pastor came to my village and made contact with me. He comforted me with many verses from the Bible and invited me to the church. In later months I was comforted even more by the words of the Bible. I confessed my sins and accepted Jesus as my personal Savior. One day my wife fell seriously ill. Believers from our congregation came to the hospital and prayed for her. By God's grace she regained her health. From that time onward we decided to serve the Lord. For two years I have been working with the BFLC at Tokalavaripalem. Please pray for me, my family and my congregation. Thank you.

— Shadrach Karlapudi

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Spring Lake Park, Minnesota — Maranatha Lutheran will dedicate their recently acquired church building on March 23. AFLC President Robert Lee and Home Missions Director Paul Nash will be the guest speakers. Maranatha is an AFLC Home Missions congregation. Tonnes Pollestad is the pastor.

Missionary Dan Giles and family will be leaving Aguascalientes, Mexico, the first of May to begin their year of furlough. They hope to move into the new mission furlough house at the ARC near Osceola, Wisconsin. The remodeled home is being completed on schedule thanks to all the volunteer labor. Pray for good weather to continue completion of the project. Dan and Debbie Giles' daughter, Ingrid, 18, is completing her senior year in high school. Her recent health problems have been attributed to what is now diagnosed to be emphysema. She is enrolled to attend AFLBS in the fall.

Campo Mourão, Brazil — Missionaries David and Sarah Nelson are living in the Connely Dyrud home on the Campo Mourão campus and are carrying on with the ministry while the Dyruds are on furlough. Besides taking language classes, new missionary Sonja Dahl is in charge of the Miriam Infant Home. Sonja recently reported on a little girl brought to the home. Her hair was full of lice. She also suffered with worms. Her clothes were so badly tattered they had to be burned. (This incident emphasizes the need the missionaries have for head lice shampoo to be included in the "care" packages.) Pray for the Nelsons and Sonja ministering in Campo Mourão.

Aguascalientes, Mexico — Springs of Living Water congregation celebrated a "Friends Sunday" with a special evangelistic message and a fellowship time afterwards. They thank God for the six new people who attended.

Missionaries Dan Giles and Todd Schierkolk have been leading evangelistic surveys and are encouraged with the results in a suburb. Pray for an open door into this new neighborhood called Cumbres 2.

Continue to pray for the health of the missionaries. Barb Schierkolk and Debbie Giles are doing much better. Recent health concerns have been for Ingrid, the teenage daughter of Dan and Debbie Giles.

Loveland, Colorado — The Lutheran Church of Hope is hosting a Vision 2100 seminar during April 11-13. Pastors Andy Ander-

son and Paul Nash will be leading the seminar. Pastor Anderson serves King of Glory Lutheran in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. He recently resigned from his ministry with Tent-makers.

Partners in Mission Outreach praises God for the recent final payment made on their bus. Plans are to be announced soon for a summer mission trip into Mexico. For more information contact P.O. Box M, Greenbush, MN 56726.

Pastors Robert Koepp, Colfax, Wisconsin; **Ralph Tjelta**, Blaine, Minnesota; **Einar Unseth**, Glenville, Minnesota; and **Reuben Unseth**, Radcliffe, Iowa, have requested the AFLC Coordinating Committee to remove their names from the AFLC Clergy Roster.

Book review

Declaration of Dependence, by Ken Sortedahl, Spring Valley, Wisconsin.

Since his graduation from the Free Lutheran Seminary in 1972, Ken Sortedahl has lived on a farm. Located in the beautiful rolling hills near Spring Valley, Wisconsin, this farm is dedicated and committed to Christ. They call it Peniel and it's a place where troubled teenagers are lovingly welcomed in Jesus' name by Ken and his wife, Melodee. More than 2,000 teens have come and are coming from the streets of Chicago, the suburbs of Seattle, and almost everywhere in between.

For twenty-six years they have come, and many have been transformed by the power

of Christ as they have heard the gospel and been converted. They have returned to their homes and communities as powerful testimonies of God's saving grace. Some have continued their Bible training at AFLBS.

The story of this wonderful ministry begins long before 1972 on another little farm near Moose Lake, Minnesota. That story has just been published under the title, *Declaration of Dependence*. The exciting story of Ken's early life and later conversion and ministry gives glory to God for His love and forgiveness.

Order directly at:
Peniel Publishers
Spring Valley, WI 54767

—Dr. Francis Monseth
Rogers, Minnesota

Home Missions trip to Arizona



Pastors Paul Nash and Allen Monson at the barbecue.

On January 8, 1997, Pastor Allen Monson, chairman of the AFLC Home Missions Committee, and Home Missions Director Paul Nash visited the AFLC congregations in Tucson, Arizona. They held a service at Living Faith Lutheran Church, along with an update. They were joined by members of their sister congregation, Body of Christ Lutheran.

The next day they visited Pastor Ted and Carla Kennedy in Nogales, Arizona and met with some former parishioners of Pastor Nash's, Todd and Kathy Morey, who are working with the Kennedys in that area.

On Sunday, January 12, they hosted an AFLC service in the home of Luther and Adeline Monson in Apache Junction. Over fifty

people attended the service and the barbecue that followed. Among those present were Pastor and Mrs. Orville Olson, Pastor and Mrs. Robert Giles, Pastor and Mrs. John Strand, and Pastor and Mrs. Wallace Jackson. The service, planned for outdoors, was held inside due to the weather. Pastor Nash led the service and Pastor Monson preached. Eldwyn and Bonnie Van Bruggen of Valley City, North Dakota, provided music.

The barbecue following was hosted by the Home Missions Department in appreciation of the AFLC people and their service to the Lord. There is interest in the possibility of planting an AFLC church in that area. Please pray for our "snowbirds" and others who live in that area.



Pastor Frank and Pam Cherney, Tucson, Arizona.



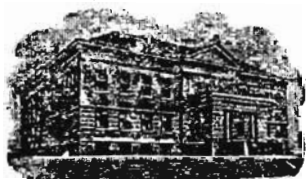
Luther and Adeline Monson, Grace and Harvey Loftsgaard.

400

Folkbladet, onsdag den 23de juni, 1970

Augsburg Seminar

Minneapolis, Minn.



Katalog og andre oplysninger
faaes ved at tilskrive
undertegnede

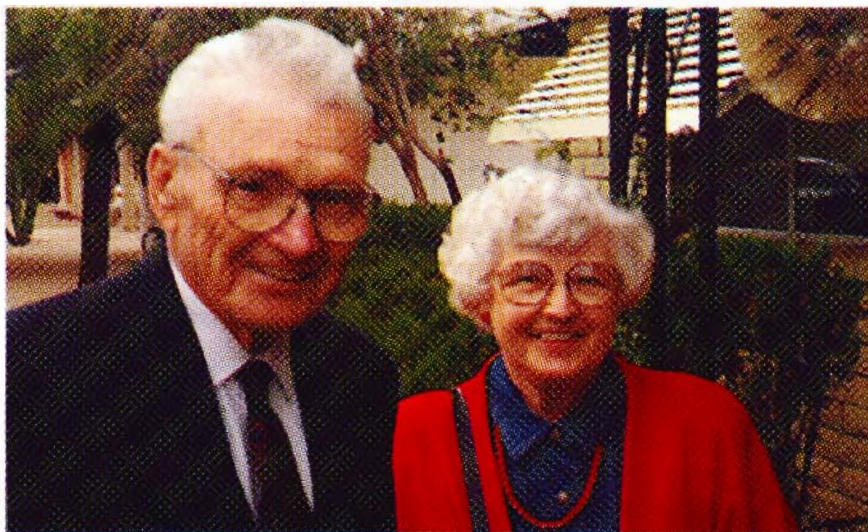
GEORGE SVERDRUP, bestyrer, Augsburg Seminary.

The Thirty-fifth
Annual Conference
of the
Association of Free
Lutheran Congregations

June 11-15, 1997

Thief River Falls, Minnesota

100th Anniversary of the
beginning of the
Lutheran Free Church



Pastor John and Millie Strand, Apache Junction, Arizona. Pastor Strand was the AFLC president from 1962-78.

Arlington, Washington — Lyle Forde uses Concordia hymnals in his high school music classes and is interested in acquiring hymnals that congregations are not using and are interested in seeing put to use. For more information contact him at 13103 67th NE, Arlington, WA 98223; phone (360) 659-4686; e-mail lforde@tgi.net.

The Nebraska-Colorado District (NECO) held their first district meeting on February 8, 1997, at Faith Lutheran in Fairbury, Nebraska. Pastor Paul Nash was the featured speaker in the morning session. The afternoon time was spread into three parts: 1) the WMF ladies held a tele-conference with national WMF Executive Secretary, Karen Knusdvig in their desire to develop a greater connection with the AFLC ministries at large; 2) the youth met to discuss new ways to increase their fellowship; and 3) the men met with Pastor Nash to clarify how a district can consider starting a new mission congregation. The district is prayerfully considering a work in Grand Island, Nebraska.

Ferndale, Washington — Walborg Anderson, the oldest member of Triumph Lutheran, passed away on January 25, 1997, just one day short of her 104th birthday. Born in Drammen, Norway in 1893, the family moved to Duluth, Minnesota in 1903. They eventually moved west and settled in the Whitehorn community near Ferndale. She was a member and organist of Golgatha Lutheran Free Church, founded in 1908.

Barnabas, Connection and Majesty teams available

Once again this summer, teams of young people from the Association Free Lutheran Bible School are scheduled to travel in the United States assisting AFLC congregations and camps with their Vacation Bible Schools and youth programs. Barnabas, Connection and Majesty teams are teams of four or five young people trained to work with children and youth through music, puppetry and the spoken word. A suggested contribution of \$550 is asked for each week a team serves.

If you church or youth camp would like to schedule a team for a week this summer, contact the Home Missions office at (612) 545-5631 (for Barnabas teams) or the Bible school at (612) 544-9501 (for Connection and Majesty teams). It is helpful to give three alternate choices of weeks.

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences – January 1 - January 31, 1997

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN JANUARY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$279,330.00	\$16,466.60	\$16,466.60	6
Seminary	113,300.00	8,283.77	8,283.77	7
Bible School	142,509.00	12,171.83	12,171.83	9
Home Missions.	257,432.00	36,629.87	36,629.87	14
World Missions.	341,000.00	31,436.88	31,436.88	9
Capital Investment	19,000.00	1,705.79	1,705.79	9
Parish Education	56,517.00	5,582.35	5,582.35	10
Church Extension	14,813.00	1,420.19	1,420.19	10
TOTALS	\$1,223,901.00	\$113,697.28	\$113,697.28	9
TOTALS 1996	1,232,267.00	125,677.51	125,677.51	10
Goal 8%				

NEWS OF INTEREST

Promise Keepers conference schedule includes mass rally in Washington D.C.

Promise Keepers, the men's organization that, since 1991, has drawn more than two million men to stadium conferences throughout the U.S., announced its 1997 conference schedule. The Denver-based Christian organization, founded by former University of Colorado football coach Bill McCartney, challenges men to increase their commitment to faith and family as well as their integrity in career and finance. This year's theme for the 19 stadium conferences is "The Making of a Godly Man."

Promise Keepers has been the focus of intense media attention as it has packed out stadiums in more than 25 cities with men from virtually every race and walk of life. The *New York Times* reported of the 1996 Shea Stadium conference, "The men listening raptly to the words from the stage were white, black, Hispanic and Asian, reflecting the organization's call for interracial harmony." *ABC World News Tonight* reported that Promise Keepers is "on message" in Peter Jennings' 1996 Person of the Week profile of Bill McCartney. *U.S. News and World Report* wrote that "at the most personal level, Promise Keepers changes lives."

Many cities hosting Promise Keepers conferences, like Tampa, Florida, are reporting expected revenues of approximately \$9 million from the influx of tens of thousands of men needing hotel and meal accommodations.

Promise Keepers will also convene an historic gathering in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, October 4 which may be the largest gathering ever held on the Capitol Mall. Hundreds of thousands of men are expected to participate in this day of personal repentance and prayer for the nation. "We will be on our knees

in humility and on our feet in unity," said McCartney. The rally is titled "Stand in the Gap."

At a February 4 press conference McCartney said he wants to invite those black men who attended the Million Man March organized by the Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan to join the Promise Keepers rally this fall. "Only humbled men before God can cross racial barriers," McCartney said.

An hour-long television special on how Promise Keepers has changed lives will air on major television networks during prime time from March 25 through 28. Negotiations are in progress with network affiliates for the special, "The Power of a Promise Kept."

Promise Keepers already held its first 1997 conference in Honolulu, Hawaii January 10-11. Upcoming conferences include:

May 2-3/Detroit-Pontiac, Michigan/Silverdome

May 2-3/Los Angeles, California/Coliseum

May 9-10/Cincinnati, Ohio/Cinergy Field

May 16-17/Houston, Texas/Astrodome

May 16-17/Tampa, Florida/Houlihan Stadium

May 23-24/Chicago, Illinois/Soldier Field

May 23-24/Seattle, Washington/Kingdome

May 30-31/Birmingham, Alabama/Legion Field

May 30-31/Kansas City, Missouri/Arrowhead Stadium

June 6-7/Knoxville, Tennessee/Neyland Stadium

June 13-14/Buffalo, New York/Rich Stadium

June 13-14/ Washington, D.C./RFK Stadium

June 27-28/Fresno, California/Bulldog Stadium

June 27-28/Miami, Florida/Orange Bowl

July 18-19/St. Louis, Missouri/Trans World Dome

July 25-26/Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania/Three Rivers Stadium

August 15-16/Minneapolis, Minnesota/Metrodome

October 24-25/Irving/Dallas, Texas/Texas Stadium

Those interested in tickets for the 1997 conferences may call (800) 265-6023.



(Used by permission of the Evangelical Press News Service.)

**"I am the resurrection
and the life; he who
believes in me, though he
die, yet shall he live."**

-John 11:25

It hurts, but only for a moment

get a little suspicious of doctors who, before doing some kind of treatment, say, "This won't hurt much at all." It may not hurt them, but the patient usually feels something rather unpleasant.

Jesus is risen from the dead! He is alive forevermore! Death has been defeated! We, with joy, proclaim, "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" (I Corinthians 15:55, NIV).

That is all true. But death still inflicts pain that is not to be trivialized or ignored. It is not something that "doesn't hurt much at all." "To die is gain" (Philippians 1:21, NIV) for the person in Christ, but it is pain for the loved ones who remain.

At the tomb of His friend Lazarus, Jesus saw people weeping and mourning and "he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled" (John 11:33, NIV). He Himself wept. He demonstrates that mourning is appropriate and to be expected. We are to "mourn with those who mourn" (Romans 12:15, NIV). Being separated from ones who are dear to us hurts. It is not the way God wants it to be. The ultimate cause of it is not God's will, but the curse that comes upon us all because we are all sinful human beings. We look forward with great anticipation to the day when death, mourning, crying and pain will be no more (Revelation 21:4).

We who know Jesus still mourn and grieve, but not "like the rest of men, who have no hope" (I Thessalonians 4:13, NIV). It hurts more than just a little bit, but it hurts only for a moment when looked at through the eternal perspective our risen Lord provides.

Death involves separation of loved ones from one another and of body and soul. But we look forward to glorious reunions with ones who are now gone and with new, imperishable bodies which are to come. The separation is painful today, but the reunions to come tomorrow will be wonderful beyond description.

While we look forward to the reunions and to, most of all, seeing our crucified and risen Savior in all of His beauty and splendor, we still must live in the often pain-filled present. How is that to be done? It is done by having the type of desire expressed by the Apostle Paul: "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings" (Philippians 3:10, NIV).

Sufferings exist which we must share in. The

temptation is to run from them or deny their existence. We fool ourselves by believing if we don't think about the pain it will just go away. We get uncomfortable around the one who is hurting. We attempt to crowd sorrows out of our life by filling our time with work and projects and the pursuit of pleasure.

A proper focus and a disciplined mind is important. On-going idleness is not helpful. Pain and hurts jab at us, though, by taunting, "You can run, but you can't hide."

The writer of Ecclesiastes tried to fill his life with the pursuit of knowledge and pleasure, hard work and much wealth. Looking back over it all, however, he concluded that it is all "meaningless, a chasing after the wind" (Ecclesiastes 2:26, NIV). There still remains "a time to weep ... a time to mourn" (Ecclesiastes 3:4, NIV).

Sufferings are a part of life to experience and endure, to learn from and grow through.

Sufferings are a part of life to experience and endure, to learn from and grow through. We are not to run from them. We ask God to help us and guide us through them and teach us from them and even enable us to share in the sufferings of others.

We rejoice that "the power of his resurrection" is also a part of life. Sufferings inflict pain, but they need not exert control over our lives. Jesus, by His resurrection, has

demonstrated that He is the One in control. Not even death itself reigns over Him or tells Him what to do. His power is supreme.

From the time of His arrest in the garden until Easter morning, Jesus' disciples and friends suffered incredible anguish and pain. Their hopes and dreams, joy and love had been cruelly taken away. But then it all returned, even better than before. Jesus was not only an amazing Teacher and the best Friend they ever had; He was the risen Lord. He had taken the world's roughest blow and emerged victorious. The pain had been bad, but when they saw the Lord, joy entered in and never went away.

Pain keeps visiting our lives, but joy is a permanent resident when we see and know the risen Lord Jesus. Has He taken up residence in your life?

There is "a time to laugh ... and a time to dance." Because Jesus lives, it is that kind of time that God's children will enjoy for all eternity.

— Pastor Craig Johnson

BUILDING THE BASE

The struggle to create the Lutheran Free Church

When Georg Sverdrup was called to Augsburg Seminary in 1874, he came to Minneapolis with a vision to create a "Free Church in a Free Land." But the task before him was enormous, and by the time he died in 1907 at the relatively young age of 58, he was an exhausted man.

Augsburg at the time was the seminary for the recently organized Conference for the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church. Called a "Conference" to distinguish itself from a synod, this small Lutheran body forbid decisions of the Conference from binding the congregations and constitutionally guaranteed their freedom. Sverdrup and his colleague, Sven Oftedal, who had come from Norway a year earlier, enthusiastically embraced the Conference principles and Augsburg's primary goal of developing pastors to serve living congregations.

During the 1870s and '80s, Norwegian Lutheranism was splintered by dissension. On one side stood the Haugeans, a group started in America by Elling Eielsen in 1846. Grounded in the conviction that experienced Christianity and lay involvement should be paramount, the Hauge Synod placed little emphasis on Lutheran doctrine and less on an educated clergy, feeling education often "killed the spirit." Though Sverdrup felt spiritually akin to the Hauge Synod, he was not comfortable with their lack of doctrinal emphasis nor with their anti-academic stance.

On the opposite side stood the Norwegian Synod with Luther College

(Decorah, Iowa) as its school. Organized in 1853 and patterned after the state church of Norway, this synod was characterized by authoritarianism and an emphasis on "pure doctrine" due in part to the fact that their pastors received training at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, a Missouri Synod institution. Sverdrup felt the weakness of the Norwegian Synod lay in its emphasis on "pure doctrine," at times elevating the importance of doctrine over the Bible, and, of course, its high churchly disregard of the laity.

The Conference that Sverdrup championed stood in the middle with its emphasis on congregational freedom, spiritually active laity and pietistic Lutheranism.

Because of the theological differences, there was much wrangling among the groups. Debates including such controversies as predestination and millennialism raged in various Norwegian Lutheran journals. Pastors and professors often attacked each other personally, and though Sverdrup, a brilliant academic, was passionately involved, he never felt that was right. It was evident to him that as the arguments advanced, the Holy Spirit retreated.

In spite of the dissension, three Norwegian Lutheran groups merged in 1890 to form the United Norwegian Lutheran Church. The groups involved included the Conference with Augsburg; The Evangelical Norwegian Augustana Synod with Augustana College (Sioux Falls, SD); and the "Anti-Missourian

Brotherhood," a break-away group representing about a third of the Norwegian Synod and connected with St. Olaf College (Northfield, MN). Though Sverdrup was unhappy that the "Conference" was merging with a synod, he felt it was more shameful for Norwegian Lutherans to be so factionalized. Of course now he would have a chance to influence a larger group in a congregationalistic direction.

Within a year a struggle developed over the control of Augsburg Seminary. The new United Church had founded Concordia College (Moorhead, MN) in 1891, and along with its other colleges wanted control of Augsburg Seminary. Augsburg, however, had been controlled by a corporation since it started in 1869, and its corporation was not about to give control to the synod. After years of struggle, including court cases, a group of congregations that supported Sverdrup and Augsburg organized "The Friends of Augsburg." In 1895 Sverdrup and Oftedal were denied delegate status at the annual conference, and in January 1897, twelve congregations were expelled from the United Church for their support of Augsburg.

As a result, Sverdrup, Oftedal, and a "Free Church Committee" drew up the "Fundamental Principles" and "Rules for Work," and on June 12, 1897, together with the expelled congregations, declared themselves the Lutheran Free Church, and thus was born the forerunner of the AFLC.

—Loiell Dyrud

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