


# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

October 31, 2000



## Faith of our Fathers



## Living Still

The most influential  
reform movement  
since the  
Reformation p. 4

God called  
him while  
plowing p. 7

One of the  
greatest composers  
of all time p. 8

# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

October 31, 2000  
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## AN ENCOURAGING WORD

### Overcome or overcomer?

“Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

**H**alloween is a time when ghosts and goblins, black cats and witches, as well as dark and evil things are actually celebrated. Seldom, if ever, do you hear Jesus mentioned at Halloween events. I used to not take Halloween very seriously until six years ago.

One night, while I was patrolling the halls as a camp counselor in Pennsylvania, a scream came out of one of the boy's rooms. Another counselor and myself went to investigate and we found Germaine, a thirteen-year-old boy, on his bed yelling, “No! No! Let me out! Let me out!” At first I thought he was dreaming, but one of the boys in the room assured me he was not. Then, as I took a step toward Germaine, a voice out of his mouth said, “Get back!” Chills went up and down my whole body and it was clear that something demonic was going on.

Fear gripped me and my first thought was to turn and run. But something had to be done. Who was I to deal with this? Just then, 1 John 4:4 entered my mind: “Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.” With the promise of that verse, I stepped forward to deal with the situation. I asked, “Who are you?” The response came back, “Leave us alone. He's ours.” Again I asked, “In Jesus' name, who are you?” This time the response was “His helper.” I asked, “Whose helper?” The response, “Satan's.” With a rush of adrenaline, I very loudly said, “In Jesus' name, get out!” The voice kept saying things like “He's ours. Leave us alone.”

After several loud, unsuccessful attempts of commanding the demons to leave, the Spirit of God prompted me to silent prayer. I told

everyone in the room that I didn't know what was going to happen but that each of them should pray that Jesus would cast out this demon.

As we prayed silently for — I'm guessing several minutes — finally the voice said, “Okay, we're leaving.” Germaine, the thirteen-year-old boy, then sat up rubbing his forehead. I asked him if he knew what had just happened. He said, “Yeah, they visited me again.”

When he was about four-years-old his dad introduced him to black magic and would make him chant things while wearing witch jewelry around his neck. Ever since then, Germaine would be visited and tortured in the night by demons. That particular night the demons came as one boy was shining a flashlight on a skull and crossbones etched in the mirror. Germaine couldn't take his eyes off the skull and crossbones and then was attacked. However, Germaine was freed that night and gave his heart to the Lord. Many of the other campers did the same. What Satan meant for bad, God used for good.

I learned many things that night. Evil is something to take seriously, even the symbols of evil. Jesus is the One who casts out demons, not my yelling. And finally, in Christ we can overcome anything. “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:4-5). In Christ we shall not be overcome, but we shall be overcomers. Praise God!

— **Pastor Tim Johnson**  
**Resurrection Free Lutheran**  
**Beltrami, Minnesota**

You hear the Word of God.  
This is good. But it is not  
enough that your ear hears

**1** it. Do you let it  
penetrate inwardly  
into your heart and  
allow the heavenly  
food to be digested there, so  
that you get the benefit of  
its vitality and power, or  
does it go in one ear and out  
the other?

— *Philip Jacob Spener*

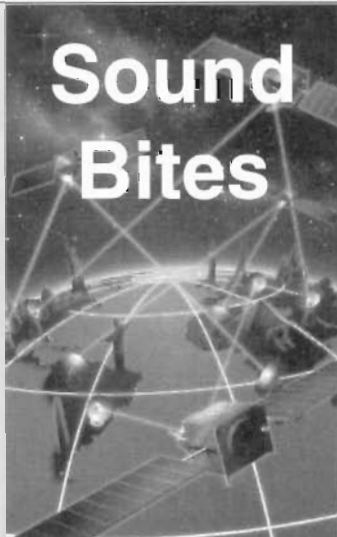
**4** But always and above all else  
the one great objective aid  
for Luther was the  
Scriptures, because this is  
the written record of the  
revelation of God in Christ. ...  
The Scriptures assumed for Luther an  
overwhelming importance, not pri-  
marily as a source book for antipapal  
polemic, but as the one ground of  
certainty.

— *Roland Bainton*

**6**

It is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith, and  
so it is impossible for it not to do good works  
incessantly. It does not ask whether there are good  
works to do, but before the question rises it has already  
done them and is always at the doing of them.

— *Martin Luther*



**2**

I have assembled the main  
arguments, to testify to  
all nations that we hold  
to the Gospel of Christ  
correctly and faithfully.

We take no pleasure in dis-  
cord, nor are we indifferent to our  
danger; its extent is evident from  
the bitter hatred inflaming our  
opponents. But we cannot surrender  
truth that is so clear and necessary  
for the church.

— *Philip Melancthon*,  
Apology of the Augsburg Confession

**3**

I have always kept one  
end in view, namely ...  
to conduct a well-  
regulated church music  
to the honour of God.

— *Johann Sebastian Bach*

My mind became so exalted that I was  
not myself aware of, nor can I express, what  
took place in my soul. For I was  
beside myself. As soon as I  
came to my senses, I was  
filled with regret that I had  
not served this lovingly tran-  
scendently good God. Now it  
seemed to me that nothing in  
this world was worthy of any regard.

— *Hans Nielsen Hauge*  
(describing the time when he found  
peace with God)

**5**

# The father of Lutheran pietism

## Philip Jacob Spener (1635-1705)

— Dr. Francis Monseth  
Free Lutheran  
Seminary Dean  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Observing the early influences upon the man who is called the “father of Lutheran Pietism,” one could almost predict the direction his theological convictions would take. The ultimate result would be that, not since Martin Luther, did a movement make such impact upon Christendom as did the Pietism Movement called forth and given inspiration by Philip Jacob Spener.

Born on January 13, 1635, the early years of Spener’s life were marked by exposure to many godly influences. Among those whom Spener later recalled as being especially helpful in his earliest spiritual impressions were his mother and his childhood pastor. It was in his father’s library that the young Spener found several books that gave definite shape to his convictions. One of these, John Arndt’s “True Christianity,” ranked next to the Bible in Spener’s choice of favorites.

In his book, Arndt set forth many of the positions later to become more prominent because of the wider influence attained by Spener. One of the echoes from Arndt observed later in Spener is emphasis upon the “new birth.” Also impressed upon young Spener in his reading of Arndt was the stress on spiritual growth in the Christian’s life following conversion. Spener was deeply moved by “True Christianity” and freely acknowledged his debt to Arndt.

After completing his studies at the University of Strasbourg, Spener accepted a call to serve a congregation in that city. His pastoral duties were not heavy, giving him time for extra study and for delivering lectures on theology. Later he served in ministry at Frankfort. In contrast to the polemical approach to preaching that was so common in Frankfort, Spener set himself to preaching to the hearts of the people. His preaching has been characterized as fearless as he called for repentance and discipleship. He preached Christ in simple, direct words. His appeal was for conversion and he did not use the pulpit for engaging in controversy. There was an earnestness and sincerity that

appealed to many people, though his sermons were often lengthy.

Desiring to reach a wider spectrum of people and also wanting to help establish in the faith those who had been newly converted, Spener began to conduct devotional meetings in his home. These meetings consisted of an exposition of Scripture by Spener and then an invitation to those present to express their thoughts and to ask questions. A time of free prayer was also included. These “collegia pietatis” were a source of great blessing to many people. It wasn’t long until there were more than thirty cities where these small group meetings had begun.

Many were converted through the ministry of Spener in preaching and in the home meetings. Family life changed for many. A deeper interest in devotional literature emerged. Among the books published was a new edition of John Arndt’s sermons. Spener wrote the introduction to the first edition which he entitled “Pia Desideria” — pious longings. Later published separately, this little book became a powerful catalyst for spiritual awakening in the Lutheran Church of Germany and, ultimately, in many parts of the world.

In his little book, Spener’s two-fold objective is to offer a diagnosis of the problems within the church and then to set forth a prescription for spiritual renewal. Among the problems he cited was the prevalence of a mere outward form of Christianity with little substance and reality. He lamented how many there were “who live such a manifestly unchristian life ... and yet who pretend to be firmly convinced that they will be saved in spite of all this.”

Spener framed his formula for spiritual



A copy of “Pia Desideria”

# Pen of the Reformation

## Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560)

— *Seminarian Wade Mobley*  
*Minneapolis, Minnesota*

**T**o paraphrase church historian Kurt Aland, when we speak about “the Reformer,” we mean Martin Luther. For the sake of making the term plural, we often add Calvin, with occasional references to Ulrich Zwingli. Philip Melanchthon virtually disappears in Luther’s shadow. Aland summarizes, “This does not do justice to the historical reality.” As confessional Lutherans, we owe much to Melanchthon’s historical reality, for he was Luther’s greatest assistant and the author of more than half of the historic Lutheran confessions.

Philip Melanchthon was born Philip Schwarzert on February 16, 1497 in Germany, to a family of relatively wealthy artisans. From an early age, young Philip’s contact with his great uncle, Johann Reuchlin, shaped his life. Reuchlin was Germany’s greatest Christian humanist, to be carefully distinguished from modern day, secular humanists. These humanists were elite scholars steeped in



Renaissance thought. Study of history and ancient languages, mainly Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, consumed their interest. They studied theology somewhat secondarily, and held the unscriptural view that man is basically good, but needed moral teaching. Reuchlin’s influence initially became evident when young Philip Schwarzert followed the humanist tradition and translated his name to the Greek: Philip Melanchthon.

Melanchthon was an academic prodigy. He enrolled in the University of Heidelberg at age twelve, earning his Bachelor of Arts degree at age fourteen. Prior to his seventeenth birthday he achieved Master’s status — the level of a university teacher. Following in Reuchlin’s footsteps, Melanchthon became an expert in the original languages of the Bible and a noted teacher and author. With his great uncle’s recommendation he became a professor of Greek in Wittenberg, Luther’s city of influence, at the tender age of 21.

When Melanchthon came →

renewal under six theses: a wider diffusion of the Bible; a rediscovery of the priesthood of all believers; the application of biblical truth to daily life; the motive of recovering the erring and winning the lost in “contending for the faith,” an emphasis in pastoral training on personal piety rather than an exclusive focus on intellectual development; and, finally, more emphasis on practical theology in the training of pastors.

The response to Spener’s proposals was generally favorable. There were many pastors who attempted to apply them in their parishes. Prayer meetings were introduced in many places. It is clear that the publishing of “Pia Desideria” was no small moment in seventeenth century Germany.

Indeed, many church fellowships today trace their spiritual moorings back to this period, including the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

Most church historians trace the emer-

gence of the Pietism Movement to the publishing of this little book, a movement that is considered today to have been one of the most influential reform movements since the Reformation itself.

Wherein lies the secret to Spener’s wide influence and lasting impact on those who associated with him as well as those who have come in contact with his writing? The consistent explanation has been put in terms of his living devotion to Christ, his earnest desire to live a godly life, and his strong sense of call to serve the Lord in wholehearted commitment to His will.

In his later years, Spener often became discouraged at the direction taken by some of his friends and followers. He never felt that the theological school at Halle where he taught was quite true to the vision and ideals he set forth in “Pia Desideria.” Nevertheless, until his death in 1705, he conscientiously fulfilled his ministry as a preacher and teacher of God’s Word. Blessed be his memory.





to Wittenberg he was principally a teacher of languages with interest in history, geography, mathematics, astronomy, and even ancient medicine. A small and timid man, his knowledge exceeded his physical presence. He had great ability as a theologian, but limited responsibility and interest, a character trait which continued throughout his life despite the insistence of many around him. He never pursued a degree higher than Bachelor of Theology. Despite this fact, Melanchthon quickly drew Luther's admiration. In a letter to his friend Spalatin shortly after Melanchthon's arrival at Wittenberg, Luther wrote, "We very quickly turned our minds and eyes from his appearance and person to the man himself. We congratulate ourselves on having this man and marvel at what he has in him."

Luther summarized one encounter when Melanchthon "delivered an extremely learned and absolutely faultless address." His prowess continued as Melanchthon drew lecture audiences even larger than those of Luther, fifteen years his senior. Luther himself marveled at Melanchthon's greatest work, *Loci communes*, or "fundamental concepts of theology," in his preface to "The Bondage of the Will," claiming that *Loci* deserved "not only to be immortalized but even canonized," and that it was "an unanswerable book" to detractors from the true faith.

Admiration soon became cooperation, and Melanchthon found himself an able assistant to Luther for much of the next 28 years. Melanchthon's tact and writing ability proved the perfect complement for Luther's strong personality and confident assertions. His scholarly ability impacted Luther enough for one modern author to entitle a book, "How Melanchthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel." While Luther's original thought found form through Melanchthon's pen in the first 21 articles of the Augsburg Confession in 1530, Melanchthon alone authored the last seven articles, the entire Apology to the Augsburg Confession, and *The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*. In 1580, when Lutheranism adopted its official confessions as the Book of Concord, Melanchthon's writings equaled those of Luther in quantity and exceeded the same in authority.

After Luther's death in 1546, Melanchthon fled conflict and proved unable to bear the yoke of leadership in the Lutheran church, with both his persona and theology to blame. His tact, which had been of pro-

"As he was plowing a field on his father's farm, he began to sing the hymn, 'Jesu Din Söte Forenning a Småke,' (Jesus, I Long for Your Blessed Communion). Up to this point he had not reached true spiritual peace, a genuine assurance of being a child of God. As he sang the second verse, he saw clearly his own total depravity, the vanity of worldly glory, and Christ as his only hope, life, and stay. He realized by the means of grace that he had to die to all that was of self and this world so that the Savior living in him would be his all-in-all.



He immediately sensed a calling to share this with others and spoke to his sisters that same evening, and they immediately found peace with God. His father was understanding and sympathetic though his mother at first experienced grief over what had happened. Soon his whole family, however, received assurance."

found blessing and benefit to Luther, combined with his early training as a humanist formed an attitude of compromise which led him to back down from some of Luther's teachings. Most notably he authored an Altered Augsburg Confession in 1540 and shifted toward Calvin's understanding of the Lord's Supper. Shortly before Melanchthon died in 1560 he penned an autobiography of sorts on a scrap of paper. On one side he wrote, "You will be redeemed from sin, and set free from cares and from the fury of theologians." and on the other, "You will come to light, you will look upon God and his Son, you will understand the wonderful mysteries which you could not comprehend in this life: why we were so made, and not otherwise, and in what the union of the two natures in Christ consists."

As our appreciation for biblical doctrine grows, our appreciation for those who systematized it will follow. As Christians we should be thankful to Philip Melanchthon for his vast contributions to the formulation of fundamental Reformation doctrine.



# A layman called by God

Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771-1824)

— Dr. Robert Kohl  
Calvary Lutheran  
Arlington, South Dakota

**O**n April 3, 1771 a boy was born on a farm named Hauge in Thune parish, about seventy-five miles south of Oslo, Norway. The first Sunday after Easter, Hans Nielsen Hauge was baptized in the nearby state-supported Lutheran church. Before his death 53 years later, God used him to bring a great awakening in Norway that, through immigrants had an impact in America as well. Not only did spiritual revival occur, but his inventive mind aided the industrial development of his homeland when she was in great need.

By the time of Hauge's call, Norway had become a mere appendage to Denmark's empire. Ministers in Norway were primarily Danish, educated and ordained in Denmark and they even preached in Danish. Their polished sermons spoke little to the common folk. Their goal was to preach obedience to the reigning monarch in Denmark. After all, they were paid by the government. It is said that one Christmas Eve a Lutheran bishop preached a sermon on the care and feeding of cattle as it was the only thing relevant that he could find concerning Jesus' birth.

There were a few good theologians and a brief awakening occurred when pietism came to the empire in 1730. The most notable man of that time was Dr. Erich Pontoppidan, Bishop of Bergen, who wrote "Explanation of Luther's Catechism." Our own AFLC catechism is an abridged translation of this book.

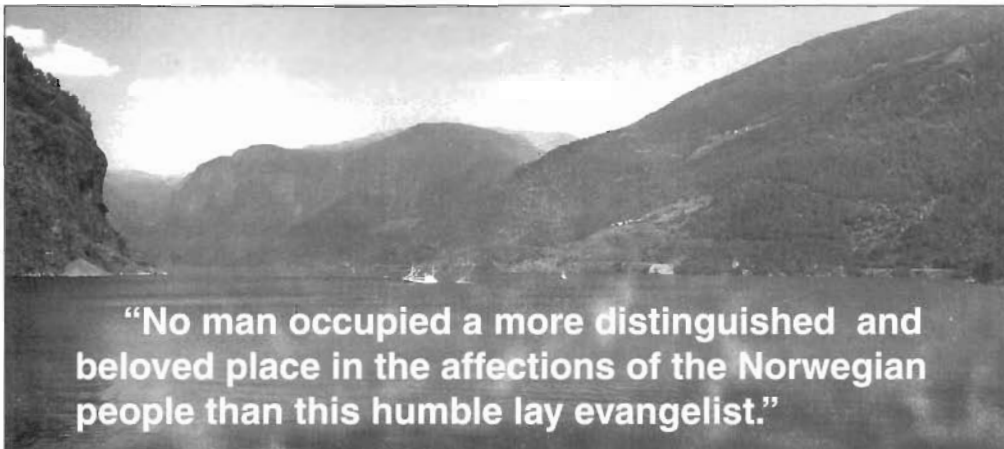
During the latter half of the century, rationalism became highly fashionable among the elite and most clergy as well. Fifty years of this tradition produced a dead

church throughout Scandinavia. It was in this environment that God called a layman.

The parents of Hans were deeply religious and family devotions and hymn-singing were part of their family life. One of six children, Hans showed a quiet, serious spirit while also being a very industrious young man. His foremost interest was religion. He wrote that from his early youth, he wrestled with the question, "What does God require of me?" For a number of years he sought to find a satisfactory answer through diligent study of the Scriptures, careful reading of Luther and Pontoppidan, and earnest prayer and regular attendance at worship services. By age 20, Hauge had acquired a remarkably sound mastery of Lutheran doctrine. But something was missing. As yet Hauge's religion was centered in his head rather than in his heart.

Hauge's spiritual breakthrough and call came on April 5, 1796, while plowing a field on his father's farm. He later described his experience: "My heart was so uplifted to God that I do not know nor can I express what really took place in my soul. As soon as my senses returned to normal, I regretted that I had not served the loving and all-gracious God; now I felt that no worldly thing was of importance. It was a glory which no tongue can express; my soul felt something supernatural, divine and blessed. ... I had a completely transformed mind, a sorrow over all sins, a burning desire that others should

*"Hauge carried on many business enterprises. He developed a paper mill, a stamping mill, a bone and flour mill, and a tannery as well as a foundry for small cannons and church bells. During his last imprisonment, he was briefly released during an English blockade of Norway to teach others to manufacture salt. He demanded thrift and industry from his followers, saying Christians should not be lazy or idle."*



**"No man occupied a more distinguished and beloved place in the affections of the Norwegian people than this humble lay evangelist."**

*"On January 27, 1815, Hauge married Andrea Andersdatter Nyhus. To this union a son, Andreas was born, however, shortly after giving birth, his wife died. On January 22, 1817, he married Ingeborg Marie Oldsdatter. Several infants were born to this union, but all died as children, leaving Andreas as his sole surviving heir."*

*Inserts submitted by  
Pastor Christian Oswood  
Minneapolis, Minnesota*

# His music — our heritage

— Jerry D. Nelson  
AFLC Schools Music Director  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

## J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

**T**his year marks the 250th anniversary of the death of Johann Sebastian Bach. As Lutherans, we can claim a kinship with this man that many refer to as one of the greatest composers of all time. Bach spent most of his career serving the Lutheran Church in Germany as a full-time cantor, or music director; using virtually all of his available work hours to produce music that is still highly revered 250 years after his death.

Bach was not only a Lutheran musician, he also embraced Lutheran theology. He was a devoted reader of the Bible, and greatly influenced by the writings and music of Martin Luther. His personal library contained 83 books inventoried at his death, and all of them explored spiritual matters. Besides the Bible, there were two different editions of Martin Luther's collected works and dozens of other books by those who

championed the same cause. Patrick Kavanaugh said that "Bach was to be the reformer's greatest musical disciple."

Some of Bach's cantatas composed for Sunday morning worship services were based on the melodies and texts of Martin Luther. The most famous and recognizable work is Cantata 80, "En Feste Berg" (a Mighty Fortress). Luther's familiar Christmas song, "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come" appears in five different compositions of Bach, most notably his Christmas Oratorio. Bach has been called the "Luther of Music" because he translated the strength and profound message of the reformer into the language of music.

Bach had a personal faith in Jesus, and poured his whole life into the work he sensed the Lord had gifted him and called him to do. Bach's personal Bible was discovered in 1968. The long-lost missing work was found in the library of Concordia Semi-

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## HAUGE

share the same grace, a particular desire to read the Scriptures, especially Jesus' own teachings, as well as new light to understand them and the teachings of godly men; toward the one goal that Jesus Christ has come to be our Savior, that we should be born again by His Spirit, be converted and sanctified more and more in godliness to serve the triune God alone, in order to improve and prepare our souls for the eternal blessedness."

He did not rush out and begin preaching. Hauge first shared with his family, then some friends, but struggled with God as to why He was not sending out a minister or bishop. That summer and fall he spoke only to individuals, gaining a wonderful insight into the condition of their particular souls which became the most outstanding feature of his method of soul winning. During this time he wrote the first of 33 books in which he warned his readers of the danger of a false Christianity which relies upon forgiveness without genuine repentance. He also wrote with the intention to keep the awakened alert lest they fall into spiritual sleep and carelessness.

From January 1797 to his tenth and final imprisonment in 1804, Hauge trekked over 10,000 miles back and forth

across Norway visiting every parish and hamlet. Spiritual awakenings broke out as many saw their lost condition and need of Christ. As the revival took hold, the opposition by the clergy mounted. They used a 1741 law which stated that no one was to hold public services who was not an ordained Lutheran pastor.

Hauge's final imprisonment lasted for ten years and upon his release, he was broken in health due to the many diseases contracted under the terrible prison conditions. But his leadership in the religious movement continued. Through counseling, correspondence and the distribution of his books, he exerted a profound influence on the religious life of Norway.

At the time of his death in March 1824, no man in the country occupied a more distinguished and beloved place in the affections of the Norwegian people than this humble lay evangelist.

Why did a layman succeed when even the few dedicated clergy could not? There seems to be seven main reasons:

1. Hauge's commitment to God. Since Christ had graciously saved Hauge, he continually asked the question "What did Christ as Lord expect of him?" He had to obey the Scriptures.



nary in St. Louis, Missouri. The numerous marginal notes in his Bible reveal his love for the Lord and the Scriptures. One of his favorite verses was II Chronicles 5:13, which describes a temple worship service with these words: "The trumpeters and singers joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the Lord .... Then the temple of the Lord was filled with a cloud, and the priests could not perform their service ... for the glory of the Lord filled the temple of God." In the margin next to this verse, Bach wrote: "Where there is devotional music, God is always at hand with His gracious presence."

Bach's thoughts clearly echoed the convictions of Luther, claiming that "Music's only purpose should be for the glory of God and the recreation of the human spirit." He believed that all musical ability was a gift from God and that he should use that gift in God's service. At the top of many of his musical scores, he wrote either the letters J. J. or I. N. J. (the Latin words *Jesu Juva* — meaning "Jesus help me," or *In Nomine Jesu* — meaning "In the Name of Jesus"). At the end of his manuscripts, he often wrote S. D. G (*Soli Deo Gloria*) which means "To God Alone, the Glory."

2. Hauge studied those Scriptures as keenly as any layman could. And he relied on prayer.
3. He experienced a direct call from God to be His witness to his countryman.
4. He knew the common folk. He was one of them. His keen observation of souls and what they responded to allowed him to speak to their hearts. He reached out to individuals, rather than people in general. His focus on sincere and genuine repentance was key to the new life in Christ.
5. Hauge's personal convictions and dedication to his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ shown from his heart. Hauge answered all hostility from common folk to sheriffs and judges in a calm and direct manner, always showing respect and kindness. He let Jesus shine through him.
6. His numerous small books were distributed at low cost or free. They were not deep theological works, but they presented God's Word in a way that touched hearts. As one theologian said after reading one of his books, "It lightens and thunders and sparkles to all sides, as if he had been hammering a piece of red hot iron."
7. Hauge quickly developed a gospel net of other layman over the whole of Norway to continue the work of nurturing the folk in true pietistic Lutheranism.



Bach wrote joyful music of praise to God despite having a lifetime filled with adversity. He was born in Eisenach, Germany, on March 21, 1685. His father, Johann Ambrosius Bach, was a professional musician who taught his young son to play the violin at the age of five. His mother died when he was only nine, and his father died less than a year later. He then lived with his elder brother, Johann Christoph at Ohrdruf, who gave him instruction on keyboard instruments, but took his younger brother in begrudgingly, resenting another mouth to feed.

As an adult, his life continued to be filled with heartache. His first wife died after 13 years of marriage. He remarried and had twenty children from both marriages. Ten of those children died in infancy, one in his 20s and one was mentally retarded. The adversity he experienced strengthened his faith and brought him to total dependence on God.

Disappointments marred his music career also. He left his first organist position in Arnstadt after four years because of bad working conditions and the poor state of the church choir. He desired the position in Weimar, but it was given to another musician. He was strongly criticized because some church leaders felt his music was too highly ornamented and "showy." In 1723, Bach was appointed to the position of cantor at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig, but only after two other composers had been offered the job. Bach spent the next 27 years until his death, in Leipzig as director of music. Despite total dedication to excellence in his work, only ten of his original compositions were published in his lifetime. Bach continually faced adversity, but he stayed true to the call of God on his life.

We can be grateful to the church in Leipzig for hiring Johann Sebastian Bach to work full-time as a minister of music. He could spend his day preparing music for the upcoming Sundays — new music that was fresh and inspired, carefully prepared and rehearsed.

Bach persevered through hardship, trusted in God, and used his talents to glorify God. Now 250 years after his death, we can still hear the beautiful music of Bach performed by musicians around the world to the glory of God.

*Soli Deo Gloria*



Bach has been called the "Luther of Music" because he translated the strength and profound message of the reformer into the language of music.



## WISH LIST

### Women in Service for Him

# Lessons of motherhood

**I**t's quiet. The morning sun is streaming through the windows. The sink is empty. Laundry is done and the cool breeze is refreshing. My two little girls are still fast asleep. But the scene will be much different by lunch time. One of them will come to breakfast only to find her beloved cereal is gone — a tragedy. Maybe little Hannah will want to play outside before being dressed — a confrontation. Then there's always the possibility of a little girl's temperature spiking, resulting in an achy body and a very worried mom. Whatever the next hours hold, most definitely the smiles and giggles will balance out those moments of frustration and uncertainty.

Life as a young mom has a variety of those moments — ups and downs; big and small decisions; joys and disappointments. I'm so thankful for a consistent and faithful God to surrender my emotions and worries to throughout the day, no matter what may happen. The Shepherd is always present to provide the wisdom and strength needed.

Every day provides a new opportunity for a lesson to be learned. I'm amazed at how fast the girls can learn a new word or skill. If only this mom could learn the lessons from her heavenly Father as fast as those little girls can learn from their mom!

A recent questionnaire asked: "What are your hobbies and past-times?"

"Hmm, two little girls; is that an acceptable answer?" I thought.

In that moment, I realized I had released those older desires of a full-time job, and had embraced my new occupation of motherhood. Contentment was a lesson to learn. "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances" (Philippians 4:11). The Lord is patiently working the lesson of contentment into my life. I'm

learning to find joy in the moments of today, and not looking forward to years ahead or longingly back to yesterday. There is contentment in the present with the awesome privilege of molding lives for the future.

Trust has not been as easy to learn. While it might be my nature to worry, like every other mom, the Lord desires trust. Psalm 91:1 says, "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty." Only by letting Christ dwell in me during those moments of worry can I truly rest; rest from the moment's burdens and frustrations Satan would want to bind me with. "Which of you by worrying can add one single hour to his life? ... But seek first His kingdom" (Matthew 6:7b, 33a). I need to trust Him with the moments in my day. Every mom needs a rest; a real rest in the arms of the Most High.

Continual prayer has the result of blessing as Romans 10:12 reminds me. The Lord has amazed me by the answered prayers offered up to Him throughout the day. I see big and small answers and if not an immediate answer or direction, then the certain peace of knowing that Jesus hears me at that moment.

Through the encouragement of the heavenly Father and the Word, support of veteran and new moms, I have been encouraged to surrender these areas of my life to Jesus. Years ahead, with more children of my own and perhaps grandchildren, I hope these lessons will have taken root in my heart. "Be glad for all God is planning for you. Be patient ... and prayerful always" (Romans 12:12). He knows, He sees, He cares and He hears.



— **Tricia Nelson**  
**Maranatha Free Lutheran**  
**Willmar, Minnesota**



Mrs. Fern Bohling, Hebron, Nebraska led the morning Bible study at the South Dakota District WMF Rally at Calvary Lutheran in Wallace on September 23, 2000. Her husband Lavon, the director of Free Lutheran Association of Pilot Supporters (FLAPS), also presented the vision and needs of this new AFLC mission service organization.



The mission home for missionaries on furlough is located just outside The ARC grounds, near Osceola, Wisconsin. Pictured is the Missionary Paul and Becky Abel family on the front deck of the mission home. It is their first furlough to enjoy this completely furnished home. Previously they would have to move in with family members or make some other temporary arrangements.

## WMF Memorials

June-September, 2000  
Molly Kennedy Nogales, AZ  
Paul Kamp, Wolf Point, MT  
Faye James, Crystal, MN  
Mabel Larson Casperson,  
Valley City, ND  
Mabel Haugen, Minot, ND  
Ivan Schlenk, McVile, ND  
Lavern F. Johnson, Tioga, ND  
Harris Hoseth, Tioga, ND  
Brody McGregor, Tioga, ND  
Elizabeth Harder, Cando, ND

## Ambassador Publications has new Bible study book available

"Living in the Light and Love of God," a study on I, II, III John is the newest in the Ambassador Bible Study Series. Pastor Gary Jorgenson of Durant, Oklahoma is the author.

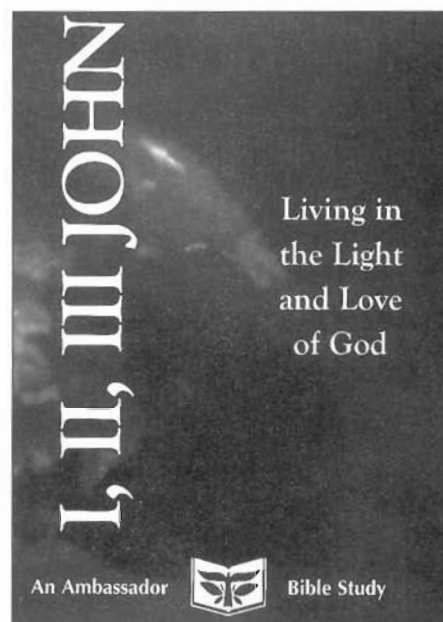
The study addresses relevant issues such as, "Is there absolute truth?" Many people today think the answer to that question is "No, truth is relative. Right and wrong are determined by the situation. What ultimately matters is what you think and how you feel."

These opinions seem contemporary, but they are not. The early church struggled against the same erroneous teachings. The epistles of the Apostle John give us God's answer to those who deny that truth is absolute.

God is light. In Him there is not darkness at all. We can live in God's light. God is love. We can live in God's love. For the child of God, life is an adventure of living in the light and love of God.

For the low price of \$4 each, this study can be used for Bible classes, small groups or for personal devotions. The explanations and study notes lead the student into the Word of God to help in understanding the Bible and applying it to life.

To order, contact the AFLC Parish Education Department at 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441; phone 1-763-545-5631 or e-mail at [parished@aflc.org](mailto:parished@aflc.org)



## Amsterdam 2000

### Proclaiming the message of reconciliation to the world

Last summer I had the privilege of being one of 10,732 participants at Amsterdam 2000, a conference to equip and strengthen people for the task of proclaiming the Gospel. With 209 countries represented, it was the most who have ever gathered for a worldwide conference. During the conference, I visited with individuals from 44 nations. The conference center where we met was over 750,000 square feet and we ate with 5,000 people at a time for a sit-down meal in a room the size of five acres. I will share brief highlights of each day in this issue and the next few issues of *The Lutheran Ambassador*.

#### July 28

After an eight-hour flight, I was taken to the RAI Convention Center to register before going to the hotel room. After settling in, I went for a walk in a beautiful park next to the hotel. I was amazed at the immorality and habits of the people in Amsterdam. They did not cover anything up.

#### July 29

The conference officially began with a procession of people dressed in their native attire. Franklin Gra-

ham welcomed the participants on behalf of his father, Rev. Billy Graham. Dr. Billy Kim, Seoul, Korea, gave the message on "Motives for Evangelism." One statement that impressed me was that "the number of lost people is growing at a rate of ten times faster than the church is growing .... There are millions of lost souls around us. We have spent no sleepless nights in prayer for those who are lost. May God forgive us for not being deeply concerned over the lost, hell-bound souls."

#### July 30

Today's focus was the evangelist's message. Speakers included

— Pastor Jim Rasmussen  
AFLC Director of Evangelism

Ulrich Parzany, leader of the Christian pavilion at the World Expo in Germany. J. I. Packer spoke on the importance of sharing the whole counsel of God: "In the Bible, the Gospel is the entire saving plan of God, all revolving around the person, the place and power of our Savior, Jesus Christ, the incarnate, crucified, risen, reigning, returning Lord." The evening session featured Ravi Zacharias, speaking on the "Barriers of the Mind and Hungers of the Heart." He stressed the necessity of bringing back the focus to the eternal and that the proclamation of the Word had to be seen as well as heard.



The Ministry Training Institute holds their classes in the computer/library room on the first floor of the women's dorm. Pictured are Lidia Herrera, Alex Yambrick, Interim Director Todd Schierkolk, Tom Lumpio, and Carla Mattson.



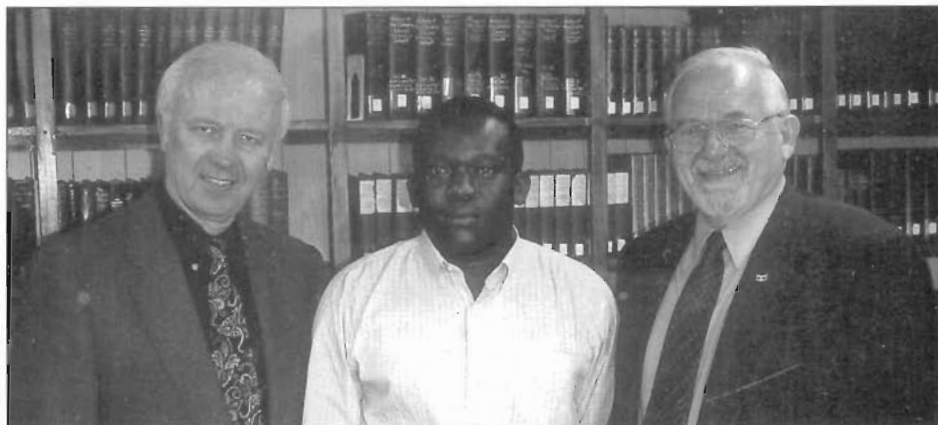
Kelly Nelson, receptionist, provides the cheerful voice you hear when calling the AFLC schools. The schools phone number is 612-544-9501.

### Eastern Europe choir outreach scheduled

The Concert Choir from AFLBS is planning to travel to Eastern Europe in the spring of 2001. This missions outreach project is being planned in cooperation with East European Missions Network. Pastor Don Richman is the director of EEMN. He along with AFLC Schools deans, Dr. Francis Monseth and Pastor James L. Johnson will accompany the choir during the April 16 though May 7 trip.

This year's Concert Choir members are:

Lucas Anderson, Lisbon, ND  
Caleb Berge, Fargo, ND  
Paul Blom, Alexandria, MN  
Mike Borg, Cokato, MN  
Ona Brandt, Sioux Falls, SD  
Josh Britz, Houghton, MI  
Crista Carter, Kandiyohi, MN  
Tomasz Chmiel, Czech Republic  
Andy Coyle, Nicollet, MN  
Laura Finstrom, Glyndon, MN  
Eric Folsland, Oldham, SD  
Emily Forness, Wahpeton, ND  
Anne Haugen, Crystal, MN  
Sarah Hines, Apple Valley, MN  
Micah Hjermstad, Bruce, SD  
Debbie Holmquist, Maple Grove, MN  
Josh Holwell, Roseau, MN  
Erika Jensen, Barronett, WI  
Erika Johnson, Lakeville, MN



Pastor David Natemba, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Uganda, visited the AFLC School campus in September. He is pictured with Dr. Francis Monseth, Free Lutheran Seminary Dean (L.) and Pastor Eugene Enderlein, AFLC World Missions Director.



The AFLBS Proclaim Choir rehearses in a classroom in the men's dorm. Their spring tour is scheduled for congregations in the Midwest and Colorado. Both AFLBS choirs will perform at the annual Christmas concert on December 3.

Nate Johnson, Sacred Heart, MN  
Mike Knapp, Kandiyohi, MN  
Kristin Knutson, Centerville, SD  
Sarah Kobler, Swea City, IA  
Jeff Landblom, Dickinson, ND  
Amber Nelson, Glyndon, MN  
Nicole Papillon, Wadena, MN  
Betsy Parsley, Pipestone, MN  
Shelly Reinholdt, Minot, ND  
Becky Rudebusch, Lakeville, MN  
Paul Rugroden, Hickson, ND  
Nathan Skramstad, Zumbrota, MN  
Kevin Subbert, LaCrosse, WI  
Christian Talley, Newark, IL  
Jennifer Tollefson, Ortonville, MN  
David Valdez, Maple Grove, MN  
Sarah Vegdahl, Bloomington, MN

Sam Wellumson, Williston, ND  
Beth Zeltinger, Bismarck, ND

Each choir member needs to raise \$2,000 in order to go. Please begin to pray for the students and for the people in Eastern Europe. Pray that the Lord will lead and guide in every detail of preparation. If you can help support a student of the school in this ministry opportunity, please send a check to AFLBS and specify that it is for the Eastern Europe Choir Outreach. If you are sponsoring a particular student, please specify the name.

— Jerry D. Nelson  
AFLBS Music Director



## Two Wisconsin congregations join the AFLC

Christ the King Lutheran of Wilson, Wisconsin was recently approved by the coordinating committee for membership in the AFLC. This young congregation began last March and has been mothered by

**Aaron Johnson, 9, Stanley,** North Dakota continues to be treated for his leukemia with chemotherapy by pills. He has two more years to be on a "maintenance program" where he has weekly blood work done in Minot, and has to be on guard against routine childhood communicable illnesses. According to his father, Pastor Rodney Johnson, "We are thankful to not have to be driving the long distance to Fargo as often. The 55 miles to Minot is much easier. Aaron leads a somewhat normal life, plays with his brothers, etc."

### AFLC schools receive matching funds

The Free Lutheran Theological Seminary in Minneapolis recently received \$2,451 from Lutheran Brotherhood, a fraternal benefit society. This amount matched 27 gifts from Lutheran Brotherhood members made during the third quarter of 2000. Fifty-eight gifts were matched for the Bible school and \$4,875 was given to AFLBS.

Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) recently presented \$1,100 to the seminary through the AAL Member Gift-Matching Program. This total reflects AAL's matched portion of contributions received from members during the second quarter of 2000. The Bible school received a \$795 check for the same quarter.

Annual gifts of \$25 to \$100 made by members of these fraternal benefit societies to Lutheran schools, colleges or seminaries are matched dollar-for-dollar by AAL or Lutheran Brotherhood. For more information contact the AFLC Schools at 612-544-9501, or your local representative.

Amery Free Lutheran in Amery, Wisconsin, an established AFLC congregation 38 miles to the northwest. Christ the King meets in a former Bible Church in a little community called Hersey. Members from Amery Free Lutheran have been the primary source of pastoral leadership with some assistance from the AFLC Schools and the headquarters in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Average attendance for Sunday services is



Marilyn Thoreson, Argyle, Minnesota and Pastor Allen Monson, Lakeville, Minnesota at the All Boards lunch.

eighty to ninety people.

New Hope Lutheran of Janesville, Wisconsin was also accepted on the AFLC congregational roster at the same meeting of the coordinating committee. New Hope Lutheran is a former ELCA congregation that has been recently served by Pastor Curt Emerson of Trinity Free Lutheran, also in Janesville. Pastor Emerson continues to serve both congregations.



Pastor Everaldo Strom of Fergus Falls, Minnesota led two devotional times during the AFLC All Boards meeting, held at The ARC on September 26, 2000.

## Letter to the Editor

*Dear friends in the AFLC,*

We are deeply grateful to you for standing with us in this time of our deepest sorrow. The support through cards, meals, letters and most of all prayer, has been overwhelming. We can't imagine trying to deal with the loss of our precious boy on our own. You have shown God's compassion and love in very real ways.

Little Peter was born on Janu-



ary 12, 2000 and lived an extremely happy life until September 7, 2000. He was a precious addition to our family. Although we don't understand why God allowed Peter to die, we know that He is sovereign. Psalm 139 has been very meaningful to us — especially verse 16: "All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." When we think about Peter, so much of the pain comes from what our plans and dreams were for him. Yet God knew each of Peter's days — every one of them. He knew Peter would live for seven months and 26 days. That was His plan for Peter's life. We are grateful God gave him to us for a little while to enjoy.

We are planning to build a playground for young children at The ARC in memory of Peter. Thank you for your gifts toward this project.

— **Eric and Wendy Westlake and family**  
**Osceola, Wisconsin**



## PEOPLE & PLACES



Dexter, Minnesota — Pictured is Heather Dvergsten with Allienne Haarstad, Sunday school superintendent, and Pastor Lyle Aadahl. Heather was given a \$2,000 scholarship to attend AFLBS this fall from the Zion Lutheran Scholarship Fund. The congregation raises money for the fund through an annual chili supper with the Sunday school students as servers. A freewill offering is taken for the supper. Lutheran Brotherhood has matched a portion of the income in recent years.



Bagley, Minnesota — Rev. Ron Pulscher was installed last summer as pastor of Rice and Alida Lutheran Parish by AFLC President Robert Lee. Pictured are Pastor Lee and his wife Gloria, with Pastor Ron and Doris Pulscher.

### Retreat center has new program coordinator

Pictured at right are: Jolene Dietsche Wester, the Association Retreat Center secretary; ARC Director Eric Westlake; and Pam Olson, the new AFLC program coordinator for The ARC. Due to the increasing work load for The ARC staff, Jolene Wester will no longer coordinate information and registration for AFLC activities at The ARC.

**Please contact Pam Olson at  
1-888-748-3969 or e-mail: [arc@aflc.org](mailto:arc@aflc.org).**



**Pastor Rodger Olson**, Fergus Falls, Minnesota, has resigned as pastor of Calvary Free Lutheran where he has served since 1985, in order to accept the call from Good Shepherd Lutheran in Camarillo, California. He expects to begin his new ministry on January 1, 2001.

**Fargo, North Dakota** — The Doublewood Inn is the location for a youth conference to be held November 17-19, 2000. "Extreme Worship 2000" from Psalm 146:2, is the theme for the weekend. For hotel reservations, call 1-800-433-3235 before October 28. Each youth group is responsible for their own arrangements. The \$15 cost for the conference does not include hotel and food expenses. For more information call Jason Norlien at 1-715-268-4682 or e-mail at [jason@norlien.nu](mailto:jason@norlien.nu).

### Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

#### AFLC Benevolences (9 months) – January 1 - September 30, 2000

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN SEPTEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund . . . . .	\$252,865.00	\$23,807.93	211,642.94	84
Seminary . . . . .	118,291.00	7,259.46	72,349.57	61
Bible School . . . . .	164,270.00	8,879.53	107,528.47	65
Home Missions . . . . .	262,125.00	18,199.75	173,283.35	66
World Missions . . . . .	239,968.00	17,528.52	114,166.06	48
Capital Investment . . . . .	15,226.00	559.25	8,038.31	53
Parish Education . . . . .	69,480.00	3,112.31	47,190.57	68
Church Extension . . . . .	25,285.00	957.46	15,411.04	61
<b>TOTALS . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,147,510.00</b>	<b>80,304.21</b>	<b>749,610.31</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>TOTALS 1999 . . . . .</b>	<b>1,013,386.00</b>	<b>90,326.91</b>	<b>720,100.15</b>	<b>71</b>

**Goal 75%**

Evangelism department received \$8,794.08 in September.

# The surprising kind of people God uses

**T**he end of October is the time of year when we celebrate the anniversary of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. It is a time of year when we remember our roots.

We remember where we came from as a church. We consider those people God used in the past who shape our present.

In this issue we have feature stories on four different individuals who each played a significant role in our history: Philip Jacob Spener, Johann Sebastian Bach, Hans Nielsen Hauge and Philip Melancthon. They were men with a passion for God who served the Lord and His Church in powerful and unique ways. They are heroes of the faith from whom we can learn much. But they were still just men; sinful human beings with faults and limitations.

Some history books don't speak of the transgressions of our heroes. But God in His Word tells of how men and women we are called to admire and learn from, still sinned and fell short.

Abraham was a liar. Moses was a murderer. David was an adulterer and a murderer. When the pressure was on Peter denied he even knew Jesus. Paul was unrivaled as a teacher and missionary, but also unrivaled when it came to the sinfulness of his past.

We look at the heroes of the faith we are told about in the Bible and the ones we learn about in the history books, and we see a very human bunch of people — folks we can relate to.

If we knew none of the flaws of our heroes we could be deluded into thinking that a human being — maybe even us — could reach perfection with enough hard work. But when we are confronted with the reality that even the great men and women of God in the past were sinners who fell short, we have to admit that Romans 3 is true: "There is no one righteous, not even one" (Romans 3:10, NIV).

If they couldn't meet God's standard of perfection, if they couldn't be righteous in their own good works; then neither can we.

The sinfulness of our heroes should impress on us the need to admit our own sinfulness. It also teaches us of God's faithfulness and forgiveness. If He could forgive what they did, if He could still use them; then He can use you and me in His service.

The Lord used one whose original name meant *deceiver* to be the one from whom His chosen people would derive their name: Jacob/Israel. He used one who complained of having no ability to speak and

being too young to be one of the greatest and most eloquent prophets of all time: Jeremiah. God brought a great work of transformation to a large, corrupt city through the words of a prophet who ran the opposite direction when he was originally called and who got angry at God's goodness when the Lord forgave the people: Jonah. The ones the Lord chose as leaders of the New Testament Church were still doubting even after the Resurrection (Matthew 28:17). As the Church was growing and lives were being saved, they still had times when they messed up big time. They had differences of opinion. They didn't always get it right. But God still used them.

The description of the Corinthians is a correct description of God's people throughout the ages. "Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him" (I Corinthians 1:26-29, NIV).

We study the people of the past because it helps us to learn more about God. He uses sinful, ordinary people to proclaim His good news and do extraordinary things.

The Reformation's leader was not a powerful prince or a wealthy nobleman, but a simple monk named Martin Luther. God opened His eyes to the beauty of the gospel. Luther saw that salvation comes not by works, but by God's grace. The wonderful truth that changed him and that he loved to proclaim was, "The righteous will live by faith" (Romans 1:17, NIV).

It is doubtful that anyone at the beginning of the 1500s expected that Martin Luther would still be discussed and studied 500 years later. Others were certainly attracting more fame and seemed to show more promise. But it is Luther and ones like him, in spite of their flaws and weaknesses, that we look to as heroes. The humble servants we learn from and that God uses arise from unlikely places.

Who knows, one that may be talked about and considered a hero by some in years to come could be you?

— Pastor Craig Johnson

**"We look at the heroes of the faith ... and we see a very human bunch of people."**

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## SOMETHING TO SHARE

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# A lesson at the feeder: The light of life

"What do you see?"

"Oh, nothing, just some blackbirds," came the reply made in a flat tone.

Just some blackbirds. That plain old bird, always around, so unappealing. They're so common you hardly notice them. They're just boring!

Is that you? Is that your usual day? Boring. Perhaps you need to take a closer look at yourself and your day.

But first, let's look closely at the blackbirds. They appear so plain at first sight that you pass over them as insignificant. But with a closer look their beauty is awesome. An iridescent head glistens in the sunlight, with bright shiny eyes, and a velvety black body, wings and tail. Iridescent means to have a display of lustrous, rainbow-like colors. And, depending on the light, the common blackbird, brackle and cowbird have heads with colors varying from blue to purple to green to bronze.

That describes the plain ones. Then there are the yellow-headed and red-winged blackbirds. Included in the ninety-four species of blackbirds are the orioles, meadowlarks and bobolinks. Now we're talking about vibrant colors along with beautifully intricate songs.

And so, what is the hue of your day and your temperament? How do you deal with the monotony or the sameness of your life?

We fill our days with busyness. Daily routines are necessary. We

need to maintain our homes and coordinate our work and personal activities. We need to have contact with others individually and as couples or families. But how is your spirit while all these activities take place? Is your spirit a monochrome, just living and performing your activities in shades of gray?

The color of the orioles and blackbirds and the songs of the meadowlarks and cowbirds provide a pleasant freshness at the feeder. Their color draws our attention and their songs lift our spirits. God, too, refreshes us and desires to be an active part in our life. Acts 17:28 reminds us that "In Him we live and move and have our being." He desires that we should seek Him and know Him. Therefore as we are reading and studying His Word, we learn of Him and recognize His promises for us. Our spirits begin to reflect a pleasant, vibrant and peaceful strength.

When the activities, responsibilities and stresses of our daily routine dim and suppress our spirit, we are wearied. It is the Lord God Himself who can refresh us. He wants to warm our spirit and bring luster and vitality to our lives. He has promised us new mercies every morning. But it is our responsibility to call on Him. For only then in our need, can we allow Him to restore our soul (Psalm 23:3); cause our heart to rejoice (Psalm 19:8); and direct our path (Psalm 119:105). It is the light of His life that can and will refresh,

renew and rekindle our spirit.

He can revitalize the monotony of our daily routine. He may use music to soothe our soul. It may be a Bible study that rekindles our spirit. Perhaps a quiet walk or time with friends, laughter, a smile, tears, or any number of things. The Lord knows what we need and He will enliven and refresh. It is light that makes the dull blackbird striking and interesting. It is His light that enriches us.

Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness;  
Make me to know joy and gladness,  
Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from Thy presence,  
And do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation  
And sustain me with a willing spirit.

— Psalm 51:1a, 8a, 10-12



Mary Christiansen  
Calvary Lutheran  
Fergus Falls, Minnesota