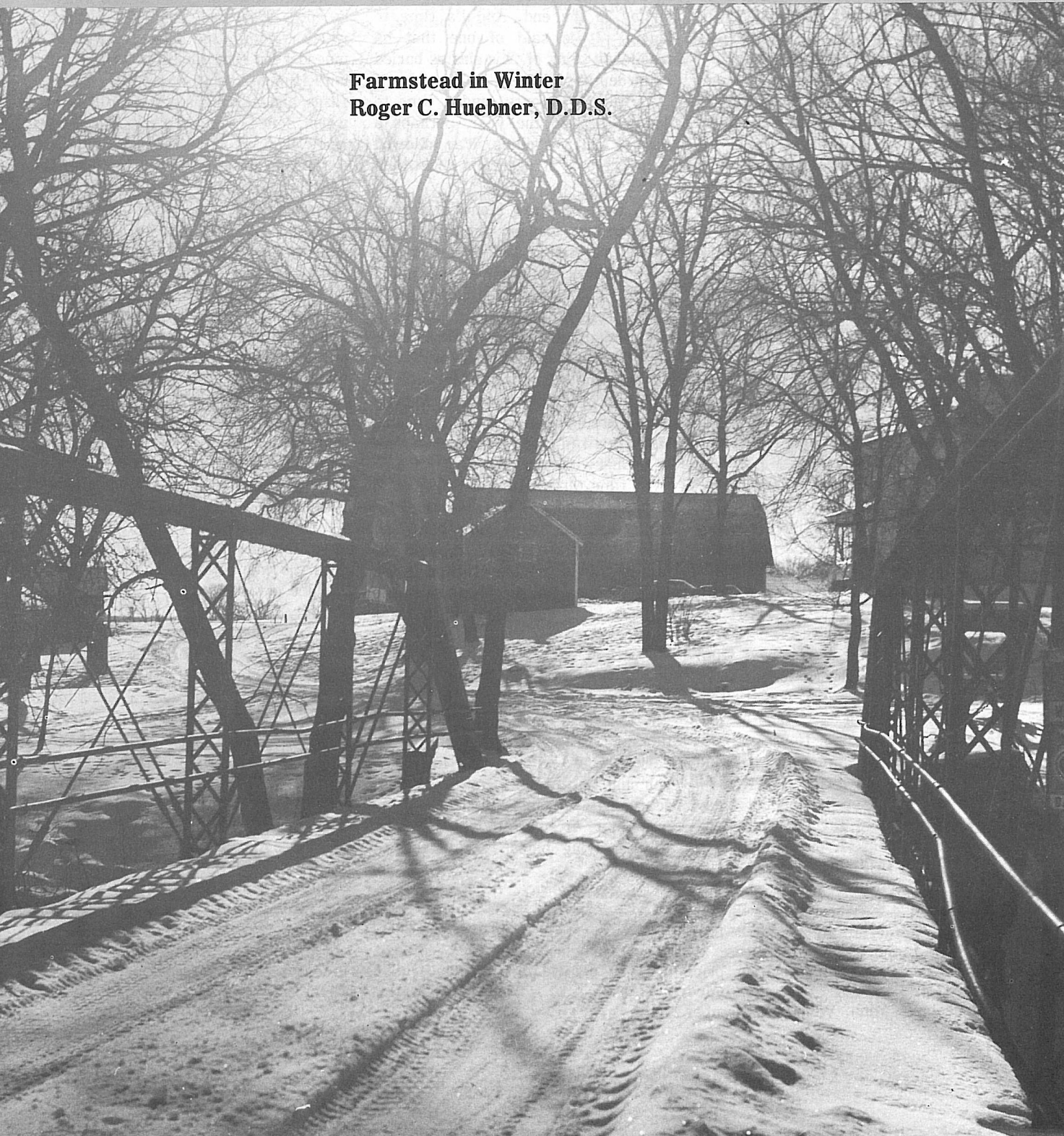


December 30, 1975

The Lutheran Ambassador

Farmstead in Winter
Roger C. Huebner, D.D.S.



MEDITATION MOMENTS

A TIME TO END 1975

Many of the common events in or of life have no doubt touched each of our lives in one way or another, as we think of this year, now passing.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8: "There is an appointed time for everything, and there is a time for every event under heaven."

"A time to give birth." That is often a time of great expectation and rejoicing. A wonderful beginning, being called into being for much or less to happen before "a time to die." Would that we would die in peace.

"A time to plant," in hope of a harvest. People plant anything from weeds to the Word of God. But if God's people would plant diligently and water in season and trust God for an increase to the bringing in of sheaves rejoicing, then no need to uproot except the old roots and deeds of the self-life.

"A time to kill." Some nations are considering reinstating the death sentence because of terrible, beyond-control, disrespect for law and order. May the law kill in order to make alive, and there may be "a time to heal."

"A time to tear down," very often as a dead branch is removed from the vine, something no longer is of use for that which it was constructed. In this fast moving age, much has become obsolete in 1975. However, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever."

"A time to weep." No doubt many have experienced a time of weeping in the past year. If one will look to the Lord in times like this, one will

no doubt experience growth and deeper joy in the end. And "a time to laugh." It is said of one that he laughed to think of "his sins as buried in the depths of the sea."

"A time to mourn, and a time to dance." Within the year, perhaps a funeral and a wedding. War followed by peace; the struggles in doubt ending in victory.

"A time to throw stones." A time to clear the vineyard of cumbersome stones, yes, clear the ground before the cultivator and the hoe; and finally the fruit. "A time to gather stones." O use them for the terrace, the wall, the strength and beauty of the vineyard. A house is moved from "Camp Little;" the lot now stands with an ugly gap of rubble from torn foundations, fireplace, the walks in heaps. Haul it away? No, construct a wall of art and with invitation to re-inhabit.

"A time to embrace, and a time to shun embracing." May we think of Ruth clinging to Naomi, returning from the land of Moab. A time for family ties to be strengthened in the Lord. A time for the brethren in the faith to know real strength and love together.

"A time to search," with lighted candle the "lost coin," and with patient perseverance the "lost sheep." "Seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Seek the Lord with all your heart and you shall surely find Him. Jesus, with searching eye, caught the eye of denying Peter. Result, he was forgiven. But betraying Judas, "a time to give up as lost."

"A time to keep." Hold to that which is good. Keep the faith. Keep that which is committed unto you. We can indeed keep that which is committed unto Him to keep for us. Many keepsakes and passing utensils are used, worn, soiled, "and a time to throw away."

"A time to tear apart," because it just does not fit. It does not fit the Christian life. It does not serve the cause of Christ. Let it be converted and know, "a time to be sewed together."

"A time to be silent, and a time to speak." A proverb says, "Speech is silver, silence is golden." Like all proverbs, this admits of qualification. There is a silence that means cowardice, sulkiness and stupidity, and there is a speech that is more precious than gold... Jesus was silent before judges. He had no answer before ignorance, venomous bigotry and personal insult.

"A time to love, and a time to hate." Much may be heard about love these days. So many things clamoring for a place of affection in hearts should actually be despised. Jude 21: "Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life."

"A time for war, and a time for peace." Both have been in history from the beginning. Rumors of war until the end. War within self often prevails. May God's peace come to our hearts now as we lay down the burdens and events also of 1975. Lay all before the cross of Jesus, and know His peace as we enter the New Year.

—Lawrence C. Dynneson

The Lutheran Ambassador is published biweekly (except the second issue in August) by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55441. Rev. Raynard Hugen is the editor. Subscription price is \$3.50 per year in advance. Subscriptions should be sent to The Lutheran Ambassador, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55441. Second-class postage paid at Minneapolis, Minn. Volume 13, Number 25

Landmarks and Stumbling Blocks

by Rev. Donald Greven, Sedan, Minn.

"Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set, in thine inheritance which thou shalt inherit, in the land that Jehovah thy God giveth thee to possess it" (Deut. 19:14). "Take up the stumbling block out of the way of my people" (Is. 57:14).

As the old year comes to an end, and the new one begins, it is a common practice in factories and shops to take an inventory. This inventory often includes a count of every item in stock, as well as a review of the year's profits, losses, and operating principles. The purpose of all this time-consuming and costly review is to discover where improvements can and should be made and to continue those practices that have been most profitable and good.

The application from the material side of life to the spiritual side is easily seen, but seldom made a reality. It seems so much easier to coast along, taking for granted both the landmarks and the stumbling blocks, than it is to stop and let the Holy Spirit take a thorough inventory of our heart and life. The result is obvious: a defeated spiritual life that falls far short of what God desires and is able to do in and through every child of His. The solution to the problem is suggested in the verses above: we must remember the landmarks, and root out the stumbling blocks in our lives. We are to go in and possess all that God has prepared for us, while at the same time the path in which we are called to walk is to be kept free from every occasion of stumbling.

Now the function of a landmark is to mark out clearly, for all the world to see, what one's inheritance is, and what one has received as a personal possession. There are four basic landmarks that no Christian can afford to have removed from his life. As those landmarks are shared, I would



Rev. Donald Greven

like to point out a few stumbling blocks that are to be found near the border of each 'inheritance,' waiting to trip up those who seek to personally possess the inheritance God has prepared for them.

The first landmark that God wants every person to possess is **the landmark of salvation**, of becoming a child of God. The Bible says that "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (II Pet. 3:9). And because God is not willing that any should perish, He provided a way of salvation for every man, woman and child on earth. The scope of John 3:16 and a multitude of other Scriptures makes it perfectly clear that "whosoever will may come" to Jesus and be saved. How sobering, and yet how wonderful it is, to ponder the truths of this simple verse: that God so loved you and me, despite our sin and rebellion and disobedience, that He allowed His only begotten Son to die on the cross, in order that we might become children of God, that we might be saved! This great landmark of salvation is possessed when one simply receives Jesus as His personal Savior. "But as many as received him (Jesus), to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that

believe on his name" (Jn. 1:12).

When the Holy Spirit begins to call a person to take possession of this first landmark, two stumbling blocks are often encountered. First, the thought may occur that he is not such a great sinner that he needs a Savior; he may think he is good enough the way he is, that God would never condemn him to hell. Jesus told just such a man, "You must be born again." After being convinced of his own sinfulness, and need of a Savior, the seeker may then trip on the second stumbling block—that of thinking he is too great a sinner for God to ever want to save. When tempted with that thought, the apostle Paul proclaimed, "Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (I Tim. 1:15). Have you let Jesus save you? Have you personally received this first part of the inheritance God has for you?

The second landmark that God wants us to possess and claim is **the landmark of the promises of God's Word**. The promises of God's Word are to be experienced by every Christian today. It is the claiming of the promise, the relying on the faithfulness of God, that will give us victory over those areas of defeat, for the Scripture says that God "has granted to us His precious and very great promises, that **through these** you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature" (II Pet. 1:4). Stop for a moment and take a quick inventory of all those areas of defeat in your thought-life and in your actions and attitudes. Are you willing to claim the verse above, and let the Lord through His Word win the victory in your life?

The stumbling block near this landmark is called doubt. How common it is for us as evangelical Christians,

who hold to the truth and the inerrancy of Scripture, to, in effect, deny that very doctrine by time and again refusing to claim the promises of God in our **personal** lives. How often does Jesus plead with us, in the midst of temptation, or depression, or discouragement, or worry, and say, "Do not be faithless, but believing." Today Jesus calls us to claim the promises!

The call of every Christian to be an ambassador for Christ is the third landmark that we are to lift up. The Scripture says, "So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:20). Just think! If you have become a child of God, you ARE an ambassador for Christ! You children who love Jesus are ambassadors for Him; you teenagers who love the Lord are God's chosen way in which He wants to call others to faith in Him. God seeks also to make His appeal

through every Christian adult. This call is not optional; rather, it is to be the natural result of having Jesus dwelling within. If we truly know Jesus, we will want to share Him!

The stumbling blocks clustered around this third landmark are numerous. Most of them center around our self-will, and that nasty thing we call pride in others (and self-respect in ourselves). How often our pride has become a hindrance to our witness, and we need to deal with it as sin! How sad it will be on Judgment Day to realize that precious souls have gone lost because we as Christians have refused to follow in the footsteps of Jesus by humbling ourselves, taking the form of a servant, and dying to self that others might be saved. Let us purpose with Paul, "Let us no more pass judgment on one another, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother" (Rom. 14:13).

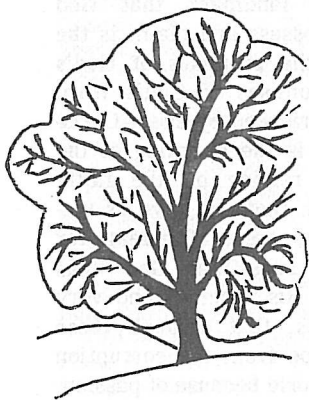
The final landmark that God offers to every Christian is the **blessed hope of eternal life.** It was this living hope of the Lord's return that kept the New Testament church, and Christians down through the centuries, faithful witnesses to the end, despite hardships, persecutions, and even martyrdom. What a joy it is as a Christian to look forward to the day when temptations will be no more and when faith will become sight. We believe the promise of Jesus when He said, "I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (Jn. 14:3). And as we see that day drawing near, we are stirred. "We must work the works of Him who sent me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work" (Jn. 9:4).

As the new year begins, then, let us purpose to possess all that God has prepared for us, and ask the Lord to remove from our lives anything that will cause us or others to stumble.

A NEW YEAR'S PRAYER

Lord, thank You for the year that's past,
For ripened grain and rich green grass,
For cellars full and shelves piled high,
For laughing hours and sunny skies,
For family, friends, those we hold dear;
Thank You, God, for this blessed year.

The new year comes like fallen snow.
We leave our footsteps as we go.
We cannot hide the path we choose.
We leave a trail that others use.
Lord, give us strength to keep Your way
Through each and every busy day.
In all we say, in all we do,
That through us others may find You.



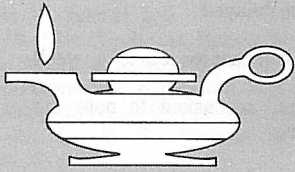
Poem and illustration
by Marlene Moline

The Lutheran Ambassador Schedule for 1975

(Please save for reference)

1. The first date given is the date on which the Ambassador is published, every two weeks.
2. The second date is the deadline on which material for that issue must reach the Editor at 3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441. Please send all correspondence concerning content of the paper to him at that address.
3. Material which arrives late will not be included in the next issue unless it is of an emergency nature or there is room for it.
4. Unsolicited material is welcome, but it will be used at the discretion of the Editor and as space permits.
5. All materials should be in double-spaced typing. Handwritten material will often be delayed.
6. The second issue in August is omitted.
7. In sending in notices of meetings, keep in mind that subscribers receive their copies up to a week or more following the date of publication.
8. Regular writers for the Ambassador, as well as other possible contributors, are asked to note the special issues given below so that they may write concerning those topics if they so desire.

Publication Date	Editor's Deadline	Special	WMF Bible Study
January 13 January 27	December 27 January 10	New Year	Yes
February 10 February 24	January 24 February 7	Patriotic	Yes
March 9 March 23	February 21 March 6	Lent Lent	Yes
April 6 April 20	March 20 April 3	Easter Mother's Day	Yes
May 4 May 18	April 17 May 1	Pentecost, Memorial Day and Pre-Conference	Yes
June 1	May 15	Pre-Conference and Father's Day	
June 15 June 29	May 29 June 12	Patriotic	Yes
July 13 July 27	June 26 July 10	Conference Reports	Yes
August 10	July 24		Yes
September 7 September 21	August 21 September 4		Yes
October 5	September 18		Yes
October 19	October 2	Reformation	
November 2 November 16 November 30	October 16 October 30 November 13	Bicentennial Thanksgiving Advent	Yes
December 14 December 28	November 27 December 11	Christmas Year's End	Yes
January 14	December 24	New Year	Yes



SCHOOL NEWS

CHRISTMAS CONCERT HELD

The annual Christmas concert by the Choir and Choral Club, under the direction of Mr. Donald Rodvold, was held on Sunday, Dec. 14, at 4 o'clock. In spite of snow falling all afternoon and iciness from the night before, a large crowd attended the program.

Early numbers in the concert were sung from the balcony before the Choral Club (an all-girl group) moved to the chancel for several songs, followed by the Choir. Climax of the program again this year was the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's *Messiah*. The audience responded in the finale by joining in on "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty."

Brass instruments were used at various times in the program and for the song "Maria Sat in Cattle Stall" there were stringed instruments used.

Pastor John P. Strand and Pastor Amos Dyrud were narrators, with several students.

A supper which included ham and scalloped potatoes was served immediately after to many of those who had attended the concert. And an open house in the dormitories lasted until 9 o'clock.

On Saturday night the monthly youth rally was conducted as a part of the concert weekend. Rev. Philip Featherstone, Colfax, Wis., was the speaker and special music was by the Praise Gathering of the Lutheran

Evangelistic Movement and Naomi Nash, Galchutt, N. Dak., and Barb Myhre, Abercrombie, N. Dak., flute duet.

CHRISTMAS CHATTER

The Choir went carolling on Dec. 12 to Augustana Home and Luther Tower, Ebenezer, both in Minneapolis. Don Rodvold and Pastor Huglen accompanied the group. Mr. Ludvig Kvamme, former houseparent at AFLBS and now a resident at Augustana, was in the audience there. As a final stop, a number of songs were sung from the Crystal Court of the IDS building on Nicollet Mall.

Jayne Sletten, junior, and Dan Jordan, both of Faith, S. Dak., were married on Dec. 22 at Bethel Lutheran in Faith. Jayne will continue at AFLBS and Dan plans to audit some classes after New Year's.

Sherrilyn Remick, Tacoma, Wash., junior, is a first cousin of the Smothers brothers of TV fame. Her dad and Tom and Dick's mother are brother and sister.

Calvin Knapp, former student, and Christine Gunderson, junior, told about Christmas in Brazil and Bolivia, respectively, at the December meeting of the Mission Club. Christine reported that her father, Rev. Richard W., was hospitalized with infectious hepatitis at that time.

At the Christmas party for the school, Rev. Amos Dyrud, acting dean, told of Christmas observance in Madagascar. Special music was supplied by a junior Gospel team. Mr. Mauritz Lundeen, assistant dean of men, had devotions. Gifts were passed out from beneath the tree in the rec room by a group of "elves" and refreshments were served.

Second quarter proctors are these: Boys' dorm, 2nd floor—Paul Kylo, Goodhue, Minn., and Chuck Gryte, Crookston, Minn.; 3rd floor—Keith Nash, Colfax, N. Dak., and Phil Schumacher, Minneapolis, Minn. Girls' dorm, 2nd floor—Deb Wire, Minneapolis, Cheri Carter, Lake Stevens, Wash., and Suzi Draeger, Medford, Wis.; and 3rd floor—Sue Sorteberg, Roseau, Minn., Karen Livingood, Callaway, Minn., and Faith Dean, Culbertson, Mont.

The annual spiritual emphasis week at AFLBS this year will take the form of a mission conference and will be held earlier than in past years, namely Feb. 3-8. A variety of speakers will address the conference. Prayer is requested of the church for this endeavor. Both foreign and home mission concerns will be presented.

The Schools will host the annual pastors' conference of the AFLC Jan. 20-22. Some rooms are available for those wishing to be housed on campus.

STUDENT OFFICERS, 2ND QUARTER

President—Paul Haagenson, Minnewaukan, N. Dak.

Vice-president—Ivar Berge, Binford, N. Dak.

Secretary—Karen Russum, Grafton, N. Dak.

Treasurer—Deb Wire, Minneapolis, Minn.

Chaplain—Allen Herset, Kila, Mont.

BASKETBALL SCORES

Cross of Glory 54 Conquerors 53
Conquerors 65 St. Paul Bible College JV 48

Gethsemane 68 Conquerors 61
St. Paul Bible College JV 62

Conquerors 53

Conquerors 70 St. Raphael's 46

Conquerors 77 Plymouth Chapel 20

editorials

THE DIVIDE OF THE YEARS

Earlier in life we lived next door to Divide County, North Dakota, on no less than three occasions, but never in it. With its high elevation on the western side it did give the impression of a "divide."

The later days of December each year also have about them the appearance of a divide. We seem to ascend to them and, as the year ends, to descend into the new, only to move upward again as the year progresses.

Whatever, the ending of a year gives pause for sober reflection. Another cycle has run full circle. Another stage of time has entered history and eternity. There have been defeats and triumphs, individually and collectively. In the church at large, there have been advancements and, while there are no clearly obvious defeats, there have been some delays, and efforts which were less than all-out in the work at hand.

As we enter the new year, and this will have happened, God willing, before you read this, it must be said that the Association work continues at a steady, if unspectacular pace. There is growth, not rapid, but steady. Our people continue to respond well with their financial

support, not uniquely, but with a strong evidence of love for the work in the local community and church-wide.

May 1976 be a good year, the best year ever in AFLC work. And if it is the best ever it will be so inasmuch as there is a real dedication to advancing God's work in our time and a presenting of ourselves as living sacrifices to God. And what does that latter mean except placing ourselves at God's disposal without reservation?

Yes, God help us to do this as we stand at the divide of the years, grateful for past mercies, and hopeful that they will abound unto us still in 1976.

THANK YOU, PASTOR DYNNESON

With this issue of the *Ambassador* we conclude the series of devotional messages by Pastor Lawrence C. Dynneson of Nogales, Arizona. We are sure that the articles (always on page 2) have brought blessing and inspiration to many and have disturbed and made uncomfortable where that was necessary. Let us ever be ready to accept what God has for us through His servants.

We ask God's blessing upon the work at the home base in Nogales and the outreaches being made from there also into old Mexico for Christ. A number of people are involved directly in this work, including the Leonard Swansons. Not a few Association people have arranged vacation stops at Nogales to see what is being done first-hand and to lend a hand for a day or two or more.

Thank you for writing for us, Pastor Dynneson. His successor for the next six months will be Rev. Gerald F. Mundfrom of Grafton, N. Dak. He is well-known in the church and beyond for his writings in the *Ambassador* and elsewhere, his work with the Bible-Book Mission, his own Bible studies and his speaking at preaching missions.

We look forward to the messages he will share with us in Meditation Moments, beginning next time. Here, too, there will be blessings received in good measure and may we willingly take them. God bless you and use you as you write, Pastor Mundfrom.

ASSOCIATION OF FREE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS 3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard Minneapolis Minnesota 55441

BUDGET RECEIPTS

(February 1 - November 30, 1975)
(10 months)

	Total Budget	Current Budget	Rec'd during November	Total Rec'd to Date	% of Current	% of Total
General Fund	\$ 64,250.00	\$ 53,541.60	\$ 9,135.27	\$ 38,921.66	72.7	60.5
Schools	102,000.00	85,000.00	7,054.03	59,953.11	70.5	58.7
Home Missions	53,000.00	44,166.60	10,391.96	41,031.16	92.9	77.4
Foreign Missions	66,840.00	55,700.00	10,933.48	44,259.57	79.4	66
Praise Fund	18,000.00	15,000.00	1,408.93	8,735.34	58.2	48.5
TOTAL	\$304,090.00	\$253,408.20	\$38,923.67	\$192,900.84	76	63.4
1974-1975	\$264,200.00	\$220,166.70	\$29,284.47	\$164,512.99	74	62
Legacies: \$6,401.82						
Dorm Fund: \$4,899.90						

NAME OF SPEAKER OMITTED

The name of Mrs. John Abel as our afternoon speaker at the district WMF meeting at West Lake Lutheran Church on Oct. 7 was omitted from the article in the Nov. 18 issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador*, page 7.

Mrs. Abel spoke on all the "let us" verses in the book of Hebrews, bringing us a challenge to hold these admonitions for spiritual growth. She also told of different aspects of the work in Brazil and closed her talk with a solo, "Jesus, Use Me."

Mrs. Irene Torgerson
District Secretary

THE ANGEL

A Legend by
Gerhard Ouckama Knoop

The angels were gathered in the presence of God. They were hearing a report from the angel Raphael, just returned from earth. He had lived on the earth for a time, unrecognized by men. He had, alas! little to report that was good. Among men he had encountered only sins, crimes and perversity.

A shudder went through the assembly as Raphael spoke. One of the younger angels gave vent to his feelings. "O Lord, Thy forbearance is truly unquenchable!" he declared. "Had I been in Thy place, I should long ago have annihilated the human race."

The Lord looked up; the angel, frightened, was ashamed of his audacity.

But the Lord spoke mildly: "Although you are one of the youngest of the angels, I will take your advice. Go! Wipe out mankind with fire and sword!"

Now the angel was beside himself, not knowing how to answer. And the Lord commanded once more: "Hear what I tell you. Take a whip, a sword and a torch and go forth among men until not one soul remains of them."

The angel silently excused himself from the circle of God's servants and started preparing to carry out the Lord's command. But his heart was greatly troubled.

Descending to earth, he landed in a large, desolate moorland. Only one solitary cottage stood there in all this loneliness. Going to the cottage, the angel saw how miserable and pitiful it looked. The door was off its hinges; the windows were broken out; an icy wind blew through the empty openings. As the angel drew nearer he could hear a heartrending, whimpering sound. Cautiously stepping across the threshold, he encountered a woman, wasting away and clad in rags, clasping several half-naked children to her breast. Mother and children shivered in the cold; the children's skin looked shrivelled, almost corpse-like. But when the

woman caught sight of the angel, she cried aloud: "Oh, God has sent you to us! Give us something to warm ourselves with, or we'll all surely die a most miserable death!"

Overcome with sympathy the angel, without quite knowing what he was doing, lay his torch down upon the cold, ruined hearth. Suddenly it grew warm and cozy in the room as a sweet-smelling cloud of incense and myrrh permeated the place. The torch dissolved into glowing coals. Falling at the angel's feet, the woman sought to kiss the hem of his robe, but the angel suddenly grew frightened and disappeared from the cottage.

With strong, mighty steps he continued on his way, coming soon to a large stream. When he was afar off he could already hear its roaring, as well as that of a storm which was descending upon the stream and making giant waves. The angel climbed up onto a dike as the water tempestuously tossed about, roaring and lapping at his feet. Soon the stream was as wide as a lake.

Above all this noise a screaming cry for help could be heard. The angel hurried toward the screaming voice. He saw a canoe battered about and a man trying to reach the shore, so near to it as he battled the waves, yet unable to reach the land. Now he was starting to sink. Driven by sympathy, the angel laid himself down on the bank and extended his whip out across the water. The canoeist could reach the tip of the whip; he grabbed hold and pulled himself toward the bank. But he no longer had enough strength to pull himself up onto the bank.

The angel stretched forth his hand, holding fast to a willow tree with his other hand. He managed to bring the drowning man to safety, but the ship fell into the water and immediately sank from sight.

The angel looked the man over and realized that he was a handsome youth. "Why," he asked, "did you go out onto that river in such a storm?"

"Oh, my bride lives off over there,"

the young man answered. "Today was to have been our wedding day. But she's dying of a terrible fever, and her last wish was to see me one more time. Now she'll have to die without me!"

The angel was cut to the heart, but he pulled himself away from the young man and travelled on. His road led him up to a huge castle with shuttered windows. An old man stood in front of the castle, crying, weeping, and wringing his hands.

"Why do you weep?" the angel asked.

Amid many tears, the old man answered: "Behind these walls my only son is imprisoned forever."

"But why? For what reason was he thrown into prison?"

The old man sobbed loudly; it was a while before he could answer.

"Unhappy lad, he rebelled against the authorities. His friend was treated badly by them; his anger got the best of him and he challenged the authorities and struck one of them. Now he has to languish in the dungeon for life."

Again the angel was overcome with grief, but he did not know what he ought to do. But the unhappy father continued: "Oh, you certainly have been sent to us from Heaven! With your sword you will free us."

The angel was so overcome that he could scarcely think. He went up and struck the iron bars, cutting through them at the top immediately but not down below where they were thicker and resisted him. Then the angel struck a mighty blow, his sword cutting through the iron like sawdust. But then the sword shattered like glass against the masonry of the walls. And out of the window climbed a pale, emaciated, but handsome youth.

Father and son were immediately in each other's arms. The angel's heart overflowed with love and compassion as he led both of them toward the road into a foreign but free country.

Once more the angel went on his way. As he went, he realized that he had lost his whip, his sword, and his torch. Thoroughly frightened, he returned with dread into the presence of God, expecting censure and severe

[Continued on page 9]

Christmas with Pastor Josefa

By Roger Ose

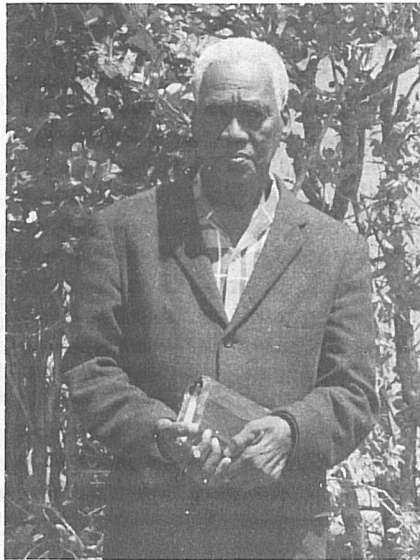
People had been coming along the foot paths to the church for quite some time before they started the Petromax kerosene pressure lamp. Although the church was dark, the Malagasy children didn't mind. This was Christmas Eve and they wanted to share in one of the biggest festivals of the year—the children's program at church.

As they started up the Petromax lantern, it didn't glow just right. Two men adjusted the valve, pumped in more pressure, and did their best to get it to produce a bright flame. Then all of a sudden it worked and the church was filled with light.

By the time the program started at 7:30 p.m., the busy church was packed with 185 people or more. They cleared a path for the Sunday School children to walk down the center aisle, and all joined in singing "O Come, All Ye Faithful." One child read Hebrews 1:1-8, that tells about God speaking through his Son. A seven-year-old child led in prayer.

The program was a series of 34 songs, Christmas carols, recitations, Bible readings, and the Christmas story acted out. There were different grade levels and each group had something special they had learned for the program. When the program was over, each child got several pieces of candy.

What was so different about this program? The leader. He is Pastor Josefa Randriantseheno, a man born in a little Malagasy bush village back in 1896. Although nearly 80 now, he had worked faithfully with the children for weeks, helping them learn their recitations and songs. And that Christmas Eve he did an excellent job of leading the program. When the Petromax mantle broke



Pastor Josefa

at 9:20 p.m., the church went dark. But he pulled a dozen candles out of his pocket. I smiled. He knew what to expect when they had to depend on that Petromax for light. Then he continued to direct the program, holding a candle in one hand, and the song book in the other. The children who had books also held candles. That was even more impressive than the earlier part of the program.

Who is Pastor Josefa? He is an orphan. He was really the first boy who came to the Lutheran Boys' School in Fort Dauphin. His parents were slaves and he was an outcast. His mother died shortly after he was born, and the owner cared for him. But the owner was anxious to get rid of him. When he went on a trip, he put the boy in a calf pen, as he had no one at home to look after him. Although he was three-years-old, Josefa had not begun to walk yet and was very small. Because of lack of nourishing foods, his legs were too weak to hold him up. He was often

in need of food and sometimes people would throw raw sweet potatoes into the pen for him. The calves trampled on him and he has large scars on his head to this day.

Then an elderly Christian couple heard about "Little Josefa," as he was called. They asked the master if they might have him and the man immediately consented. He was glad to get rid of Josefa. The little boy had a good home for some time, but his foster parents were old and wanted to return to their tribal village in the inland. When they heard that there was a Christian boys' school about to be opened in Fort Dauphin, they brought Little Josefa there.

The missionary in charge, Papa Halverson, took him into the school and saw to it that he was well cared for and got a good education. Once when Josefa was very sick, they thought he was about to die. But he recovered. Then Papa Halvorson said, "God must have something special for him to do in this world." That prophecy was true. Today Pastor Josefa is still serving a bush church and farming in the Mahatalaky community, north of Fort Dauphin. As the Christmas Eve program closed, all sang, "I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve." I thought of how gladness came to this one little boy because the story of Christmas came to Madagascar.

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punishment.

Throwing himself down before the face of God, he humbled himself and said: "Forgive me, Lord, I botched up your order."

But the Lord only smiled as He answered: "And now, have you learned to understand My forbearance?"

—From *Die heilige Spur*
(The Holy Trail),
issued by Otto Heuschele

(Translated from the German by
Rev. Edward A. Johnson,
Ohiowa, Nebr.)

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BIBLE STUDIES ON FIRST CORINTHIANS AVAILABLE

Pastor Mundfrom is in the process of writing a Bible Study on First Corinthians. The first draft on the beginning chapters are completed and mimeographed. The rest will be completed soon.

Anyone interested in seeing a sample of these studies or using them in a class (or for individual study) may write to:

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