



The DEAF LUTHERAN



Official Publication of the International Lutheran Deaf Association & the Board for Missions of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

July-August, 1996

St. Louis, Mo.

Volumes 88, No. 4

On the Loss of a Pastor . . .

WHERE IS GOD?

Almost everyone, at some time in their life, will experience stress, trial, disappointment or defeat. It may even seem as if things are out of control, that things familiar to us in our daily lives are changing faster than we can cope with them.



These things occur to us as individuals, and surely as whole church congregations as well.

At the time we went to press, there were approximately six vacancies in deaf ministry in various regions of the country. The North Dakota area seems to be the longest, more than eight or nine years without a full time pastor. The Kansas District is also vacant for a long time now, the last full time pastor being the late Rev. LaVern Mass. This vacancy not only affects the Greater Kansas City area, but also areas of Wichita, Olathe, Emporia, Topeka and others.

In the Atlantic District, we have St. Matthew and St. Mark (Elmhurst and Manhattan respectively) which have been struggling without a full time shepherd and guided with the help of laymen. Trinity Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh is presently served by only a vicar and Alpha in Rochester, N.Y. is vacant, following the departure of Rev. David Boyd, who accepted a call to California.

The loss of a pastor can surely create situations of confusion and uncertainty. Some of us may even feel lost or orphaned. Many will be asking, "Where is God?" At times like these some are going to wonder, "If God were here, these things would not be happening." Or they might think, "If God cared . . ." or, "If I were closer to God, or more obedient to God I would be spared all this doubt,

uncertainty, and pain." And the church members might be feeling, "If only we can find the right pastor, everything will be OK. It is our fault we have not found the right man soon enough. So we must work harder, or seek God's will with more dedication and determination."

For some people, the assumption behind all this may be that God cannot accomplish His will for us unless we find out what His will is. This kind of thinking assumes that God cannot act properly or bless us unless we act in a certain way. There may even be belief that things that have happened in the past and calls that have been made were not a part of God's perfect will; that they were mistakes, and our confusion is a sign that we have failed.

None of these assumptions are true! God is omnipotent, meaning He is all-powerful. He is also omniscient (He knows all things) and God is also omnipresent (He is everywhere). He rules in everything, and His perfect will is being accomplished. If we feel unsettled or confused, it is not because God is, too. God is not dependent upon us for anything, least of all to accomplish His purposes. We read in Romans 8:28 "In all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose" and this means that God is able to turn any circumstance to good, and that He is able to accomplish His will no matter how desperate it might be . . . or even "impossible." He is able to make defeat change into victory!

The death of Christ on the cross was not an accident. From all appearances, it might look as a spectacular defeat for God. But in God's plan, it was the greatest of vic-

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NEW EDITOR AND BUSINESS MANAGER SOUGHT FOR DEAF LUTHERAN

Believing that change and an infusion of new blood and fresh ideas can be very beneficial to our nearly 90 year old publication known as THE DEAF LUTHERAN, both Editor Lester Ahls and Business Manager Elmer D. Francisco submitted their resignations to the Board of Directors at their regular meeting in St. Louis April 12-14. The joint announcement provides the board with a rare opportunity to select a new team to staff the paper with two persons who can work well together. The resignations are to be effective on July 6, 1997, at the conclusion of the convention in the St. Louis.

Francisco has many years of board experience, having been President-elect and President for two terms, treasurer for three terms and serving as business manager for 17 years for the paper. He has also served in many capacities in his home congregation in Spokane, Wash. and the Northwest Regional ILDA Conference.

Ahls has been involved in the ILDA since 1976, serving as Regional President; ILDA Secretary, President-elect and President. He will end 14 years as Editor next year.

THE DEAF LUTHERAN has been in continuous publication since the year 1909. At the turn of the century, early members of the deaf ministry shared a paper with a German language paper, "Der Lutheraner" which as one might surmise, created some problems with the ability to read German. It was not for

some time until the year, 1909, that their own paper came into existence with Rev. Traugott Wangerin as the first editor. Since then, there been 16 editors and assistant editors. Some were both editor and business manager. The editor with the longest tenure was the late Rev. O. C. Schroeder who served approximately 25 years.

With a year in which to fill the two positions, the board did not immediately name anyone to take up the duties. Instead, persons interested in either position should submit resumes to ILDA President Larry M. Gorton, S. 3807 Latawah St., Spokane, Wash. 99203-2726.

PLANNING TO GET MARRIED?

QUESTION: Why do brides buy their own wedding gowns and grooms rent their suits??

WHERE IS GOD?

Continued from Page 1

tories! Sometimes the only way the Lord can take His people to green pastures is first to take them through the shadow of death.

We do not know why God has allowed some of our vacancies to endure as long as they have. But we can be certain of one thing . . . that everything that happens is only for our good. By trusting in God, we will be stronger, richer, and more faithful because of the experience.

The question we had at the beginning of this article was, "Where is God?" He is still on His throne, He is still sovereign; He is still working for our good.

Let us always trust Him in all things.

NOTICE to all ILDA members and *The Deaf Lutheran* subscribers: The Board of Directors of the INTERNATIONAL LUTHERAN DEAF ASSOCIATION is seeking interested persons to fill vital positions on the staff of *The Deaf Lutheran* beginning in **FALL 1997** as follows:

EDITOR - Responsible for layout and editing ILDA's publicity newspaper. Collection of mission informations, news and stories.

BUSINESS MANAGER - Assists with subscription lists, notices and distributions.

For more information please write or call:

Larry Gorton, President
S. 3807 Latawah
Spokane, WA 99203
(509) 624-5650

ILDA BOARD MEETS IN ST. LOUIS

The first meeting of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors since the last ILDA convention in Schaumburg, Ill. last year occurred in St. Louis at Concordia Seminary April 12-14. All elected members of the board were present with the exception of Richard Sharp, who was replaced by former board member Victor Lyon of the Northwest Region. Synodical representative Dr. Rodney Rynearson attended only the first session, as illness of his wife Rhoda required that he be at home.

Much of the business at hand dealt with the upcoming 1997 convention, which will be held in St. Louis. It approved a request from Chapel for the Deaf in Charlotte, N.C. to host the 2001 meeting after Cleveland, Ohio in 1999.

1997 combination ticket prices have been set at \$93.00, however, early birds can save \$13 if paid by Dec. 31, 1996. Costs increase to \$87.00 until April 30, 1997. After that date, the full combination ticket will be charged. Hotel rooms are very nice and also quite pricey at \$85. It does not matter if one person occupies a room or as many as four, the cost is the same. To save money, members and visitors are encouraged to share in order to save on expenses. If hotel rooms are paid for by Dec. 31, 1996 and the money forwarded to the convention chairperson, one can save on the hotel room tax, which will further reduce the convention costs. Moneys forwarded to the hotel headquarters will not receive this benefit.

The last convention of the ILDA in Schaumburg, Ill. set 1995-1997 Mission Projects at \$31,000. It was announced that as of April 13, 1996 the fund stood at \$13,822.03 or approximately 44.6% of the goal. The Board of Directors was informed that the largest of the projects to be funded during the current biennium, the India Lutheran Church, Hosur, to purchase a tract of land for a new school for \$20,000 might need to be moved up quickly in order to take advantage of current costs before any increase later. A motion to do this was carried unanimously by the board.

A letter from Rev. Donald Zuhn to members of the Steering Committee of the next Convocation of Deaf Ministry was shared by Lester Ahls, one of its members. In planning for the next Convocation, Pastor Zuhn stated that new rules by the AAL require the sponsoring organization to supply at least 25% of the project costs compared with last time when it was 10%. The problem, it was explain-

ed, is that there would be a shortfall of \$4,250. Could the ILDA supply this? Inasmuch as the ILDA is sponsoring this convocation, which is expected to occur in the Fall of 1997, the board gave its blessing and it was also carried.

Three young men studying for the ministry at Concordia Seminary and planning to serve the deaf after graduation attended one of the sessions. They were David Neilson, Tim Eckert and Cory Eckstrom. All three received scholarships of \$750 each.

The board discussed having workshops during the convention. Different topics came up, but the one generating the most interest and support was the need for Home Study. Bible Classes allow persons to stop and ask questions; it permits feedback, something one can seldom do during formal worship.

It was announced that the roster of members in the God's 1,000 club stands at 154 members. As envisioned when created several years ago, the club would have 1,000 members each of whom would donate 10 dollars annually. This fund would be enough to cover all board expenses, thus freeing up more funds to support mission projects. The club will have its dinner at 12 noon on Saturday, July 5, 1997. Memberships can be obtained by forwarding the dues to Treasurer Russel L. Healey, P.O. Box 223, Olive Branch, Ill. 62969.

The 1997 ILDA Convention theme will be, "I am the Gateway." The theme is very appropriate this time, because the Adams Mark hotel, the convention headquarters, is very close to the famed Arch, the "gateway to the west." In fact, the view from the terrace on the 18th floor provides a marvelous view of the Arch and the Mississippi River in the background. One can take a walk down there, visit a museum under the Arch, depicting events leading to the conquest of the west. If you wish, you can take the elevator to the top of the Arch, 630 feet above the ground level, for a nominal charge.

The 1997 ILDA Convention dates are July 3, 4, 5 and 6. Besides the business sessions, there will be an election of officers to guide the Association over the next two years. Your input and support are very important. If you would like further information, write or call:

Sharon Schwarz, Chairperson
1997 ILDA Convention Committee
 1116 Lindsay Lane
 Florissant, Mo. 63031

NEWS FROM HERE 'THERE . . .

The members of the Board of Directors attending the recent meeting in St. Louis were very surprised to see **Rev. Don Leber**, their pastoral adviser, in apparent good health, following reports of being seriously ill with a brain tumor. In fact, it was a blessed miracle! We give honor and praise to the Lord, for the power of His healing touch.

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Mrs. Rhoda Rynearson, wife of Dr. Rodney Rynearson, would not be denied an opportunity to visit with the ILDA Board of Directors, despite having undergone major surgery only a few weeks earlier. Rhoda was smiling and jubilant at seeing everyone and was in excellent spirits. We pray for both Rod and Rhoda and the Lord's blessing on them both.

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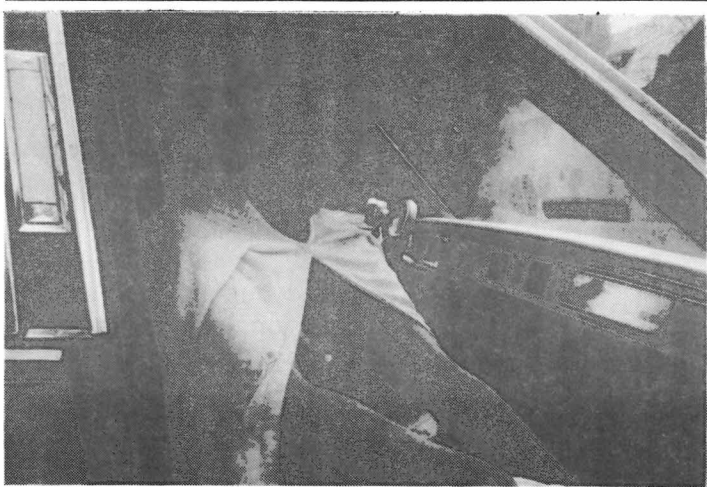
We were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of **Mrs. Charlene Dietz** of Colorado Springs on March 30. A member of Bethel Lutheran Church in Denver, Mrs Dietz and her husband, George could almost always be found at ILDA conventions, as both were loyal members.

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Also from Colorado Springs comes the news that another faithful member, **Herman Butler**, is not well and residing in a nursing home with painful physical problems. Cards can be sent to him in care of Mr. and Mrs. Marion Keliher, 1423 Swope Ave., Colorado Springs, Colo. 80909.

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First Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Chicago, where the first signed service for the deaf



A SMILE FOR YOU--Still mending after surgery, Rhoda Rynearson insisted on coming th the Seminary to greet the ILDA Board members. You cannot keep a good lady down.

occurred more than a 100 years ago, celebrated its 125th anniversary May 19.

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Chapel of the Deaf in Charlotte, N.C. will host a Fall retreat at Valle Crucis, N.C. on the dates of Nov. 1-3, 1996. Guest speaker will be Rev. Mark Seeger of Jesus Lutheran Church, Austin, Texas. Chapel of the Deaf will also host the 2001 ILDA Convention.

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Pastors Don Leber and Brian Smith of the Los Angeles area will be leading the Lutheran Deaf Camp at Frazier Park, Calif. on the dates of Aug. 4-9. The camp is for the deaf kids and their hearing brothers and sisters age 6 and up.

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We need your prayers for **Tillie Bymers and Ray Rasmus** in California. Both are undergoing health problems. Ray is suffering from prostate cancer and Tillie had a stroke. We call on the Great Physician for His healing hand.

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The **Dixie Deaf Lutheran Conference** will take place near Dallas, Texas on the dates of Oct. 11-13. More information will be published as soon as it becomes available.

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Three candidates for the holy ministry will take their places this year: **Cory Eckstrom** to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Omaha; **Tim Eckert** to Alpha Lutheran Church, Rochester, N.Y., and **David Nielsen** to Calvary, Des Moines, Iowa.

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Keith Haberstock, a missionary from Lviv, Ukraine was a visitor at Cross of Christ Lutheran Church in Edmonton, Alberta recently. He talked about his work at the Deaf Orphanage and school there. \$256.00 has been donated towards the project with a goal of \$500 before he returns in August.

THE WISDOM OF THE BIBLE

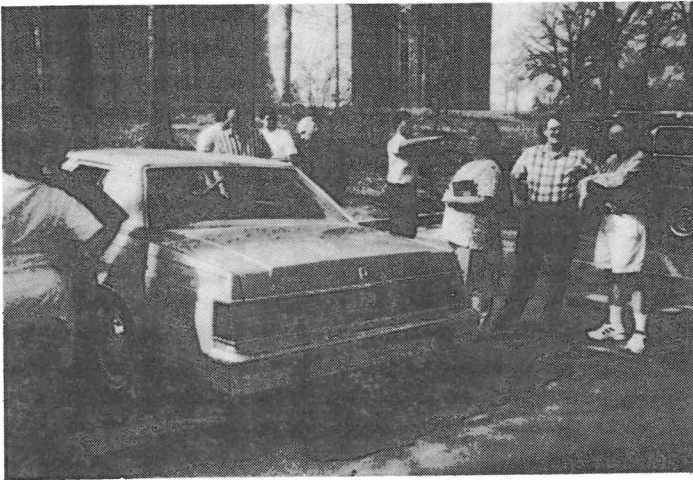
Proverbs 1:7, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. . . ." I Corinthians 1:18, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

A famous educator from Yale University has said, "I thoroughly believe in a university education, but I believe a knowledge of the Bible without a college course is more valuable than a college course without the Bible. Everyone who has a thorough knowledge of the Bible may truly be called educated."

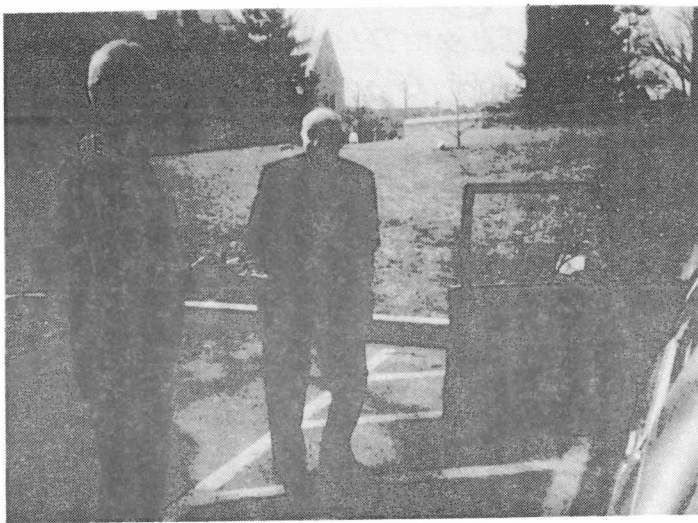
PASTORAL DEVOTION

By Rev. Donald E. Leber
6950 Center Ave.
Alta Loma, Calif. 91701

Recently I was in St. Louis for a meeting of the ILDA Board. And since I am the Pastoral Adviser, it was my duty to lead the board in devotions. As part of the devotions I added some non-traditional songs because I



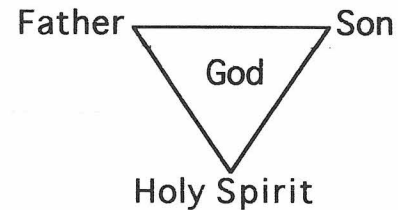
A NICE DAY TO BE OUTDOORS--Facing the photographer, left to right: Cory Eckstrom; Don Leber (chatting with Rhoda Rynearson seated in Car); Richard Norton, Texas; Pam Kane, Ohio; ILDA President Larry Gorton and President-elect Dennis Konkell. Couple with backs to the camera are Charlie and Lee Ann Kotel, California.



RECOVERING PASTORS SHARE HUMOR--Rev. Rodney Rynearson, left, who is getting over a bout with malaria which he picked up in his travels to India, chat with Rev. Don Leber, who was also recovering from a major illness. The editor was not able to find what was so funny.

enjoy doing music in sign.

I pointed out to the Board people that often we put the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit all together in one place in our signing. I emphasized that our God is a tri=3 une=1 God. And for us to be good witnesses to other deaf people who may associate all three just as separate gods or lumped together under only a God, I find it easy to describe God by an inverted triangle.



In that way I can always show which person of the Trinity that I am talking about. Every time I talk about God the Father, I use my left hand raised to heaven to show Him. And every time I talk about Jesus, I use my right hand raised to heaven to show Him. And when I talk about the Holy Spirit, I use both my hands palm up in front of me in the center to show Him. I have noticed some deaf Lutheran people talking about God the Father and God the Son using their left hand for both of them. To me, that can be confusing. Since ASL (American Sign Language) allows us to place people and things then why not use good ASL when we are talking about our God and especially talking about the Three Persons of our God.



1995-1996 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS--Pictured, left to right: Cory Eckstrom, who will go to Bethlehem, Omaha, Neb.; David Nielsen, to Calvary, Des Moines, Iowa and Tim Eckert, who will serve Alpha Lutheran Church, Rochester, N.Y. This picture was taken during ILDA Board meeting in St. Louis.

SUMMARY OF BOARD MEETING

By Alice L. Hagemeyer, Secretary

The first meeting of the International Lutheran Deaf Association Board of Directors of the 1995-1997 term were held on the beautiful campus of the Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Mo. April 12-14, 1996. Present were: Larry Gorton, President; Dennis Konkell, President-elect; Alice L. Hagemeyer, Secretary; Russel Healey, Treasurer and the Rev. Don Leber, pastoral adviser. On hand were a representative from each of the seven regions, James Cheese, Eastern; Lee Ann Kotal, Pacific; Richard Norton, Dixie; Pam Kane, Great Lakes; Linda Desrosiers, Midwest and Victor Lyon for the Northwest. Also Lester Ahls and Elmer Francisco, staff members of THE DEAF LUTHERAN; Rev. Mark A. Anderson, co-chair of the 1995 convention and Sharon Schwarz, chairperson for the 1997 convention.

The Rev. Rodney Rynearson of the LCMS Mission was with the group Friday evening presenting an update on his activities and recent visit to India where he unfortunately became infected with malaria. Because he has not yet fully recovered, he asked to be excused from the rest of the sessions.

HIGHLIGHTS OF MEETING

Rev. Mark Anderson, 1995 ILDA Convention co-chair, announced a profit of \$11,893.00 from the last convention. He commended the excellent cooperation of all four churches in Chicago area in making it the success it was.

Dennis Konkell and his law committee have been making many changes for the 25-year-old organization that now needs a face lift to keep up with the times. The proposed changes will be ready for approval within 90 days of the next ILDA convention.

Lee Ann Kotal, chair for the scholarship committee, introduced three seminary students who had been granted scholarships. There was a wave of hand for each man as their names were called and best wishes for wherever they might be sent.

The board approved the application of Chapel for the Deaf/Lutheran of Charlotte, N.C. to host the 2001 convention.

Lester Ahls, editor and Elmer Francisco, business manager of THE DEAF LUTHERAN surprised everyone with the announcements of their plans to resign their positions at the end of the 1997 ILDA convention. Although we are sad to see them go, we must now look for new people who are capable of taking

up their reins.

We have voted to take out \$20,000 from the 1995-1997 ILDA Mission Projects treasury to pay in advance to the India Lutheran Church in Hosur so that its authorities can buy land right away when the price is low.

A committee will be formed to study the structural problem of the Dixie Region.

A Speakers Bureau for the ILDA will be established. A list of ILDA members with expertise in various area of church service, i.e., teaching, training, lecturing and using appropriate tools for efficient worship, Bible study, hymns and public relations would be handy.

The most exciting part of the meeting was a tour of the Adams Mark Hotel, the site of 1997 ILDA convention in downtown St. Louis. This beautiful hotel is located just across from the famous Arch. Sharon Schwarz and her committee promise us all that this convention will be something no one will want to miss. There will be some activities for children and young adults. All ILDA members are urged to make plans to take a vacation in St. Louis the first week of July in 1997. Lutherans or not, everyone is welcome to register for the four exciting days of worship, Bible reading, fellowship and much more.

Watch for further details in coming issues of THE DEAF LUTHERAN.

Isaiah 40:31:



Blessed is the man whose strength is in the Lord.

Psalms 84:5

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The ILDA Nomination Committee, which is currently chaired by former President Ronald L. Madding, wishes to remind all Regional Conference secretaries of the need to nominate persons at their conferences this year who will run for national ILDA office next year at St. Louis. Mr. Madding wishes this information sent to him no later than 60 days following the adjournment of this year's conferences.

The following changes in the **ILDA HANDBOOK** are noted:

ARTICLES IX, Section A1, The President: "The President is in the second part of his term and may not be re-elected. However, he may later serve a second term as President-elect or President." Therefore, President Larry Gorton will be leaving his post, after serving two years (one term) according to the above changes.

Section B2, The President-elect, which states, "The President-elect, which states, "The President-elect's term of office is the first two-year part of

his service. At the end of this time he automatically becomes president for two years. . . . Therefore, President-elect Dennis Konkel will complete his first two-year part, then automatically becomes president for two years. The president-elect position will become vacant next year. We will need to elect a new candidate at the 1997 ILDA conventions."

ARTICLES XVIII, The nominating Committee, Section B-Responsibilities; "... at least two months before the scheduled regional meeting; the secretary shall remind the congregations to offer names for nomination which shall then be voted on at the regional conference."

The Nominating Committee desires a photo and a short biography of each candidate be sent to the chairperson. The list will be published in **THE DEAF LUTHERAN** in the spring of 1977. The address of the chairperson is 1940 N.E. 57th Ave., Portland, Ore 97213-3552.

REV. LOUIS JASPER TO RETURN TO U.S.

Dear ILDA Members:

We never cease to be amazed at how the Lord is able to use us as conveyors of His love and bearers of His Gospel message.

This has been home (Hong Kong and Macau) for 23 years, but that is about to change. We are now working on plans for returning to the U.S. the first week in September. We sincerely thank all of the congregations which are supporting us through the TIM program as well as those which make donations directly to Concordia School. I expect the next four months to evaporate almost in the twinkling of an eye and we most certainly need your continued prayer support. So much needs to be done in that short period of time, not the least of which is finding a new director for Concordia School. I know that the Lord will lead us to the person of his choice when He deems the time is right.

Initially, we plan to move to our home in Newark, N.Y. under as little pressure as possible as we adjust and learn to live again in a land which has become somewhat strange to us. We look forward to spending our first Christmas ever with our grandchildren (the oldest is now 13.) Wherever the Lord calls

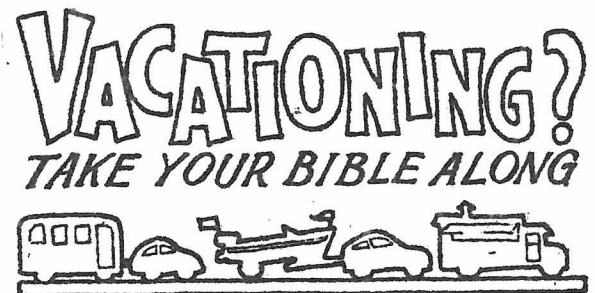
us, we will continue to support the world mission of the church in general and more specifically the work of Concordia school in Macau.

Thank you for your continued support. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless our working together in sharing His love and the good news of salvation with all whose lives touch ours. Peace and Joy in His service!

Sincerely,



(Rev.) Louis R. Jasper, D.D., Ed.D.



"WHERE HAVE THEY ALL GONE?"

By Rev. Roger K. Altenberger
Word of God Lutheran Church
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Our celebration of the Lenten season and Holy Week preparation this year ended with the joyous celebration of Easter. That is when Jesus revealed Himself after His death to the women leaving the grave and later to His disciples. He also revealed Himself to us that day in His Holy Word and in the body and blood of the Lord's Supper. Many people came to worship with us on that glorious day. The Lord's house was filled with many wor-

shippers. That leaves us with this interesting question. . . . "Where have the all gone?"

Yes, the special celebrations of Christmas and Easter frequently bring many more people to God's house. Sadly, many do not return until next Christmas or Easter. In the Book of Hebrews (10:25) God advises through the writer, "Let us not give-up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another." Yes, many people only attend church services during these special times and then GIVE-UP meeting together. They do not continue to enjoy the blessings God offers through worship and Bible study and fellowship of our Christians.

While many have disappeared into their private worlds, still many of you are coming every week and also at special times during the church year.

In the churches, God has established special families, and He cares for those families with His Word and His Communion celebration. He has brought us all together to support, encourage, invite and share His blessings with each other and with those who have not yet become part of His family.

May we continue to meet each time we have regular church and Bible study and NOT GIVE UP meeting and supporting each other with the milk of God's Word, as some are doing.

MILDRED BURFORD DIES

Mrs. Mildred Burford, 63, wife of Warren S. Burford Sr., of Swanton, Ohio, passed away April 19 after long illness. A long time



member of Good Shephard Lutheran Church of Toledo, the Great Lakes Regional Conference, and the International Lutheran Deaf Association and many other organization too numerous to mention. Her husband is currently president of the Great Lakes Region.

Survivors include her husband, Warren; a son, Warren Jr.; a daughter, Beverly; five grandchildren; three great grandchildren; five brothers and fgive sisters. She was preceded in death by a brother, Bob and two sisters, Virginia and Anna.

Blessed are they who die in the Lord.

God Is Love

I John 4:8

The DEAF LUTHERAN

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OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL LUTHERAN DEAF ASSOCIATION AND THE BOARD OF MISSION, THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD. PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY BY KERRY HOOPER PRINTING OF GALENA, OH. 3RD CLASS POSTAGES PD. WESTERVILLE, OH. SUBSCRIPTION FEE: INDIVIDUAL ... \$6.00 PER YEAR. CHURCH BLANKET PLAN ... \$5.50. PLEASE SEND ALL SUBSCRIPTION FEES AND ADDRESS CHANGES TO ELMER FRANCISCO, BUSINESS MANAGER, 10004 EAST MISSION, SPOKANE, WA 99206-3938. PLEASE SEND ARTICLES, STORIES AND PICTURES TO LESTER AHL, EDITOR, 1004 CHERYWOOD DR., CEDAR FALLS, IA. 50613-1614.

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