

THE 

OCTOBER 2022

# LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

1962 / 2022

THE AFLC AT SIXTY

SPECIAL CONFERENCE  
OF  
LUTHERAN FREE CHURCH  
CONGREGATIONS

OCTOBER 25-28, 1962

CONFERENCE TEXT: PHILIPPIANS 3:1-16

CONFERENCE THEME:

"PRESS ON TOWARD THE GOAL"

HE IS ABLE

HOST CHURCH

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

THIEF RIVER PARK



"WHERE THE  
SPIRIT OF THE  
LORD  
IS, THERE IS  
FREEDOM"  
II COR. 3:17





## THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

OCTOBER 2022  
VOL. 60 NO. 10

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### THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

(ISSN 0746-3413) (USPS 588-620)  
is published monthly by the  
Association of Free Lutheran  
Congregations,  
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.,  
Plymouth, MN 55441  
Phone (763) 545-5631  
Periodicals postage paid at  
St. Paul, MN and additional  
mailing offices.

### POSTMASTER

Send address changes to  
The Lutheran Ambassador,  
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.,  
Plymouth, MN 55441.

### SUBSCRIPTION CHANGES AND INFORMATION

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.,  
Plymouth, MN 55441  
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# CREATING A CLEAN HEART

BY KIRSTIE SKOGERBOE

**L**ast week, I randomly opened my Bible to a passage I wrote about a few months ago: “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore, for you are of more value than many sparrows” (Matthew 10:29-30). This time, though, I read the verses that come afterward. One struck painfully: “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:37).

I have loved many things more than I have loved Jesus. I have wanted Him for reasons other than His own sake: His holiness to make me noticeably holy, His love to make me memorably loving, His wisdom to make me wiser than other people. I want people to know Jesus in a way for which I can take credit.

This attitude has made it hard for me to pray. It's hard to speak honest words to God when I don't want Him. I can't adore and confess when I care more about my piety than my sin. My supplications are distracted, and I can't even remember everything I've promised to pray about.

I am angry with myself, but anger is not the same as confession. I'm stuck in absurd pride, but I don't know how to humble myself. I bear a body of death, like Paul (Romans 7:24).

So the words of Psalm 51 stand out to me: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew

a right spirit within me” (v. 10). God must make me clean or I cannot be clean. “If I do not wash you,” Jesus told Peter, “you have no share with me” (John 13:8). There is no alternative cleansing to that of Jesus.

The title of this column is “Encouraging Word,” but the encouragement in acknowledging wretchedness is paradoxical. I wasn't liberated from my pride before writing this. I am still taking distracted stabs at prayer. I know that, as Christ also implies in Matthew 10, I must carry the cross of warring against my sinful nature to death (v. 38). Jesus has justified me, but He is still changing me. My spirit will not be wholly sanctified until I see His face.

One comfort is that David, in spite of his pervasive sin, asks God to create a new heart in him now. Paul, too, tells Christians, “[H]e who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6). God has already begun and is actively doing this good work; we don't have to wait for Him to act until we die. When we die, however, He *will* complete the work that He began with our salvation on the cross.

To ask God for a clean heart is in keeping with His promise to complete the cleansing He has already begun. Jesus' cross covers us as we falter with our own, because we are of great value to our Father—even when we fall to the ground.

*Skogerboe, a 2018 graduate of the Free Lutheran Bible College, Plymouth, Minn., lives in Orange, Calif.*

(From the minutes of the Special Conference)

The special conference called for the purpose of continuing a fellowship of Lutheran Free Church congregations and other interested Lutheran congregations, was held October 25-28, 1962, at Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

Pastor F. [Fritjof] Monseth, temporary chairman, opened the business session with a welcome and a reminder of the words of Zechariah 4:6, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord of hosts."

The announcement was made that because of the crowd, the arrangements had been made to hold the remainder of the sessions at the Knox Public School Auditorium.

Pastor Allen Blegen, editor of "Word Alone," was introduced to the Conference. He brought a message on the dangerous trends in theology today ... called upon true Christians, those who have Christ within, to "occupy till He comes" though it will be costly and difficult.

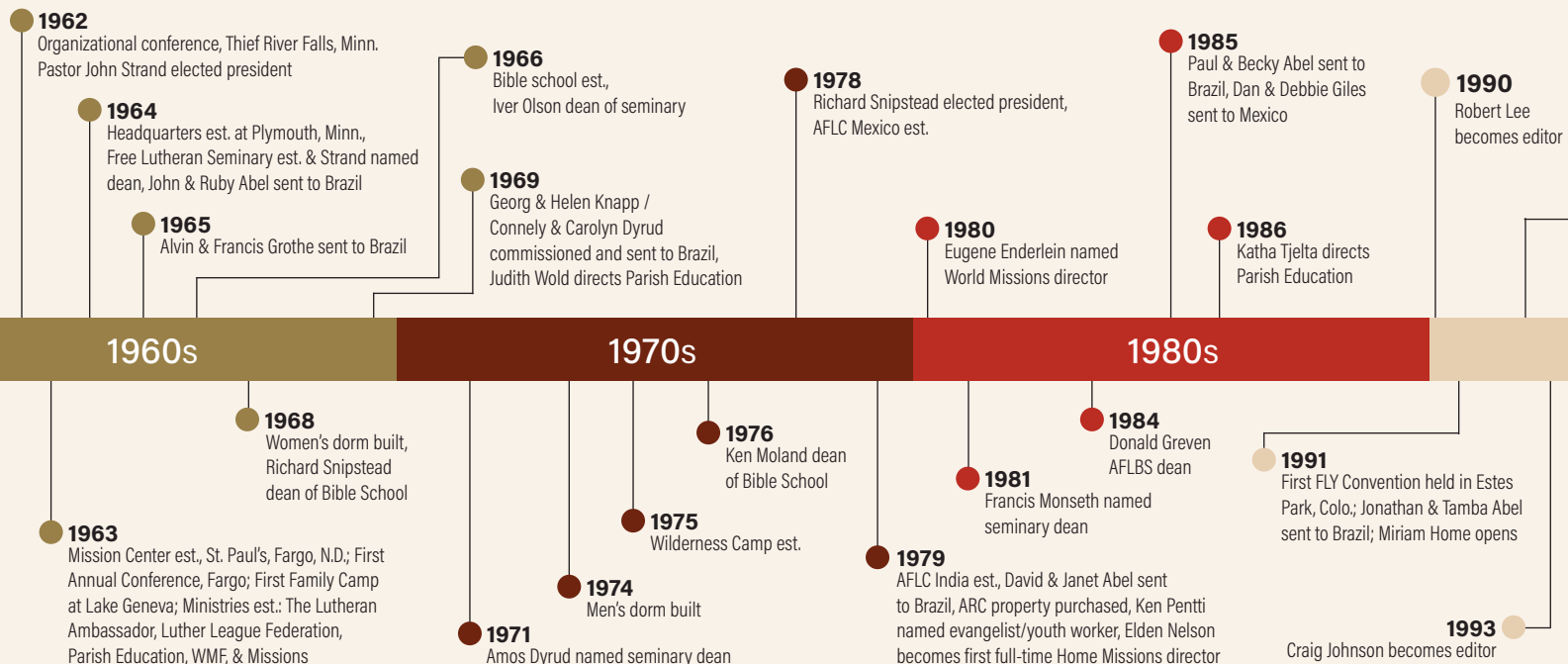
Resolved that we as a Conference continue The Association of Independent Lutheran Congregations under the Lutheran Free Lutheran Guiding Principles.

A total of 278 people; 255 lay-people and 23 pastors registered for voting and speaking privileges at the Conference. They came from 76 congregations in seven states, and two provinces in Canada. [Sadly, the registration list of names was lost.]



# OUR AFLC STORY

## 1962 / 2022







BY SOLVEIG HJERMSTAD

October 1962 was a memorable month. The Cuban Missile Crisis initiated many conversations and prayers. Before the end of the month, Soviet ships were heading home and were dismantling their missiles. I was proud to be an American and thankful for God's protection. I also have memories of other discussions in my home. My dad, an American Lutheran Church (ALC) pastor, attended the Thief River Falls, Minn., conference that last week of October as an observer. Little did I know how our family would be affected by what that group of Lutheran Free Church members set into motion.

Whether in the home or at church, biblical inerrancy, the virgin birth, and the World Council of Churches were among the discussion topics. My dad, Pastor Ray Larson, was becoming increasingly alarmed at the number of Lutherans questioning God's inspired and inerrant Word. However, he was encouraged by the spirit and vision he observed in Thief River Falls. This conference was different. Prayer was a priority. The attendees were unified in the desire to be faithful to God's Word. Plans were made for free and living congregations working together in an organization which was later called the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

Since my memory is limited and my parents have moved on to their eternal home, I visited with someone who remembers being there. Carol Haugen and her husband Albin, drove to Thief River Falls from McVile, N.D.

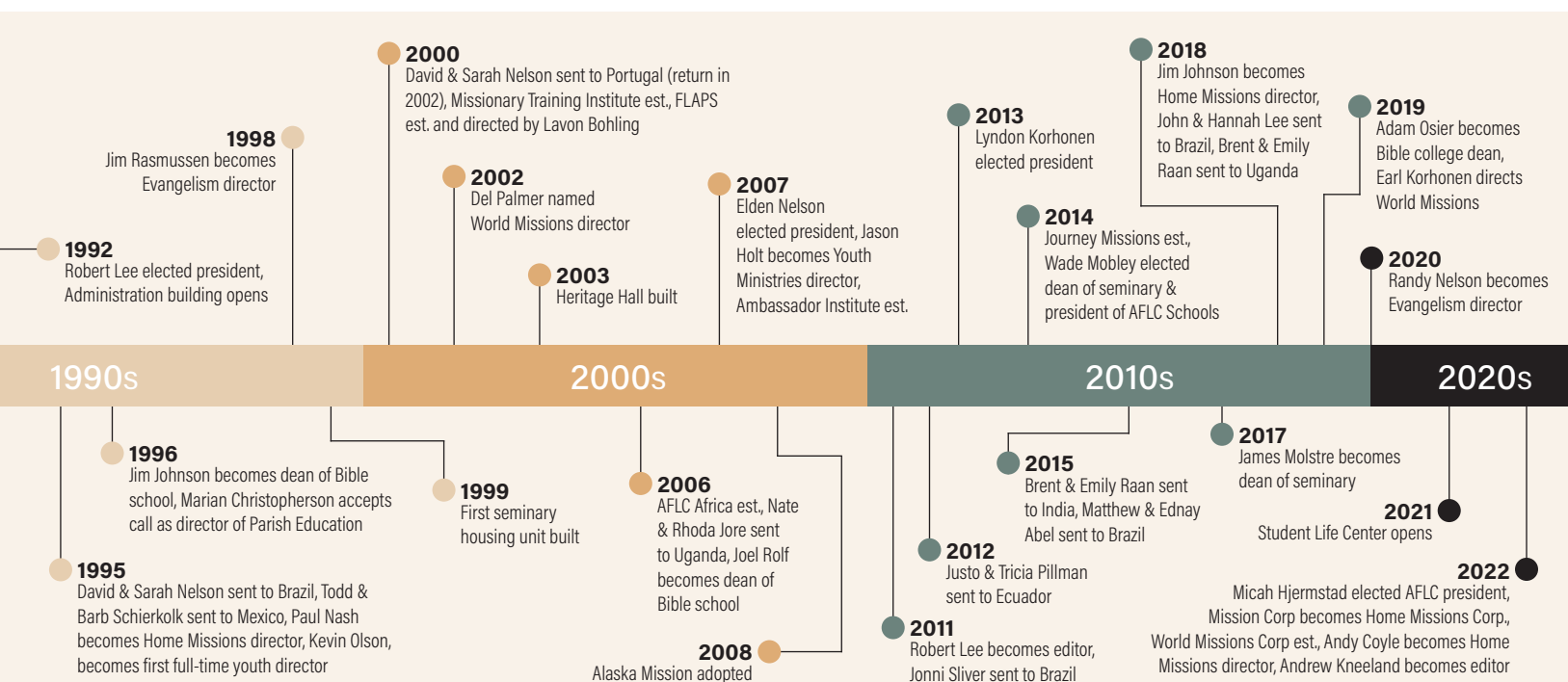
"We were just a young family," recalled Carol, now of Fargo, N.D. "We were so amazed with the good turnout. One thing that stands out to me is the unity we had. We knew we were there to preserve our Lutheran heritage and to be faithful to God's Word. We also realized a number one priority was to start a seminary."

Carol continued, "Our confidence was in our Lord. Though we've experienced failures through the years, God has blessed us."

As for my family, my dad continued to encourage individuals and congregations to understand the importance of standing firmly on the inerrant Word. After joining the AFLC in the early 1970s, he often said he had never felt so free. My married life was spent in AFLC parsonages and now some of my grandchildren are growing up in AFLC parsonages. That conference in October 60 years ago set in motion the AFLC story. But more significantly, it testifies of God's faithfulness and grace.



*Solveig Hjermstad, who served as the assistant to the editor of The Lutheran Ambassador until 2001, is a member of Solid Rock Free Lutheran, Anoka, Minn.*



# An Open Door

*Pastor Raynard Huglen gave this sermon at the opening of the first annual conference of the AFLC in June 1963 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Fargo, N.D. From his notes here is a shortened version of that talk.*



As Christian people look at the world today, they tremble. Iniquity is multiplied. There are more things going wrong. More people are trained in psychology to give answers, and how badly needed they are.

And the task gets larger for the Church, too. If a challenge is desired, it is certainly here. We look at ourselves, we who have committed to a new course, and we know we are a small group, and nothing looks less auspicious.

But the Lord would tell us, "Look to Me, I am your God, be not dismayed. Look to My Word, which will not pass away."

When we chose this conference theme, "An Open Door," we wanted something that was forward looking. An open door can be a wonderful thing as it speaks of opportunities for good.

What is the open door that God has set before us? And not only us? It is opportunities to proclaim the gospel, the glad tidings that there is a Savior for this world so beset with sin. The Apostle Paul wrote in

I Corinthians 16:9, "For a wide door for effective work has been opened to us." Dr. T. O. Burntvedt, a

former president of the Lutheran Free Church, said that there was no better time than now to preach the Word.

There are two ways to reconciliation with God. One is man's idea—and it will not avail—that it can come through moral effort and endeavor. The other is through God Himself in the sacrifice of His Son Jesus at Calvary. It is that

which we preach in the AFLC.

The Christian faith has many great truths rising like mountains, upon which we rise or fall, but the grandest of all, as Dr. Clarence Macartney (a leader in the conservative movement of the early 1900s) said, is "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (II Corinthians 5:19). If it were not so let us close our Bibles and churches. But it is true. God was in Christ. We have something to talk about, to sing about.

Where do we see the need for this reconciliation, this salvation? In the world around us, certainly, but most of all as we look at our own hearts. Perhaps the old legend throws some light on this need. At the entrance to the Eternal City there is a gatekeeper. One man approaches and is asked for the password.

The man answers, "I have none, but I was great on earth and will be so here."

The voice replies, "I never knew you."

A second comes but has no password, either, but said that he did many generous things on earth. But he finds no entrance.

A third man approaches the pearly gates, has no password, but explains, "I come a wanderer and deserve to die forever, but I heard the voice of Jesus, and He asked that I only trust in His grace and love."

"Lift up the gates and let this man in," says the gatekeeper.

Friends, make use of these convention days if you aren't yet trusting in the Lord.

There is an open door for the gospel in our time. Here is a quotation from the late Roy L. Smith (editor of the *Christian Advocate*), "Paul lived in the calm confidence that, if God led him to a door, God would also reduce the adversaries to manageable size, before the Apostle had to deal with them."

Last November there was a meeting of all committees, which I unfortunately couldn't attend. But the 13 present







drew up a list of dangers which our new fellowship should seek to avoid. Here are some of them: a spirit of bitterness, of self-righteousness, of negativity. They also noted the care needed to be taken not to act too hastily, but also not to be so hesitant that we wait too long to go through a door that has opened for us.

There are also the temptations to discouragement. Is it worth it? We are relatively few. Yes, there are adversaries, but we must look at our strengths and the promises of the Lord that He will supply the needed strength. Has He not said, "Lo, I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20)?

If God has opened a door for us, no one can close it. We have each other and there are like-minded friends who may not officially join us, at least not yet, but who will pray for us.

• • •

My notes of how I closed my message are missing. But I am sure that I noted again that we weren't a large group, but we felt that the Lord would provide for our needs and that we looked to Him for guidance.

The report in the July 2, 1963 issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* about the conference noted that among other decisions made by the conference, Pastor John Abel was welcomed into the fellowship as a channel for mission work in Brazil, the purchase of a mission headquarters in Fargo (St. Paul's Church) was approved, the establishment of a theological seminary in 1964 was authorized—and hopefully a Bible school when possible—and a suggestion was made that every congregation hold one week of evangelistic meetings each year.

*Huglen, Newfolden, Minn., is the founding editor.*





# Foundations

## STARTING A SEMINARY

BY PASTOR RICHARD GUNDERSON

These days I have been involved in building a new house for my wife, Clara, and me to live in. It will overlook Idaho's beautiful Lake Coeur d'Alene. In the process of building forms for the footers, I was reminded of the early days following the decision to organize the new church body that came to be called the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

Leaders needed to be named and their responsibilities defined. Before the building process could start, the official papers needed to be written and approved by the appropriate authorities, a plan made and approved, and resources made available. All not unlike our building process here in Idaho.

As we were laying the foundation for our new

God raised up wise, dedicated, and humble servants to serve as leaders, for which I personally shall always be thankful. Even though I was from the Swedish Lutheran tradition, I had in 1958 been interviewed by Pastor John Strand to serve as a lay assistant in Tioga, N.D. He was to become the first president of the AFLC. We did not go to Tioga as God led us to accept another call, but it was during that interview that I heard from Pastor Strand the concern he had for what was happening in the Church.

I still remember him saying, "We do not all live in the same house but are a part of the evangelical community."

A piece of property in Plymouth, Minn., became available and was purchased to carry out a second part of the plan—to start a seminary. And that is when, in September 1964, I personally stepped into the plan, together with nine other men who were a part of the first class. It was a very inauspicious start without a great inauguration.

I shall always be thankful to God for Pastor Strand's leadership in the AFLC at the time that I graduated from the seminary (1967). And I am thankful that he appreciated that God was leading Clara and me to serve as missionaries under the World Mission Prayer League, a Lutheran missionary fellowship. It was Pastor Strand who recommended to the AFLC Missions Committee that they call us as missionaries and loan us to WMPL to serve in Bolivia. I was ordained based on that call. While those men stood tall in their convictions, they were a part of the evangelical community.

In the years that have passed since that time God has truly blessed us in ways that are beyond my comprehension.

But this I know, the foundation on which the AFLC stands is solidly based in the God who led from the beginning, which brings to mind I Timothy 6:19, "... storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed."

*Gunderson, who graduated with the first class of the Free Lutheran Seminary, lives in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.*

19  
64



Members of the first class of the Free Lutheran Seminary (from left) included Francis Monseth, James Jacobson, Reuben Evenson, Edwin Kjos, David Molstre, Richard Gunderson, Robert Rieth, Howard Kjos, and Raymond Peterson. Standing are Pastor John Strand, Dr. Uuras Saarnivaara, and Pastor Clair Jennings.

house, I saw so many practical principles that were mirrored in those early years of the AFLC. It is imperative that the foundation be level and measured correctly. Those early leaders of the AFLC were, excuse the pun, very level-headed men. Yes, the plan of the AFLC was based on Scripture, our Lutheran confessions, and the Free Lutheran Church polity. Resources came from willing and committed supporters of local congregations.



## AND A BIBLE SCHOOL

19  
66

BY LOIS FORDE

**I**n 1962, the majority of members of Our Savior's Lutheran Free, Grafton, N.D., where our family had been members for three generations, voted to merge with The American Lutheran Church. That summer our family, along with others who voted not to merge, attended the organizational conference in Thief River Falls, Minn. Pastor John Strand, who had baptized me when he served our church, was elected president of the new group, initially called the Lutheran Free Church (not merged).

During the summer of 1963, we attended the first annual conference in Fargo, N.D., led by President Strand. An excerpt from the annual report stated, "The Conference recommends that the Committee on Seminary and Doctrine together with the Executive Committee and the Board of Administration proceed to establish a Bible School to train lay-workers and missionaries. This Bible School is to be established jointly with the Seminary."

In September 1964, 17 families left Our Savior's and held our first service in a vacant building in downtown Grafton. There were 24 in Sunday school and 36 at that first worship service, led by lay pastor Gordon Johnson.

The Annual Conference of 1964 was held in Valley City, N.D. Pastor Strand reported, "One of the mandates given by the Conference last year was that we were to strive to establish a Theological Seminary the fall of 1964, and if feasible, also a Bible School. It is with a great deal of gratitude to God that we are assured that our seminary will open for the first class on September 19, 1964. It has not been deemed feasible to begin a Bible School at this time."

The discussion about starting a Bible school continued at the 1965 Annual Conference in Minneapolis, but no decision was made. At the 1966 conference, held in Thief River Falls, Minn., my mom, Dorothy Presteng, brought up the need to start a Bible school in the fall. Some thought it was too soon, and others agreed a Bible school was needed. The discussion was tabled for a lunch break. Mom and a group of others spent the lunch hour praying about this possibility, and in the afternoon session the decision was

made to go ahead with plans to start the school. Thirteen students, including my sister Jean, committed to attending the two-year Association Free Lutheran Bible School at our headquarters in Plymouth, Minn., in September.

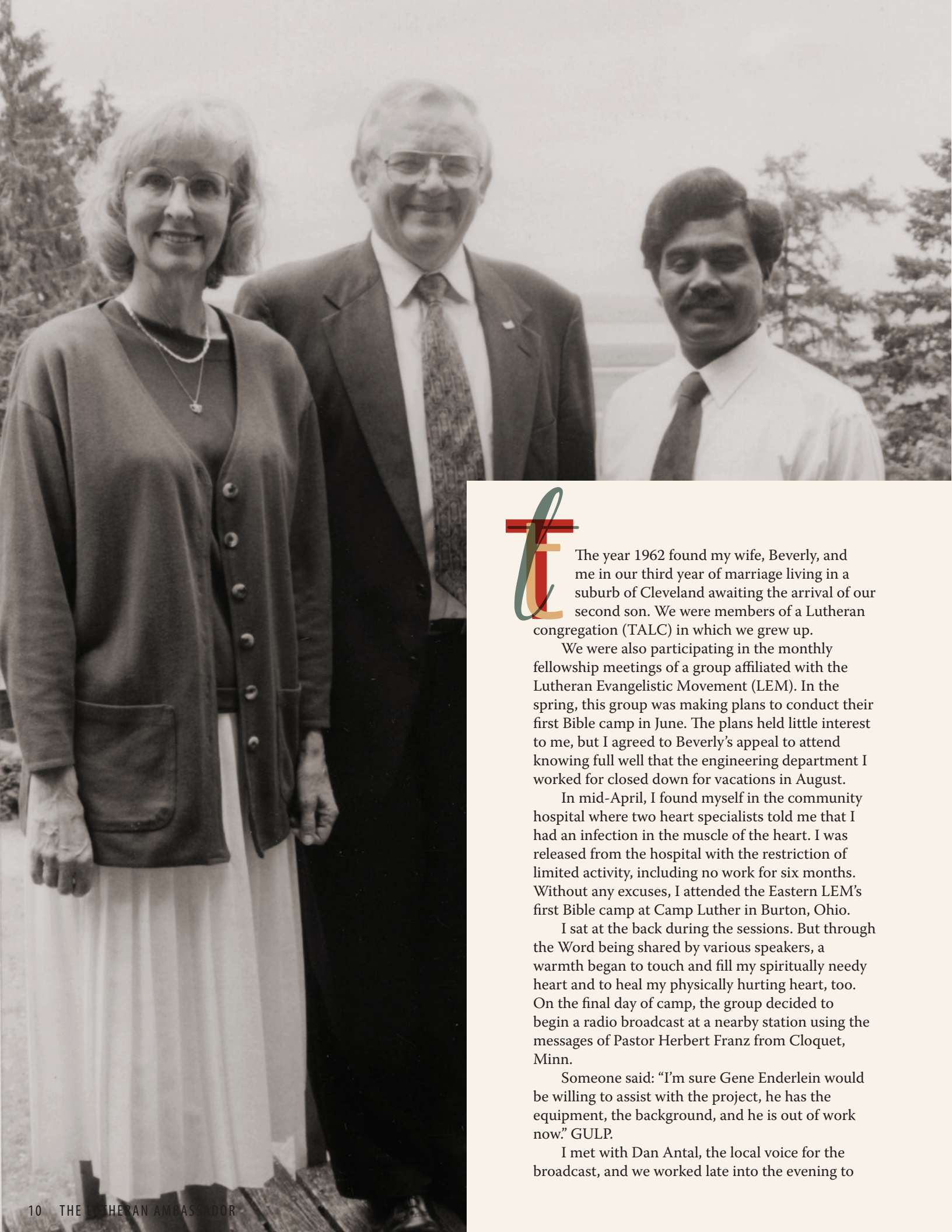
Three rooms in the basement of the chapel building were converted to bedrooms where the eight girls lived. The five boys lived nearby in apartments. In the fall of 1967, the second-year girls moved to the recently purchased house at the bottom of the hill from headquarters, which had been purchased with the headquarters property. That made room for the girls in the new class to move into the church basement. The boys continued living in the Charles apartments and apartments in the neighborhood.

The new dormitory hadn't been completed when I started Bible school in the fall of 1968. Some of the girls moved into the basement rooms, while others lived with families from Medicine Lake Church. Since Pastor Strand had served churches in Grafton and Tioga, N.D., two girls from Tioga and I were invited to spend those first weeks of school with him and his wife, Millie, in their home. When the dorm was completed later that fall (now the women's dorm), the girls moved into the second-floor rooms, along with our sweet house parents, Ludwig and Olga Kvamme, while the boys lived on half of the first floor. The other half was for offices, a student lounge, and classrooms.

Teachers those early years included Pastors Strand, David Moke, Fritjof Monseth, Arnold Stone, Amos Dyrud, Chester Heikkinen, Richard Snipstead, Dr. Iver Olson, and choir directors Esther Farrier and Don Rodvold. They were wonderful years where the Bible was taught in its truth and purity, choirs sang enthusiastically, and lifetime friendships were formed. My prayer is that the vision of those early AFLC pioneers remains, and the teaching of God's Word will continue to be the foundation of FLBC.

*Forde, a 1970 graduate of the Free Lutheran Bible College (formerly Association Free Lutheran Bible School), is a member of Elim Lutheran, Lake Stevens, Wash.*





The year 1962 found my wife, Beverly, and me in our third year of marriage living in a suburb of Cleveland awaiting the arrival of our second son. We were members of a Lutheran congregation (TALC) in which we grew up.

We were also participating in the monthly fellowship meetings of a group affiliated with the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement (LEM). In the spring, this group was making plans to conduct their first Bible camp in June. The plans held little interest to me, but I agreed to Beverly's appeal to attend knowing full well that the engineering department I worked for closed down for vacations in August.

In mid-April, I found myself in the community hospital where two heart specialists told me that I had an infection in the muscle of the heart. I was released from the hospital with the restriction of limited activity, including no work for six months. Without any excuses, I attended the Eastern LEM's first Bible camp at Camp Luther in Burton, Ohio.

I sat at the back during the sessions. But through the Word being shared by various speakers, a warmth began to touch and fill my spiritually needy heart and to heal my physically hurting heart, too. On the final day of camp, the group decided to begin a radio broadcast at a nearby station using the messages of Pastor Herbert Franz from Cloquet, Minn.

Someone said: "I'm sure Gene Enderlein would be willing to assist with the project, he has the equipment, the background, and he is out of work now." GULP.

I met with Dan Antal, the local voice for the broadcast, and we worked late into the evening to



# home&family

BY PASTOR GENE ENDERLEIN

get a clean, broadcast-quality master tape, but to no avail; there was an interference that would sporadically occur within the recording. Throughout the week I worked to eliminate the problem, which meant repeatedly listening to the message, "Religious but Lost." The message was meant for me, and I was awakened.

Now I had the truth, a good, clean "master copy" for broadcast. There came upon me the desire to seek out how and where I could now serve my Jesus. Due to convictions of the heart, Beverly and I felt the need to leave the church of our youth.

We applied for and were accepted as missionaries with JAARS (Jungle Aviation and Radio Service), the technical arm of Wycliffe Bible Translators (WBT). We were assigned to the JAARS Center in North Carolina because of a medical problem that had developed with our oldest son. Beverly served as a children's teacher and I as an electronic technician, teaching and evaluating new missionary candidates and operating the Wycliffe amateur radio station, providing communication to their mission fields.

The support of a home congregation was a requirement for missionary service. Because I considered Pastor Herb Franz as my spiritual father, our family traveled to Cloquet to attend St. Paul's Lutheran's family camp at Mahtowa, Minn. We were intensely blessed and loved by the members of St. Paul's, so we asked if we could become members of their church.

I remember the phone call from Pastor Franz when

he told me with delight in his voice of the decision by the congregation to join a new church body, the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, saying, "We have found a home." St. Paul's became the first congregation from a non-Lutheran Free Church background to join the AFLC.

Some months later I called Pastor Franz and told him that I was unsure of my calling.

He responded, "If the Lord doesn't want you just spinning those radio knobs, [then] He wants you in the seminary!" And the only seminary we should attend, he said, was the new Free Lutheran Seminary in Plymouth, Minn.

In September 1968, Beverly and I packed up our belongings, and with our three children we moved to Plymouth to become a part of the junior-year class of six students at FLS. At the spring pastors' conference in 1969, President John Strand introduced the members of our class with a grin as "the odd ball class .... There isn't one of them that comes from a Lutheran Free Church background, and they are still good men."

I will always bless the Lord and thank Him for our AFLC, for it has provided for me a home and a family. I am especially blessed to have been adopted into and become a part of the AFLC early enough to have had the very special privilege of knowing so many strong key leaders, both pastors and laypeople, who were willing to stand up uncompromisingly for the truths of God's Word and then to live it out faithfully.

*Enderlein, who served as World Missions director from 1980 to 2002, is a member of Hope Lutheran, Minneapolis.*





# Missions

BY TAMBA ABEL



Our journey together with the AFLC began in Brazil in 1985, when Jonathan and I were married. At the time, Jonathan was taking care of two congregations in Curitiba, Brazil, while his dad, Pastor John Abel, was on furlough. A year later we moved to Fergus Falls, Minn., so that Jonathan could both study at the Lutheran Brethren Seminary and care for his grandma. While there, we had the privilege of serving several AFLC congregations: Maple Bay Free Lutheran in Mentor, Minn., for a summer and then Bethany Free Lutheran in Abercrombie, N.D., and United Lutheran in McLeod, N.D. He graduated in 1990 and then spent one year at the Free Lutheran Seminary, graduating in 1991.

The special bond that was formed with AFLC families then has carried on until today. From experiencing the commute on those country roads in all kinds of weather, sharing the best potlucks, and being invited into different homes for wonderful meals and fellowship, to crying with those in mourning at funerals, listening to talented men's singing groups, shaking the rugged hands of the old timers who were happy to teach some Norwegian phrase or word, and receiving their warmth and care when needed. The list of memorable experiences could go on. It imprinted in our hearts a love for the people of the AFLC and what the AFLC was about.

Upon completing seminary and colloquy in 1990, we returned to the mission field in Brazil as AFLC missionaries, which has been our home for the last 30 years. By God's grace we have been able to plant three AFLC congregations here. Jonathan has enjoyed teaching classes at our seminary these past few years and running a Bible camp. These ministries are all a reflection of the AFLC investment into lives for Christ.

One of the blessings that we've had over the years has been the birthday cards and care packages sent by the WMFs and churches from all around the U.S. These gifts are a reminder of the AFLC's prayers and love for us.

During our furloughs, we have had plenty of opportunities to travel and visit many of our churches, all over the U.S. and a little bit in Canada. We have been welcomed into many warm homes where we connected with loving people—and loved every bit of it! Being with people in their homes gives us a glimpse of the seriousness of their personal relationships with Jesus and the knowledge of His Word. These are real examples of a walk with

God. The many times we visited Bible camps, conferences, WMF rallies, FLY Conventions, and even Bible college—where our kids attended—also provided fellowship and spiritual growth for us.

Those working on the Mission Board and at the AFLC headquarters have always been concerned and helpful in meeting our needs while on furlough and on the field.

The mission home at the ARC, where our family stays during our furloughs, became our second home. The WMF women invested a lot of resources and care in making it a pleasant, restful place to bless all of the missionaries who stay there. The ARC family always makes us feel like part of their family. We are thankful and honored to have belonged to this great caring family, the AFLC!

*Abel is an AFLC missionary in Maringá, Brazil.*







## FROM DEATH TO LIFE

BY PASTOR KRIS NYMAN

**I** I was accepted onto the clergy fellowship roster of the AFLC in December of 2003. I came from the largest Lutheran body in the U.S.

Pastor Rich Ramsbacher, who had been my council president, was attending the Free Lutheran Seminary. He sent me a copy of the book, *Free and Living Congregations: The Dream That Would Not Die*.

As I read through the book, I found nearly total agreement with what I was reading. My wife, Paula, read the book, and also agreed with what she read. We knew that the AFLC was where we belonged as pastor and wife.

In the book, the Annual Conference was described as a “Spiritual Powerhouse.” I doubted if this could be true. My experience of national church gatherings had not left a good taste in my mouth. However, at the first

Annual Conference that we attended, Pastor Rodger Olson led us in prayer. He gave suggestions for prayer as we prayed together silently. Many of us were on our knees on the gym floor at the Association Retreat Center.

After prayer time was over, Karen Palmer asked, “This is your first Conference, what do you think?”

Immediately my mind went back a year to when I attended the national gathering of the Lutheran body to which we belonged. I experienced a lot of tension, as there were many areas where people strongly differed on numerous topics. It was the opposite of the peace of the Holy Spirit which I had just encountered in the prayer time.

Before I could answer her question, I got a lump in my throat and tears in my eyes. Finally, when I could speak, I told her, “I’ve gone from death to life.”

Those are strong words, but I have almost always encountered life, liberty, and love—God’s love—as a part of the AFLC. Before we came to the AFLC, if I asked my wife if she wanted to attend a national gathering, she answered that she would rather stay home. Now she would never miss coming to the Annual Conference because it brings such refreshment and encouragement.

Not only have we found a home in the AFLC, but a home which is filled with a family of faith, for which we are very thankful.

*Nyman serves Christ Community Church, Williamsport, Md.*

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03



# The local CONGREGATION & THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

BY DR. MARTIN HORN



In the life of every organization there are certain markers when it is appropriate to look back and consider the original reasons for the organization's existence. Today, the 60th anniversary of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations presents us with this opportunity. Why did the founders of the AFLC meet 60 years ago in Thief River Falls, Minn.? Why were they determined to continue as an independent fellowship of free congregations? What distinguished the AFLC from other Lutheran church bodies?

Was it the inerrancy of the Word? Certainly, inerrancy was a central concern for the founders of the AFLC. However, there were other Lutheran groups that held a high view of Scripture at that time.

Was it Lutheran confessionalism? Certainly, they subscribed to the three ecumenical creeds, Luther's Small Catechism, and the unaltered Augsburg Confession. However, there were other Lutheran groups that subscribed to the same confessional standard.

Was it personal piety? Certainly, piety was important. However, other Lutheran groups had the same concern.

So, what was the distinctive emphasis of the AFLC? It was the emphasis on the local congregation, and specifically that our founders were determined to retain the unique vision of the New Testament congregation formulated by Georg Sverdrup, a Lutheran theologian who taught at Augsburg Seminary, Minneapolis (1874-1907).

We must ask, what was Sverdrup's vision of the New Testament congregation? What is the congregation?

First, the congregation is the creation of the Holy Spirit. The congregation is not a human invention. The congregation is a divine institution formed by the Spirit of God working through the gospel of Christ.

Second, the congregation is "The right form of the kingdom of God on earth." This means that wherever the kingdom of God is present, the kingdom is revealed in the form of the local congregation.

Third, the congregation is the beloved Bride of Christ. The congregation is His beloved bride for whom he has given Himself up into death, and in whom He delights.

Fourth, the congregation is free and subject to no other higher authority than the Spirit and the Word.

Fifth, the congregation is the body of Christ through which Christ ministers in this World. The congregation is intended to be a living body where all the members of the body exercise their spiritual gifts in ministry to each other and to the world around them.

But how do you establish a church fellowship based on Sverdrup's unique vision of the congregation? This had never been done before in a Lutheran setting. The answer is found in the document called "The Fundamental Principles."

In 1897, a group of approximately 125 congregations under the leadership of Sverdrup and Sven Oftedal established a fellowship known as the Lutheran Free Church. They formed this new fellowship around the Fundamental Principles: twelve statements that reflected Sverdrup's vision of the congregation and summarized biblical teaching on the congregation. These Fundamental Principles answer questions such as, what is the congregation? Who are the members of the congregation? What is the congregation's task, and what resources does the congregation have to accomplish this task? And finally, how may congregations work together and still preserve the freedom of the congregations?

The Lutheran Free Church lasted 65 years and merged with The American Lutheran Church. But there had been, even from the beginning of the LFC, a desire for the congregations to understand the unique position of their congregational focus.

In 1962, the founders of the AFLC picked up the mantle of a Lutheran fellowship established under the guidance of the Fundamental Principles. The biblical vision of the congregations expressed in these principles was so important that the primary task given to the Coordinating Committee was to promote and make known the Fundamental Principles among the congregations.

Now, on our 60th anniversary year, the Coordinating Committee, in cooperation with the Board of Parish Education, has published a study called *The Gospel in the Congregation: A Study of the AFLC Fundamental Principles*. Written expressly for use in AFLC congregations, this study explains the biblical roots of Sverdrup's vision of "free and living congregations."

Why is this study important for our congregations?



First, this study is important so that we may understand the AFLC itself. As Dr. James Molstre, dean of our seminary, writes, “To understand the AFLC, one must understand the guiding principles that have been at the heart of who we are as a collection of churches that joined together in 1962. The Fundamental Principles have been a worthy guide to the AFLC and to its predecessor, the Lutheran Free Church. This study will help church councils and congregations understand who we have been, who we are, and ultimately who we should be as Free Lutheran Congregations.”

Second, this study is important so that we may understand what the biblical congregation is and why the congregation is essential for the spiritual life of the believer. Consider the following statement by Sverdrup: “It is not just a question of awakening the lost. It is not enough just to lead the awakened to salvation. But the awakened must become part of the congregation, the Body of Christ, and be under the Word of God and the Spirit of God.”

*Horn, Crystal, Minn., is a member of the Georg Sverdrup Society. Photo courtesy of the Augsburg University Archives.*

#### RESOURCE

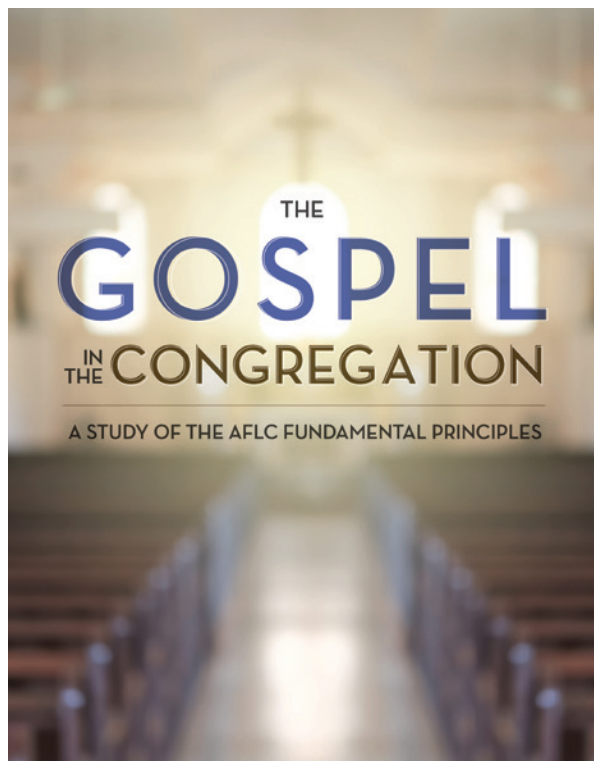
“The Gospel in the Congregation: A Study of the AFLC Fundamental Principles” is available through AFLC Parish Education. See page 17 for details and ordering information.





# THE GOSPEL IN THE CONGREGATION

## And the Fundamental Principles



“To understand the AFLC one must understand the guiding principles that have been at the heart of who we are as a collection of churches that joined together in 1962. The Fundamental Principles have been a worthy guide to the AFLC and to its predecessor, the Lutheran Free Church. This study will help church councils and congregations understand who we have been, who we are, and ultimately who we should be as Free Lutheran congregations.”

DR. JAMES MOLSTRE, DEAN  
FREE LUTHERAN SEMINARY

9-LESSON STUDY • VIDEO INTRODUCTION

AMBASSADORPUBLICATIONS.ORG

**F**undamental Principles. The words may sound weighty, stiff, and uninteresting to many people. But these foundational statements are simply meant to be the guiding biblical principles for the Christian congregation, to help each congregation and each member of every congregation to flourish in freedom and in life together in Christ—to experience together the fullness of the blessing of the gospel in the congregation.

*The Gospel in the Congregation* is a fitting title for the new Bible study on the AFLC Fundamental Principles recently published by Ambassador Publications. This monumental project was initiated and funded by the AFLC Coordinating Committee and introduced at the AFLC Annual Conference in June. A gift copy was mailed to all AFLC congregations. Note how the study serves the first duty of the Coordinating Committee in the AFLC Rules for Work: “The Coordinating Committee shall seek to make known the Fundamental Principles and Rules for Work of the AFLC and further the discussions of the same throughout the congregations, so that the task of the AFLC, in an ever-increasing degree, may be more clearly understood and more generally put into practice.”

Pastor Jonathan Langness tested a preliminary edition of the study last year with his congregation in Deshler, Neb. Langness writes, “Uncovering the strong biblical foundation for the Fundamental Principles, each lesson contains questions that lead us to interact with real-life applications of these Principles for our own congregation.”

One of his parishioners at Abiding Word Lutheran, Kathy Vieselmeyer, comments on the experience: “When our pastor suggested studying the twelve Fundamental Principles, I wasn’t too enthusiastic. I must admit, I was wrong. For me, studying the Fundamental Principles, being deeply and firmly rooted in the Word of God, has been an enriching and edifying experience. Basically, it has taught me what it

means to be part of the body of believers in Jesus Christ—very enlightening.”

Copies of *The Gospel in the Congregation* are available to purchase through Ambassador Publications, the Parish Education ministry of the AFLC. The study may be ordered online ([ambassadorpublications.org/store](http://ambassadorpublications.org/store)), by email ([parished@afcl.org](mailto:parished@afcl.org)), or by phone (763-412-2010). Video introductions for each chapter can be freely accessed on the AFLC website ([afcl.org/resources/fundamentalprinciples](http://afcl.org/resources/fundamentalprinciples)). Other related resources on the Fundamental Principles can also be found there.

May the Lord richly bless this study for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God on earth through the congregation.

*By Marian Christopherson, director of AFLC Parish Education*



*Do You Really Want the Congregation*, companion booklet to study, is also available from AFLC Parish Education.



**Y**our child died of dysentery. You have cholera. What do you want to do? If you've played Oregon Trail, then you are familiar with these phrases. In the game set in 1848, players are forced to decide—do you use the remainder of your ever-shrinking supplies, do you stop and rest, or do you press on just hoping to make it to the next stopping point where you can resupply? Scattered throughout the journey from Independence, Mo., to the Willamette Valley, Ore., are a number of outposts; Fort Kearny (“CAR-knee” for those who want to sound like the locals), is just a little more than 100 miles from Deshler, where I live. There's not much left to the fort today, but you can still tour it and learn about its importance to the western expansion of the United States.

These outposts met the many felt needs of weary travelers heading west. In the game, you cannot spend too long at these places. But in real life, I'm sure folks were tempted to stay. The outposts provided safety and rest. They were places of restoration and healing and

# OUTPOSTS OF BEAUTY

BY PASTOR JON LANGNESS

gave travelers the ability to restock their supplies. They were places to be refreshed and sent out again.

Likewise, the local congregation is an “outpost of beauty and goodness” in a world engaged in a cosmic crisis. That analogy was made by a speaker at a church planting conference attended by a number of Home Mission Board members recently. The more I think of the analogy, the more I appreciate it. The local congregation is indeed a place of rest—a place of restoration where God continues His good work in our lives, transforming believers into the likeness of Christ. It is a place of safety where we approach the throne of grace in every time of need—our needs remembered again as we confess our sins in worship. It is a place for us to encounter the Living Water, Jesus Christ, as well as the water for the washing of regeneration. It is a place for us to gather with other pilgrims in whom also the Lord is at work to sanctify and redeem.

Indeed, the local congregation is a place of

supernatural beauty where mankind not only encounters Jesus in His Word, but where we are being built up into a holy temple. We are the body of Christ. And as His body, we are the visible manifestation of Christ in the world today. In a world engaged in a cosmic crisis, as the battle wages on for souls, the Church marches forward, in the victory of Christ, establishing outposts of beauty and goodness in a lost and dying world. Christ continues to build His Church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

The world needs more outposts of beauty and goodness, places where heaven and earth intersect, where Christ comes to us. The world needs a place of safety and rest. The world needs more local congregations. AFLC Home Missions is eager to see how and where the Lord will continue to use us to establish outposts of beauty for His glory in our country.

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*Langness, a member of the Home Missions Board, serves Abiding Word Lutheran, Deshler, Neb.*



## Upcoming events at the Free Lutheran Schools

### Spotlight: Defending Life

Megan Almon from the Life Training Institute will be the featured speaker at the fall Spotlight: Defending Life conference Oct. 9-10 on the campus of the Free Lutheran Bible College in Plymouth, Minn. Almon, a former gymnast with the University of Georgia, is an award-winning journalist and apologist. She has trained thousands of individuals in the U.S. and abroad



to articulate and defend a pro-life view. The conversation is relevant for students and guests as each navigates a post-Roe world.

- Oct. 9, 7 p.m. (\$10 individual/\$20 family) “The Case for Life” will teach participants how to communicate and defend the pro-life view persuasively and graciously. Registration ([flbc.edu/events](http://flbc.edu/events), through Oct. 2) for in-person participation. Late registration will be available to walk ups. A free livestream will be available on the FLBC website ([flbc.edu/events](http://flbc.edu/events)).

- Oct. 10, 8:30 to 11 a.m., free “Reshaping the Pro-Life Apologetic,” will leave guests equipped to respond to the latest objections to the pro-life position through a morning of interactive learning.

### UpClose

High school juniors, seniors, and recent graduates are invited to attend UpClose at the Free Lutheran Bible College Oct. 20-21. The free event gives prospective students a preview of life and learning on the Plymouth, Minn., campus.

Registration is open through Oct. 14 on the FLBC website ([flbc.edu/events](http://flbc.edu/events)). The schedule of events includes participation in the daily life of an FLBC student, including classes, meals, dorm life, and worship, as well as free time with games and crafts in the Student Life Center.

### Alumni Basketball Tournament

The alumni basketball tournament will be held Oct. 21-22 in the Student Life Center. The Conqueror’s men’s and women’s teams will play select alumni players on Friday evening. The men’s tournament will begin on Saturday morning. Other events include a kids basketball camp and free lunch provided by the Alumni Association. For more information and to register, visit [flbc.edu/events](http://flbc.edu/events).

## Registration opens October 20 for FLY Convention

After a two-year postponement, the 2023 FLY Convention will be held July 3-8 at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colo. Registration for the AFLC’s national youth gathering will open on Oct. 20 with the best rate of \$499/student available through Nov. 3. See the chart below for a list of registration deadlines and categories.

Individuals and church youth groups can find the registration form online ([flyconvention.org](http://flyconvention.org)). A \$150/deposit is required for each registration.



Registration	Oct. 20- Nov. 3	Nov. 4- Jan. 19	Jan. 20- April 20	April 21- May 25	Walk up
Student	\$499	\$649	\$749	\$849	\$949
Dorm room leader	\$399	\$399	\$499	\$599	N/A
Staff	\$399	\$399	\$499	\$599	N/A
Adult	\$799	\$949	\$1049	\$1149	\$1249
Child	\$199	\$199	\$199	\$199	\$199

## Upcoming AFLC, youth events

The AFLC All Boards meeting will be held Oct. 3-4 on the AFLC campus in Plymouth, Minn. Pastor Micah Hjerstad will be installed as the sixth AFLC president at 7 p.m., October 3. All are welcome to attend. The AFLC Pastor’s Conference will be held Oct. 4-6 at the Association Retreat Center, near Osceola, Wis. To register, visit the ARC website ([arc-aflc.org](http://arc-aflc.org)). For more information and an event schedule, visit the AFLC website ([aflc.org/2022-pastors-conference](http://aflc.org/2022-pastors-conference)).

Youth Worker Weekends will be held Jan. 13-15 at the Association Retreat Center. For more information, visit [aflc.org/youth/youth-workers-weekends](http://aflc.org/youth/youth-workers-weekends).

## Huglen inducted into Minnesota county’s athletic hall of fame

Pastor Raynard Huglen, Newfolden, Minn., was recently inducted into the Marshall County Central Athletic Hall of Fame. Huglen, who graduated from Newfolden High School in 1946, was honored for his consistent support of the Marshall County School System, having rarely missed a school event since returning to Newfolden in 1977. According to a news release from Marshall County Central, Huglen has earned the unofficial title of “Most Respected Man in Newfolden.”



Huglen gave the message at the Annual Conference’s 60th anniversary service.



I

f you google “sisterhood,” the results will bring you to the Kardashians and

Venus and Serena Williams. A literary search will result in Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Bronte of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* fame or the endearing Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy from *Little Women*. A search of your Bible will result in Rachel and Leah and Mary and Martha.

For our Women’s Missionary Federation family, this has been the year of the sister. Our Bible study was written by the Snipstead sisters: Karen Floan, Anne Presteng, Gwen Berge, and Wendy Westlake. Two of them are on our national board.

My WMF journey has provided treasured opportunities to acquire spiritual sisters from coast to coast. We have laughed and cried together. We have prayed for one another and provided encouragement in tough times.

Here are five characteristics we look for in a sister:

First, we look for loyalty. We want a friend to say, “I’ve got your back,” and respond in kind. Proverbs 17:17 illustrates this well, “A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”

# BIBLICAL SISTERHOOD

BY LAVONNE WEST

Second, we long for honesty, having a close friend who isn’t afraid to tell you, “Your slip is showing.” Paul writes about this characteristic in Philippians 4:8-9, “Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.”

Next, we crave compassion. When we are hurting, we want someone to say, “I’m sorry for your loss,” as described in Romans, “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep,” (12:15) and Ephesians, “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (4:32).

We look for friends who are willing to listen well, who drop what they are doing and are present and intentional. They say to us, “I hear you.” Consider James 1:19, “My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.”

Last, we seek women who are trustworthy and exemplify the phrase, “You can count on me.” Proverbs 11:13 describes this characteristic,

“Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered.”

Recently, a college friend who is a true sister in Christ visited me. We just pick up where we left off after a number of years apart. I also know that there are sisters who have felt the sting of my sinful gossip over the years. My mouth gets me into trouble often. For those reading this, I am sorry. We can relate to the clash when iron sharpens iron. I am reminded of the pins we wore in the late 1970s, “Please be patient with me, God is not finished with me yet.”

One of the blessings of social media is that requests can be shared and instantly friends can be praying across the world. One sweet sister got up in church recently and shared several harsh realities in her life. “I need help,” she said. You give others a way to be Jesus’ hands and feet when you are honest with your struggles. The Montana way is, “I’ll do it myself.” Thankfully, I have been on the receiving end of some fabulous biblical sisterhood.

*West, a member of Stillwater Free Lutheran, Kalispell, Mont., is the president of the Women’s Missionary Federation.*



# Home Missions calls Coyle

Director position will be filled part time, board will pursue hiring potential part-time assistant position

Members of the Home Missions Corporation have called Pastor Andy Coyle as the director of Home Missions. During an Aug. 29 online meeting called for the purpose, corporation members voted to extend a call to Coyle, who will fill the position in a part-time capacity while also continuing to serve his congregation, Shiloh Church, Rapid City, S.D.

"The AFLC has blessed me so much and I am humbled to be able to serve our family," said Coyle, who will begin his new role on Oct. 1. "I am really excited to be a part of planting the gospel across our nation. I think we have tremendous need and tremendous opportunity."

Coyle has worked as a church planter since 2015, when Shiloh Church was launched in South Dakota's Black Hills. He graduated from the Ministry Training Institute in 2002 and from the Free Lutheran Bible College in 2001. After graduating from the Free Lutheran Seminary in 2008, he served St. Paul's Lutheran, Jewel, Iowa, and Salem Lutheran, Radcliffe, Iowa. He served as a missionary in Ukraine with East European Mission Network, where he taught at a Bible school near Odessa. He served has on the Home Missions Committee since 2020.

"We are very excited for the Lord's leading [of] Pastor Andy Coyle to receive this call and look forward to the Lord's ongoing work through AFLC Home Missions," said members of the Home Missions Board of Directors in an email announcement. "Coyle comes with overseas mission experience, U.S. church planting experience, and a solid grasp theologically, philosophically, and practically of pastoring and church planting. And most importantly, [he] is a man who loves the Lord and those around him."

Coyle is married to Monica, and they have six children: Moriah, Isaiah, Josiah, Levi, Daniel, and Anna Mae.

According to Glenn Mork, board chairman, the board received 18 nominations for the position. After eleven pastors withdrew their names from consideration, the remaining seven candidates filled out a questionnaire. A review by the call committee, consisting of four members of the board and the president and secretary of the corporation, concluded in a unanimous decision to pursue Coyle as the candidate for the position.

Members of the board have indicated their intention to pursue hiring a part-time assistant for Coyle.



Pastor Andy Coyle, who spoke at the AFLC Annual Conference in June at the Association Retreat Center, near Osceola, Wis., has accepted the position of director of AFLC Home Missions.



## Pastor Walter Beaman

Pastor Walter "Walt" Beaman, 85, of East Grand Forks, Minn., died Aug. 23, 2022. Born May 7, 1937, in Eau Claire, Wis., he was the son of Orville and Erma (Ingles) Beaman. He married Ellen Nielsen Nov. 7, 1959, in Alta, Iowa. She preceded him in death.

Beaman graduated from Menomonie High School, and the Lutheran Bible Institute (1958), Minneapolis. After marriage, they served as missionaries with World Mission Prayer League in Ecuador. He graduated from the Free Lutheran Seminary's Summer Institute of Theology in 1985. He served many AFLC congregations in Minnesota and North and South Dakota. After retirement, they lived in East Grand Forks, and he continued to serve as an interim pastor and chaplain at Valley Senior Living.

Surviving are three children, Debbie (Dennis) Strand, Grand Forks, N.D., Naomi (Jim) Mathsen, of Alvarado, Minn., and Daniel (Angela) Beaman, Oakfield, Wis.; six grandchildren; and 14 great-grandchildren.

The service was held Sept. 1 at Dahl Funeral Home, East Grand Forks. Burial will be in Trinity Free Lutheran Cemetery, McIntosh, Minn.

Memorials are suggested to the Gideons and Riverside Christian School.

## Ward installed at Maranatha



Pastor Peter Ward was installed July 17 at Maranatha Free Lutheran, Ulen, Minn. Pastor Lloyd Quanbeck, who serves Maranatha Free Lutheran, Glyndon, Minn., officiated at the service. Pictured are Pastor Ward and his wife, Mary Ann, at the reception following the service. Prior to seminary, Ward worked for 23 years for an international seed company. Since graduating from the Free Lutheran Seminary in 2001, he has served churches in Newfolden, Minn., Vernon, British Columbia, Ottawa, Ill., and Fargo, N.D. He also served as the chaplain at a senior care facility in Illinois. Ward accepted the call to serve Maranatha, Ulen, this spring.



# MIRACLES AND DREAMS

BY PASTOR NATE JORE



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hapter 16 of Acts tells us the beautiful story of the planting of a congregation in

Philippi. The story begins with Paul's vision of a Macedonian man begging, "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (v. 9). The chapter ends with Paul and Silas leaving the prison where they had preached to a jailer and his family and going to Lydia's house where they encouraged the brothers. Lydia had been the first believer, followed by (potentially) a slave girl delivered from a demonic spirit, followed by the jailer and his household. Sounds like a good recipe for planting a church: a dream, plus the casting out of a demon, plus an earthquake, equals a church plant!

From our village of Nabukosi, we are witnessing a church plant that has some similar characteristics. While

I was meeting with Henry and Rob, two leaders of the first church planted in our village, for visioning and prayer, I spoke about the vision of training up leaders who could rightly handle the Word so that we would have manpower to send people out to plant more churches.

Rob spoke up, "I had a dream about what we are talking about. I dreamt that we started a new church in Kiranga village" (neighboring Nabukosi).

Henry added that he, too, had dreamed that we had added three more congregations in Busowoko village to the south.

A couple of weeks later, Henry stopped by our home and excitedly told me about the events of the last week. Henry had left the Sunday service in Rob's hands as he felt that God was leading him to walk door-to-door that morning to share the gospel. Along with a friend, he did just that, and they ended up sitting outside a certain woman's home, sharing from Matthew 8 with those who had gathered. The woman said that she had a son of about 13 years who was very sick and requested that they pray for him. Henry said that the boy was quite sick, and he described the boy's hands being curved inward such that he could not even feed himself. The men laid hands on the boy and prayed for him, and then they promised

to come back to check on him the following Thursday.

When Thursday came, they returned to the family and were met with the amazing testimony that the boy had been healed that very Sunday when they had prayed for him. And at that moment he was playing with the other children. They shared the Word with them again and have since been going back on Sundays for a simple service at the woman's home.

Rob, who had been on the visit on Thursday, said that the location of the woman's home was not only in Kiranga village, but was in the exact area that he had dreamed about.

Since beginning services at the woman's home, Ngobi and Lwamule, both younger believers, have been accompanying Henry at the new location. Meanwhile, Godfrey has joined Rob in leading the first congregation. Please pray for these men. May the Lord continue to bear witness to His great salvation (Hebrews 2:3-4).

*Jore is an AFLC missionary serving in Nabukosi, Uganda. Submitted photo. Pictured (from left) are Lwamule, Mufumbiro (Ambassador Institute chairman), Henry, Moses, Godfrey, Ben, Talekera, Aggrey, Dasani, and Rob.*



## PEOPLE &amp; PLACES

**Pastor Jim Johnson**, Otsego, Minn., has accepted a call to serve True Vine Lutheran, Mora, Minn. Johnson has been serving the congregation on an interim basis. His installation was scheduled for Sept. 25, with Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, AFLC president, officiating.

**Licensed Pastor Dean Fiestner** was installed Aug. 28 as associate pastor of Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Madison, S.D., and Center Free Lutheran, Salem, S.D., with Pastor Lyndon Korhonen officiating. Fiestner recently received his lay pastoral license from the AFLC Coordinating Committee and has been added to the Licensed Pastor Roster.

**Pastor Scott Erickson** was installed Aug. 21 at Our Saviour's Lutheran, Dickinson, N.D., with Pastor Lyndon Korhonen officiating.

**Pastor Todd Erickson** was installed Sept. 18 at Grace Free Lutheran, Maple Grove, Minn., with Pastor Lyndon Korhonen officiating.

**Pastor Matthew and Julia Pillman** have begun a year-long residency at Trinity Lutheran, San Antonio, Texas, where they will be trained in Home Missions church planting under Pastor Matthew Ballmann.

The **World Mission Prayer League** is currently in the process of seeking a new executive director. Paul Gossman, who has served in the position since 2017, has resigned.

## Support the AFLC's monthly magazine

The AFLC's monthly magazine, *The Lutheran Ambassador*, is now free for all subscribers. The ministry is subsidized by your gifts. Contact [lasubscriptions@afcl.org](mailto:lasubscriptions@afcl.org) for more information on giving to our ministry. Or, visit our website at [afcl.org/lutheran-ambassador](http://afcl.org/lutheran-ambassador).

## AUGUST MEMORIALS

**Bible College**

Ruth Claus  
Joy Woodbury

**Evangelism**

Carol Ann Lynnes

**Home Missions**

Lois Myhre

**Journey Missions**

Carol Ann Quern

**Parish Education**

JoAnn Onnen

**Seminary**

Pastor Bob Rieth

**WMF**

Tara Lee Keller

**World Missions**

Carol Ann Quern

Peggy Olson

Tara Keller

Sig Schaper

Elmer Goetz

Pastor Alvin & Frances

Grothe



## Charlotte Fruehauf

Charlotte Fruehauf, 80, of Maple Grove, Minn., died on Sept. 4. Born in Escanaba, Mich., to Clarence and Barbara Gerdeen, she married Pastor Christian Oswood in 1964. After 40 years of marriage, he preceded her in death in 2004. She married Pastor David Fruehauf in 2006.

She graduated from Escanaba High School in 1960. In 1964 she graduated from Augsburg College. After her first marriage she taught elementary school on Vashon Island, Wash. They lived in Genesee, Idaho; Swift Falls, Minn.; Jackson, Minn.; Maynard, Minn., and Hampden, N.D., as Pastor Oswood served congregations in those communities. She served as executive assistant to the AFLC president, Pastor Robert Lee, retiring in 2007. She continued to work part-time as the subscriptions manager of *The Lutheran Ambassador* until 2017. Charlotte was a loving wife, mother, and grandmother. She will be remembered for her compassion and care to all, especially father-in-law Christian Oswood, Sr., who lived with the family for nearly 20 years. Charlotte died as she lived, trusting in her Savior Jesus Christ.

Surviving are her husband, Pastor David Fruehauf; three brothers James Gerdeen, Joel Gerdeen, and Robert Gerdeen; one sister Lola Hoes; three sons, Mark (Ann) Oswood, Paul (Karen) Oswood, and Steven (Laura) Oswood; seven grandchildren; and many stepchildren and their families.

The service was held September 11 at Hauge Chapel, Free Lutheran Bible College and Seminary, Plymouth, Minn., with Pastor Jason Gudim officiating. Interment was at Crystal Lake Cemetery. Memorials requested to Leukemia & Lymphoma Society or Compassion International.

## Conference elections approved for Coordinating Committee Corporation

Members of the AFLC Coordinating Committee have approved the elections of the following members to corporation boards—all five-year terms:

- Youth Board: Pastor Matthew Nelson, Radcliffe, Iowa
- Parish Education: Gwen Berge, Maple Grove, Minn.

• Evangelism and Discipleship: Micah Johnson, Maple Grove, Minn.

• Board of Benefits: Joe Spilde, Arlington, S.D.

Also elected was Pastor Andrew Kneeland as editor of *The Lutheran Ambassador*. Kneeland, who accepted the call, will begin serving Oct. 1

## AFLC BENEVOLENCES January 1-August 31, 2022

FUND	REC'D IN AUGUST	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$44,219	\$295,656	\$277,719
Evangelism	9,758	89,871	85,263
Youth Ministries	16,046	108,834	119,915
Parish Education	16,730	124,629	124,079
Seminary	25,566	185,677	189,355
Bible College	43,366	313,928	288,158
Home Missions	43,603	250,242	353,310
World Missions	43,766	298,145	269,453
WM Personal Support	60,268	500,124	567,519
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$303,323</b>	<b>\$2,167,107</b>	<b>\$2,274,772</b>

For additional financial information for each department, go to [www.afcl.org/giving](http://www.afcl.org/giving)



# OCTOBER 1962 ... AND TODAY

The year 1962 is remembered internationally for the Vietnam War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and for the Second Vatican Council convened by Roman Catholic Pope John XXIII that would transform the face of his church. In U.S. affairs we recall the first Supreme



Pastor Robert Lee

Court ruling on prayer in public schools, the first black student enrolled at the University of Mississippi, the first Target and Walmart stores, and the World's Fair in Seattle. It was also the year that the publication of the book *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carlson helped to ignite the modern environmental movement.

This month our fellowship remembers with thanksgiving to God the rebirth of a Lutheran spiritual life movement at a 1962 conference in a small northern Minnesota city, a movement which would become the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC).

This is my final editorial as editor of *The Lutheran Ambassador*, and I am very grateful for the opportunity to serve our church family in this way, as well as for the encouragement that I have received from many friends. As one of the few still alive who were present in 1962, I have chosen to write about the things that in my opinion have changed in the life of the AFLC during the past 60 years. These comments are not intended to be criticisms but rather personal observations; some are quite obvious, while others may be considered a matter for debate.

There was a strong Norwegian ethnic heritage in 1962, and several of our pioneer pastors were even born in the old country. This was the heritage of all our charter congregations, but it began to change quite early with the addition of several congregations of Finnish heritage, and today, like most of the rest of American Lutheranism, we are an ethnic blending. Many of the new congregations that joined

us during our season of greatest growth had a German heritage, and an informal survey taken at a pastors' gathering indicated that this was the primary heritage of a majority of them.

One wonders what some of our pioneer members would think of the worship style in many of our congregations today. In 1962 the use of the *Concordia Hymnal* and Order No. 2 (with occasional small deviations) was quite universal; today so-called contemporary worship has become quite common. Hymnals are shelved as song lyrics are displayed on screens. Celebration of the Lord's Supper was four to five times a year; today monthly communion is more common, and a few congregations may offer it weekly.

Our heritage of church polity is strictly congregational, and we are reminded in our first Fundamental Principle that the congregation is the right form of the kingdom of God on earth. Our founding fathers and mothers believed that the pastor was a servant of God and the congregation, and lay leadership was provided by elected deacons and trustees. The first challenge may have arrived with several pastors whose leadership style was perceived as more authoritarian, and they were not with us very long. A more recent challenge has been an approach often known as elder rule which may seek to place authority in the hands of the pastor and a few lay elders instead of in the congregation. Hopefully the new study of the Fundamental Principles recently published will help us to know what we believe and why we believe it offered a safeguard against any challenges.

Our founders believed in the efficacy of infant baptism, and yet were deeply concerned for the evangelization of the baptized, since it seemed to them that most people do not continue to live in the grace of their baptism. There is a vital balance to maintain here, and perhaps at times the impression was given that everyone needs

a datable conversion experience. Today it seems to me that the testimony of those who have always loved Jesus since baptism is more common and respected, yet it would be tragic if this weakened in any way our commitment to the evangelization of the baptized who have fallen from grace.

There was a strong concern at the 1962 conference that new approaches to theology were undermining confidence in the inspiration and inerrancy of Holy Scripture, and I believe that this commitment still holds in our schools and among our people. Yet we are not simply another conservative Lutheran church body, for our heritage in evangelical Lutheran Pietism is an important part of who we are. Most of our schools' faculty today have trained in Lutheran schools that misunderstand and

*Yet we are not simply another conservative Lutheran church body, for our heritage in evangelical Lutheran pietism is an important part of who we are.*

reject that heritage. It is crucial that we continue to promote and practice a pietism that is right for our day.

Now it's your turn. Are there practices or principles that you might add to my list?

Brothers and sisters, let's recognize that change over 60 years is inevitable as we strive to hold to the best of our heritage and pass it on to new generations as the Lord tarries.

*association retreat center*

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# THE POINT OF THE MISSION

BY KIRK RAUTIO

**I**n conversations with other individuals called into missions I find that most of them get the same questions I am asked from time to time.

One specific question most often asked is how we keep going when the days are long, the workload is great, and the rest is minimal. Most of the time I honestly say, “I know I am called, and I have been given just enough for today, and tomorrow is out of my hands.” Then other moments happen and my answer is more like, “I have no idea how, but the mission is not completed, and the day is not over, so here we go.”

It was in the “I have no idea” part of a week recently when God sent His reminder of the “how” through our morning devotions. The story of the woman at the well from John 4:1-42 was the topic that morning. I was amazed yet again. This story has so many different applications to our

daily lives and how to do missions. On this reading, I realized one simple point from the passage: Missions is not ever about me. It is not about how I feel, my opinions of a situation, if I fit in comfortably, how I want to do things, what tools I use or have, how I dress, or anything that is about me. Missions is all about them, the one or the many with whom I am engaging.

In John’s Gospel story, Jesus intentionally went into Samaria, an area Jews would have avoided, so that He could intentionally engage with the woman at the well. He was also worn out at the time, tired from His journey. Yet He engaged lovingly with the woman, someone Jews would have reviled. He knew His mission was about her at that point. He did not care about what others thought or what the society at the time thought about the situation. His mission was about her.

Are you called into missions? If your

answer is no, I will ask you to reconsider that answer. Take a moment and re-read Matthew 28:19. That mission has been handed down to us through generations of Christians and still holds true today. Find the one in your life who needs your intentional focus in any way shape or form. Be ready. Be uncomfortable. Be open. Be available. Allow yourself to feel what it would be like to be in his or her situation. Know God will give you the tools for the moment. But most importantly, first and foremost, remember missions is about them, not you. Go make an impact for the Kingdom. I look forward to hearing your version of the “woman at the well.”

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