

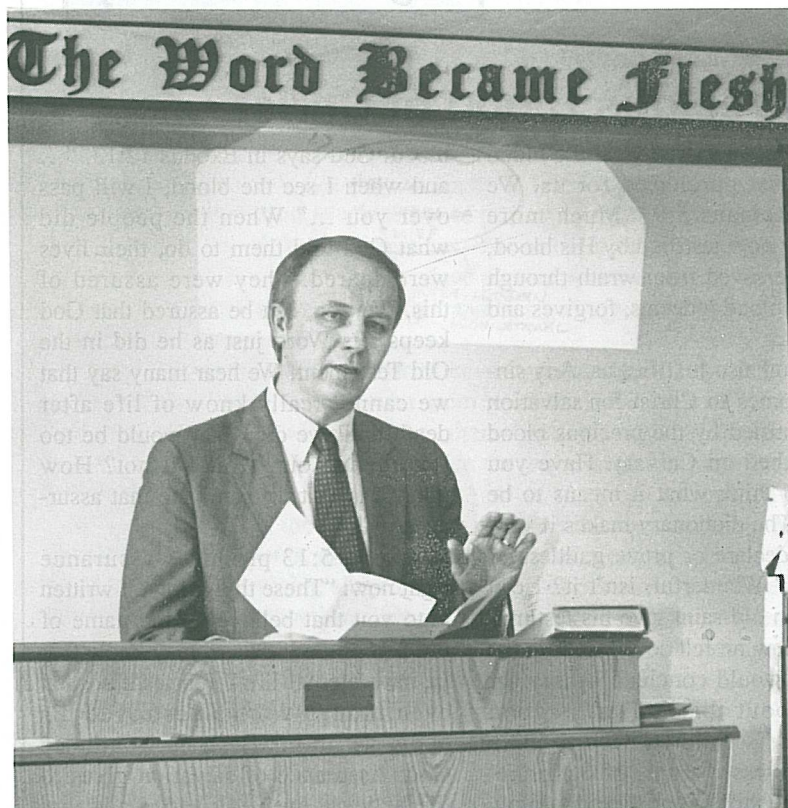


THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

April 2, 1991



THE SEMINARY



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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The Precious Blood of Christ

Last issue we shared what the blood of Christ purchased for us. We read Romans 5:9, "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." His blood redeems, forgives and delivers us.

His blood also justifies us. Any sinner that comes to Christ for salvation will be justified by the precious blood that was shed on Calvary. Have you stopped to think what it means to be justified? The dictionary makes it very clear: "to declare or prove guiltless or blameless." Wonderful, isn't it? I can still hear an old saint give his testimony about how he felt so blessed by the Word. He would conclude by saying: "Think about that!" That is good advice. God's children need to think about the blessed truths of Scripture. Does it not thrill your heart to know that you are fully cleansed, justified and forgiven? God does not even remember your sin anymore! It is a truth that seems almost too good to be true. Yet God, who cannot lie, says so in His Holy Word. We do not deserve it, but it is true because God says so.

The blood purchased our atonement. Leviticus 17:11 says: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." Long before Christ came to earth, there had to be a sacrifice of blood. Romans 5:11 claims: "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." Atonement means satisfaction. God is truly satisfied with what His Son accomplished on the cross. The fullest meaning of atonement is found in the redemptive work of Christ, through whom we are reconciled to God. Our souls have come into fellowship with our God and Creator through the sacrifice of His Son.

We receive assurance through His

blood. God says in Exodus 12:13, "... and when I see the blood, I will pass over you ..." When the people did what God told them to do, their lives were spared. They were assured of this. We, too, can be assured that God keeps His Word just as he did in the Old Testament. We hear many say that we cannot really know of life after death until we die. That would be too late to find out, would it not? How good it is that we can have that assurance today!

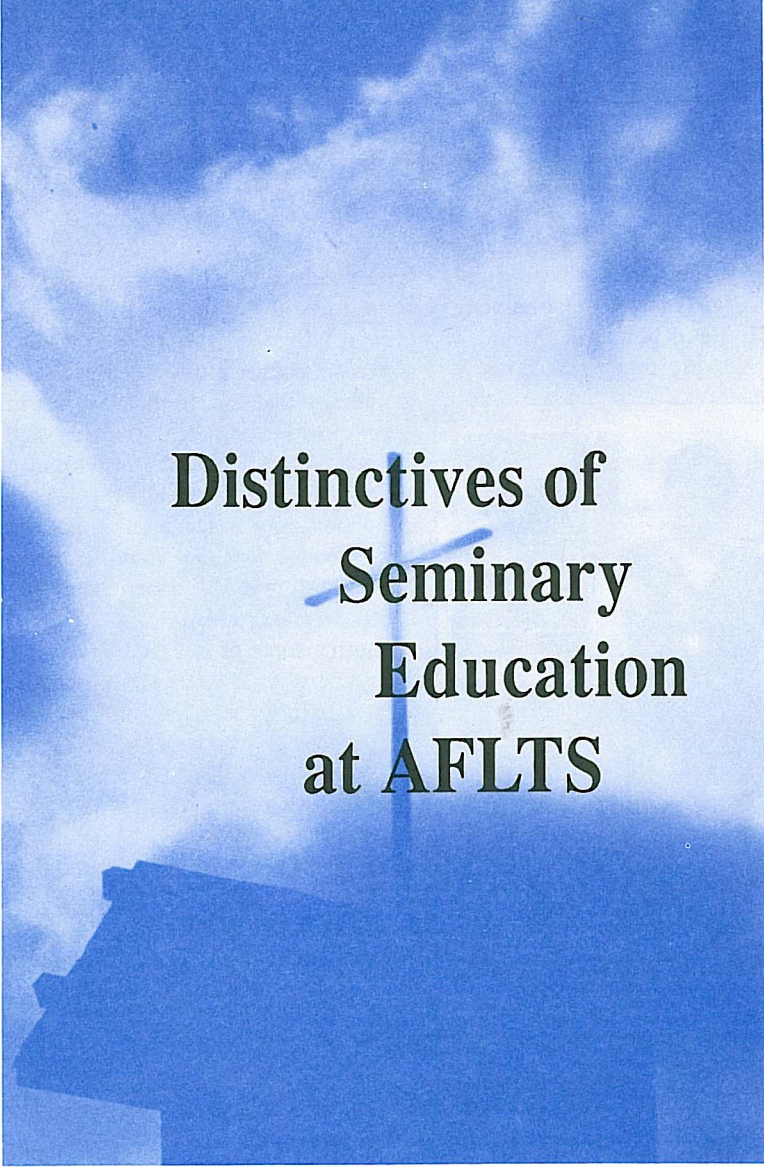
I John 5:13 promises assurance right now: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life." Job testified that even though worms destroyed his body, yet in his flesh he would see God. Assurance of salvation gives to the believer deep joy and peace that can only come from God.

The blood of Christ brings us near to our Lord. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13). James tells us to draw near to God and He will draw close to us. Yes, we are so close to the heart of God that He knows our words and desires before we even utter them. Our loving Father answers our prayers according to His loving will.

When we accept Christ as our Savior, then the only True God, the Holy One, the Almighty One becomes our loving Father, rock, fortress, deliverer, strength, buckler, horn of salvation and high tower. All this is ours because He was satisfied with the precious blood His Son shed for us upon the cross. Praise His Holy Name!



— by Rev.
Alvin Larson



Distinctives of Seminary Education at AFLTS

The educational ministry of AFLTS is as distinctive as the church body it serves, the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. Together, the AFLC and AFLTS offer a unique contribution to the larger picture of the whole Christian Church on earth. The purpose of this article is to state and re-affirm God-given strengths which have shaped AFLTS into the institution it is today.

HIGH VIEW OF SCRIPTURE

"God's Word is our great heritage," wrote Luther, "And shall be ours forever." That heritage is treasured at AFLTS. This high view of Scripture is evident in the following ways:

1) The Bible is seen as inerrant and infallible. Therefore, methods of studying God's Word all acknowledge its authority. No hermeneutical theory can be allowed if it undermines this high view of inspiration.

2) The amount of time in the class schedule devoted to studying God's Word must reflect this high view of Scripture. The exegetical

department (study of biblical texts) is to be the core of the curriculum. It is worthy of note here that several transfer students over the years have expressed pleasant surprise at the large number of Bible book studies in the curriculum at AFLTS.

3) The personal application of biblical texts in the classroom setting is also a distinctive expression of a high view of God's Word. Because the pastor is himself to be shaped and molded by the Holy Spirit through God's Word, this time of study is to affect his character as well as his intellect. When the truths of the Bible are presented in this way, God ministers to the heart of the seminarian in the classroom.

While these three aspects of a distinctive view of God's Word do not at all exhaust the subject, they form the foundation for a biblical seminary. "Sola Scriptura," insisted the reformers, "Scripture Alone," echoes the seminary.

PIETISM

IN THE MIDST OF ORTHODOXY

The seminary catalog identifies AFLTS as "An orthodox school of theology in the tradition of Lutheran Pietism." Few seminaries have put the words "orthodoxy" and "pietism" in the same sentence. Some would even say that they are antithetical and mutually exclusive, but AFLTS has maintained that a pietist can be truly orthodox and that an orthodox pastor really ought to be pious.

During the short history of AFLTS, there have been times when "dead orthodoxy" has been scorned as lifeless and fruitless. This reaction against an aberration of orthodoxy is understandable, but if by definition orthodoxy is "true teaching," then life will proceed from the Spirit-endowed proclamation of truth. In the Lutheran context in which we live, that also means we have confidence in the orthodoxy of our confessional writings, and subscribe to them without apology.

The influence of pietism within Lutheran circles is certainly not limited to the AFLC. Its positive contributions can be noted over the centuries. AFLTS takes its place in the context of history. While abuses and excesses also need to be acknowledged, AFLTS upholds the wholesome emphasis on heartfelt faith and godly living, distinctives of the pietistic movement.

The seminary's aim, then, is to send out pastors who are in a personal and experiential relationship with Jesus Christ, living in fellowship with Him, and empowered by the Holy Spirit for godly living and effective ministry. This takes place uniquely in "an orthodox school of theology in the tradition of Lutheran pietism." ¶

*I wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, and
in His Word do I hope (Psalm 130:5).*

— by Rev.
Lloyd Quanbeck
Northome,
Minnesota



What AFLTS Meant

In the years I spent at the Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary, there was one thing above all the other things that I learned, which became ingrained in my

heart and mind. Seminary developed in me a confidence in the Word of God. I came to believe that the Bible is the only infallible and completely adequate source of authority for life. I would say that this truth came out in every class I ever took at seminary, and for this I am thankful. It has sunk in. I am equally thankful that God gave me the opportunity to learn this truth, not only through textbooks and lectures, but through practical experiences during those years as well.

During some of my seminary years, I worked with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at Macalaster College. There, on a college campus with radically different values, God used His Word in a small group Bible study setting to change the lives of young students, giving them purpose and direction.

My internship year was spent in Houghton, Michigan. Again, I saw the impact of God's Word at work. There



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DISTINCTIVES

EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS

The AFLC has consistently emphasized evangelism and missions in response to the biblical mandate known as the great commission. AFLTS also has an earnest evangelistic purpose at the heart of its curriculum and program. While there is not an extensive missions department in the seminary, the foundational teaching for sending forth the gospel message is clearly presented.

As an example, the truth of John 14:6, "I (Jesus) am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me," is foundational to a commitment to world-wide evangelization. If a seminary does not believe that Jesus is the only way to Heaven, evangelistic fervor and missionary momentum will die on the vine.

Amazingly, the belief that there is salvation in Jesus Christ **alone** has become a distinctive among Lutheran seminaries in this generation. AFLTS faithfully upholds this distinctive in obedience to God's Word and urges students to

be a part of fulfilling the great commission. "Sola Christus" — "Christ Alone!"

STRONG PARISH MINISTRY ORIENTATION

AFLTS is not primarily a graduate school in theology. It is first of all a place where parish pastors can be prepared for effectively serving the local congregation. It is the goal of the seminary to never be far from the local church. All full-time faculty are ordained pastors who have served a local congregation and who have high regard for the parish ministry. Seminary education is intended to prepare pastors who will faithfully and compassionately shepherd the flock entrusted to them.

It is for that high calling of the parish ministry that AFLTS maintains each of its distinctives. To God alone be the glory!

— by Rev. Kenneth D. Moland
Kirkland, Washington

(Rev. Moland, who is the pastor of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Kirkland, also serves as the chairman of the Board of Trustees for the AFLC Schools.)

to me

was the vibrant little youth group that met almost weekly. They often brought friends and really seemed to enjoy Bible study. There were the university students from other countries who had never been exposed to the Bible and had never heard of Jesus before coming to the United States. There was the elderly lady dying of cancer. God's Word gave her hope on those long days, right up until the end.

Then again, the summer before my senior year, I saw the adequacy of God's Word while serving a young church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. There God used His Word in worship services and home Bible studies to shape a new congregation.

At seminary they told me about the sufficiency of God's Word. I know this to be true because it is God's Word, and because I have seen God honor and use His Word. By God's grace I desire to learn and to teach nothing more and nothing less than the Word of God.

Searching for a Typical Seminarian

He's the type of man who should go to seminary." Have you ever heard someone express sentiments like this about a man who was studying for the ministry? Or the opposite ...

"A seminarian? I never thought that he was the type."

Is there a special type of man who comes to seminary? Does God only call people with certain predictable backgrounds, personalities, and interests?

Let's look at the students of AFLTS, and see what we can learn.

The average age of an AFLTS seminarian is 29, and over half of the student body is in the twenty-something generation. But the average is raised by the fact that several students are O.T.A. (older than average), with two having reached the advanced age of 36. It would be hard to say that there is a typical age for a seminarian.

A majority of the men in our semi-

nary, as might be expected, come from AFLC congregations. But the unexpected fact is that a sizable minority come from a variety of religious backgrounds, including Baptist and Roman Catholic. It was also a surprise to discover that over one-third of our current student body are products of a parsonage. Most of the men were raised in Christian homes, and testify to a faith that began in infant or childhood years, or during their early teens. In other words, there is no typical church or home background.

The educational experiences are even more varied. History tops the list for college majors, but the list also includes oriental studies, agriculture science, industrial engineering, foreign languages, marketing management, social science education, Biblical studies, and business management. Many of the men come to the seminary from other occupations, such as typesetter, cook, farmer, teacher, missionary, life insurance salesman, retail manager, soldier, and construction worker.

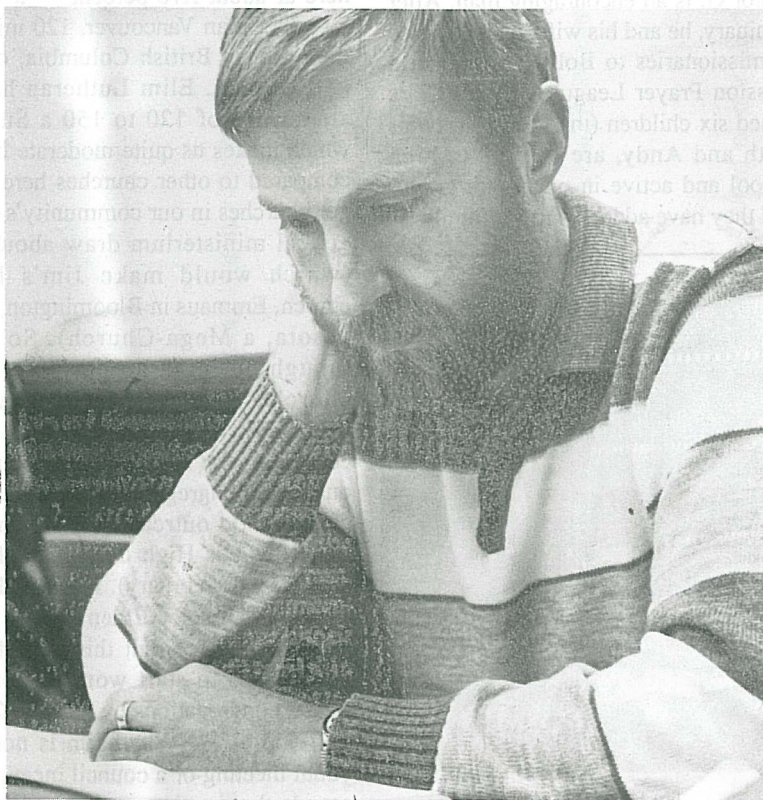
The special interests of the AFLTS seminarians reflect the same variety. Music tops this list, with sports a distant second. But we also discover students who enjoy archaeology, water skiing, amateur radio, camping, traveling, bowling, golfing, cooking, and certain areas of ministry, such as youth work and discipleship.

Is there a special type of man who comes to seminary? In spite of the above evidence to the contrary, the answer is yes!

He is a man who knows Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, and who senses a call to prepare for service in our seminary. He is a man who is teachable and open to the work of the Spirit through the Word in his life.

The search for a typical seminarian finds its answer not in church or family background, not in age or education, but in the heart that responds in loving obedience: "Here am I. Send me" (Isaiah 6:8b).

—RLL



Junior seminarian Paul Pillman.

A Day in the Life of an Intern



— by James L. Johnson
Elim Lutheran Church
Lake Stevens, Washington

James L. and Linda Johnson drove their Buick into Lake Stevens, Washington, with a 4'x8' trailer, two babies, and a lot of questions. What will internship be like? How will we adjust? How will Elim Lutheran adjust to us? Why are the Mariners so bad? That was ten months ago. Now the Johnsons have learned. Internship is easier than being dorm parents at Bible School. Linda is asking if I can finish seminary via correspondence. The Mariners finished higher than the Twins. And the experience has been great! And so, feeling like missionaries — 1,700 miles away from home in a culture vastly different from their home area in the Midwest — they offer a glimpse into their experience.

8 a.m. — After devotions in the morning, Jim drives the mile from his and Linda's rental home near downtown Lake Stevens to the church. He drives by 50 or 60 new homes built in the last six years. It's a changing area. People escaping the high cost of housing in Seattle and California are making this a blossoming new bedroom community for the Seattle/Everett area (pop. 3,000,000). Snohamish County — just north of Seattle's King County — was the fastest growing county in the state last year. The region surrounding Everett (pop. 60,000) has grown nearly 50% in the last decade. Jobs abound. People come here to work as engineers or home builders or as employees of our area's two biggest employers — Weyerhaeuser (logging) and Boeing (its plant in Mukilteo for

assembling 747s is the largest building in the world). Jim spends his first hour in the study looking at Scripture for an adult Sunday School class and praying. Lord, how can I be used to reach people here?

9:30 a.m. (Mondays) — Pastor Dick Gunderson and I meet for devotions and to lay down my weekly schedule. Linda lays down 11-month-old Hannah for a nap and reads Elizabeth, almost three, one of about 109 children's books! Jim's job is easier. Pastor G. is an encouraging man. After seminary, he and his wife, Clara, served as missionaries to Bolivia with World Mission Prayer League. He and Clara raised six children (the youngest, twins Ruth and Andy, are seniors in high school and active in our youth group) and they have added us to the family.

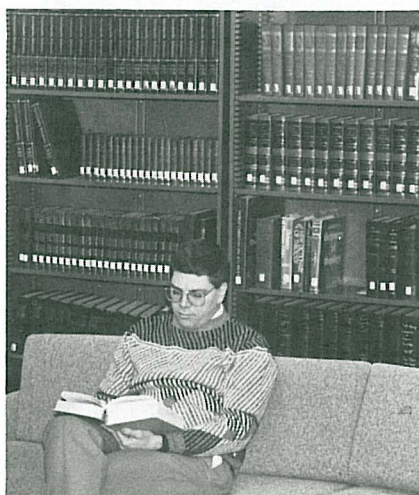
Noon — Jim drives back to 12801 20th Street NE for lunch (except on Mondays when he meets with a young father in the congregation for Bible study and on Tuesdays when the local AFLC pastors meet for lunch and prayer). Food prices are a bit higher on the West Coast, but fruit is inexpensive; berries are plentiful, and church members catch a lot of salmon and trout, which find their way on the Johnson grill. The family reads Scripture after lunch and Elizabeth goes down for a nap (usually after devotions!).

1-5 p.m. — Since Jim preaches about once a month, he has plenty of time to throw into his two major responsibilities here: visitation and youth. In January, Jim made it to 105 homes (80 pastoral visits and 25 door-to-door evangelism calls). He loves that part of the work. As you may know, few in the Northwest attend church (Washington and Oregon ran 49th and 50th in church attendance). Recent estimates put "church" families here at about five percent — a whole lot better than Vancouver, 120 miles to the north in British Columbia, one to two percent. Elim Lutheran has an attendance of 120 to 150 a Sunday, which makes us quite moderate in size compared to other churches here. Bigger churches in our community's evangelical ministerium draw about 300 (which would make Jim's home church, Emmaus in Bloomington, Minnesota, a Mega-Church). So even though our area desperately lacks churches, we're grateful that the majority are evangelical and quite cooperative! (Together, for example, our local congregations run a monthly evangelistic outreach for students at Lake Stevens High during lunch that drew 259 in February). If AFLC Home Missions Director Elden Nelson were here, he'd agree that this would be a good place to start working for 500 AFLC congregations by the year 2000.

7-9 p.m. — When Jim is not in a youth meeting or a council meeting, he spends the evenings — often with the



Junior seminarian Larry Houston.



Jim Haga, Middler.

whole family — making more visits. On Mondays, a new Christian man and Jim go door-to-door on evangelism visits. Catch this one — out of 80 apartment families visited during October and November, 15 were Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons. But they praise God for many opportunities to share the Gospel! In the Spring, more evenings were invested in preparing for the Billy Graham Crusade in Seattle during April. Pastor Gunderson and the deacons assigned Jim to the role of congregational crusade leader. Almost 30 Elim people took classes to establish further growth and to learn to be counselors. Pastor G. and Jim also praised God for fruit they've seen in recent months. Six children received Christ during or after Vacation Bible School. A new members class of ten startled Pastor Gunderson by their thirst for God's Word. A young parent comes to Christ. Jim also praises God for the Elim youth. About 15 attend Bible study regularly on Wednesday nights. His eight Junior Confirmation students ask question after question. He hopes to have a group of 20 attend the Luther League Convention in July. Linda also praises God. She has made many new friends here (and sewn many dresses!) She's most thankful to be able to feel so immediately accepted by the Christian women at Elim. At the end of church meetings, she fights to snatch our babies back from the ten or 11 women who purloin them.

10:30 p.m. — Jim is usually in the beginning stages of slumber. Linda is reading about Anne of Green Gables, and Hannah is usually hungry. Pray for us! And pray for the other interns this year. Having a whole year to learn under Pastor Gunderson and Elim members has helped prepare Jim immeasurably for a call (he hopes) someday. He can't imagine spending only three-month internships in the summer as the AFLC did in the past. There is so much to learn! This internship family will be sorry to leave their new friends and church family in August. But they remember I Thessalonians 5:24, "Faithful is He who has called you, and He also will bring it to pass."

The Seminettes

Seminettes is a fellowship made up of the wives or fiancées of the seminarians and faculty. We meet once a month during the school year in one another's homes.

It is our conviction that this organization plays an important role in the life of the seminary. Ministry is not only for pastors, but also each one of us seeks to become better equipped for ministry in the home and congregation. This means first of all to nurture our own spiritual lives, and then to explore opportunities that a pastor's wife can have to serve the Lord through the church. Learning these things will enhance the ministries that she and her husband will have together.

Seminettes seeks to help each one get to know one another in a personal way. The women become acquainted, and mutual friendships are formed among the families. This in turn helps us become united as a part of Christ's fellowship. One's sorrow becomes another's — as does joy.

Seminettes is a tremendous blessing. We all come from different backgrounds with various spiritual gifts and even levels of maturity. Though some

of us may never meet again, we know after four years together that God has given us a special time in our lives to gain eternal friends. We learn to love one another and to have one common bond — Jesus Christ.

Our meetings have introduced us to a variety of subjects applicable to the life of a pastor's wife. All of these have served to help us learn more, both encouraging and informing us. Some of the topics related to the AFLC and its ministries — Home Missions, the National WMF, etc. Others included hospitality, discipleship, and the education of our children, to name a few.

Seminettes is not just another meeting for us to attend during the month, but it is a time for friendship, spiritual growth, caring for other's needs, and most of all becoming more and more like our Saviour.

We thank God for all who shared in the blessings of Seminettes in the past. May this fellowship continue to serve as an important part of the life of each seminarian's wife as she grows and matures in the Lord.

— Mrs. Tonnes (Mary) Pollestad
President of 1990-91 Seminettes



Junior seminarian Dan Klug gets some advice from Rev. Philip Haugen, professor of exegetical theology.

AFLC April Promotion — Seminary

The seminary is close to the hearts of the churches as it prepares pastors for parish ministry in the AFLC.

1990-91 students

5 Seniors	4 Middlers
6 Interns	7 Juniors



Jonathan Abel

Campo Mourao, PR Brazil

Son of Rev. and Mrs. John Abel

Married to Tamba Lynn Wilkins

Children: none

Home congregation: AFLC Church of Curitiba, Brazil, Paul Abel, pastor

Graduated from Moorhead State University, Moorhead, Minnesota

Graduated from Lutheran Brethren Seminary, Fergus Falls, Minnesota

Special interests: traveling, music and art

Personal Testimony: Ever since I can remember, I have been involved in the church. At the age of seven, I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour, and as far as I can remember, have always loved Him and have enjoyed serving Him. However, it took me a long time to respond to the call of full-time ministry. Part of this was that I did not feel that I should go into the ministry just because my father and two brothers had gone that route. Also, I felt that I did not have the spiritual gifts necessary. But God kept tugging and finally I consented to His will and He has tremendously blessed me.

A part of Scripture that God has constantly reminded me of is found in II Timothy 1:13, 18: "What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you — guard it with the

Second of two parts

Meet the 1991 AFLTS Seniors

help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us." And then II Timothy 4:5 reminds me: "Do the work of an evangelist."

Seminary Experience: Prior to coming to the U.S. to take some theological training, I was an independent missionary living by faith (not sponsored by any specific organization). During that time, I worked with the Brazilian Evangelistic Association, pastored one of our AFLC churches, and taught Evangelism Explosion. In 1990, I graduated from Lutheran Brethren Seminary in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. During the time of my studies there, I was privileged to teach art at Hillcrest and minister in many churches as well as serve as an interim pastor at Maple Bay Free Lutheran, Fertile, Minnesota, Bethany Free Lutheran, Abercrombie and United Free Lutheran, McLeod, North Dakota. The brothers and sisters in Christ there were a great source of encouragement for my wife, Tamba, and me. This year, God is teaching me so much. I also have been teaching an adult Bible study at Emmaus, Bloomington, Minnesota, and ministering in various churches on weekends. God is good!

•Mr. Abel is available for call.



Tonnes Pollestad

Alsen, North Dakota

Son of Mr. and Mrs. Tonnes Bernard Pollestad

Married to Mary Clair Nelson

Children: Naomi, 14; Ruth, 7

Home congregation: Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Cokato, Minnesota, Lyndon Korhonen, pastor

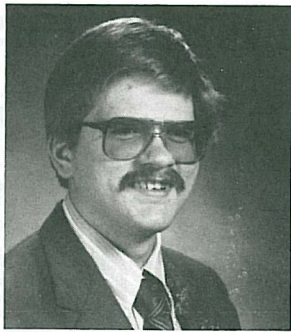
Graduate of Iowa State University

Special interests: hunting, trap-shooting, sports

Personal Testimony: I was born and raised where church was very important. However, it wasn't until my second year at AFLBS that I accepted Christ as my personal Saviour. Since that time, Christ has been the guiding strength for me through each situation. Each situation that He has brought me through has shown me that I am growing closer to Him by His all sufficient grace. As I continue to grow closer to Him, I'm reminded of I Corinthians 15:58. My constant prayer is to be steadfast, unmoveable and always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Seminary Experience: God has truly been right by my side during these four years as I have been studying and praying for insight into God's Word. Both my wife and I have felt His continual hand upon our family as we have together gone through each situation. The prayer support of so many has been our constant encouragement. The insight that God has taught me through the Word and the teachers at AFLTS along with the fruitful ministry gained from my internship in Cloquet, Minnesota, has truly prepared me for the ministry. I look forward to what God has to teach me in the future as I continue to grow in the church God has planned for me and my family. Praise the Lord.

•Mr. Pollestad is available for call.



Michael Peterson

Alexandria, Minnesota

Son of Merlin and Lois Peterson

Home congregation: Chippewa Lutheran Church, Brandon, Minnesota

Graduated from Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota

Special interests: music, languages, books, science

Personal testimony: The Lord has showered His blessings upon me, giving me new birth in baptism, keeping me His child through the power of His Word. He alone began the good work in me, and He alone will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6). Through my Christian family and rich and rare opportunities to learn from His Word, God has singled me out for special, undeserved blessing. I can never thank Him enough. I pray that I can share these blessings with others.

Seminary experience: Since late high school days, I planned to go to seminary. Though always sure that God had a place for me in the work of His Kingdom, I've struggled deeply with questions and doubts about where that place really was. Through my inner struggles, the Biblical instruction that I received in seminary strengthened me, and bound my wandering heart to my ever-patient Savior. On my internship in Minnewaukan and Devils Lake, North Dakota, God has opened my eyes to new insights about His Kingdom, the importance of the congregation, and the shepherding nature of ministry. He has also given me peace about my place in His Kingdom's work. I feel called to a specialized ministry among the elderly and will be pursuing the necessary programs for that purpose. May God be praised!

A Call to the Ministry

And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron (Hebrews 5:4).

This is the time of the year when our seminary seniors are being considered for calls to parishes. We trust and pray that the call accepted is of God's leading. The vacant congregations are also much concerned about God's will for them as they seek a pastor. Perhaps it would be good for us all to think about the call that comes to a man to become a shepherd of a congregation.

Both the Scriptures and the Lutheran confessions recognize that the term *ministry* is used in both a wider and narrower sense.

God has given to the Church as its right and duty the responsibility of preaching the Word and administering the sacraments. Between the New Testament congregation and God there does not stand, as there did between Israel and God under the old covenant, a mediating order, whose work it was to bring forth offerings for the sins of the people. The atoning sacrifice was once for all brought by Christ as our high priest. Every believer under the New Covenant is a priest. The New Testament Church is a holy "priesthood" called to "show forth the excellencies of Him" (I Peter 2:9). Every believer has the privilege and responsibility to witness to the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. That is the broad sense in which the term *ministry* is used.

In Titus 1:5, Paul gave instructions that elders were to be ordained in every city. As Paul and Barnabas established churches in Asia Minor on their first missionary journey, they, on their return trip, "ordained them elders in every church, commending them to the Lord." In I Timothy 3:5, instructions are given to ordained elders to "take care of the church of God." In Ephesians 4:11-16, Paul speaks of special gifts that are given to the Church for special ministry in the roles of the apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors and teachers. This is the use of the word *ministry* in its narrow sense.

How does one know that God wants him to be an instrument for such a ministry? It must first of all be as the result of the divine call of God. We quoted from Hebrews 5:4 at the beginning of this article. A man does not take the honour of the ministry upon himself. He must be called of God. The references to the importance of this inner call from God abound in the New Testament (Mark 4:19; John 20:31; Acts 13:2; Acts 20:28; I Corinthians 1:1; and II Timothy 1:9). As a church body, we have many times literally applied Matthew 9:37-38, as the solution to our shortage of pastors. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest."

A man who goes into the ministry must do so because he is called of God. The inner call of God comes to a man as he seeks to know God's will for his life and is willing to surrender that life to God. Many struggle against this call. But God continues faithful, and the point is reached where one has to say along with Paul, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel."

Ordination of a ministerial candidate is the recognition by the Church of the inner call, and the fitness of that candidate for the ministry. It is also based on the mediate or outward call of a congregation to that individual to be its pastor.

When a congregation calls a pastor, the office of the president is often utilized in obtaining the names of possible candidates. But congregation and pastor must both seek God's guidance and direction as calls are issued, received and acted upon.

I am increasingly concerned as I hear from pastors who want their ministry limited to a certain locality, or who put certain conditions on where a call would be considered. If God has called us to the ministry, will He not also indicate to us where that ministry will be carried out?

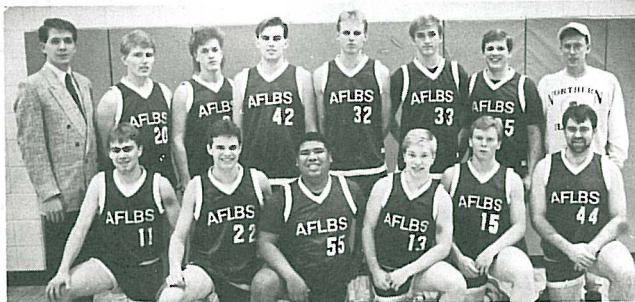
It is Christ who is building His church. I rejoice to see how He still calls special "gifts," men for the ministry to meet the needs of our congregations today.

—Richard Snipstead

AFLBS Women Place Second in Nationals



Standing (L. to R.): Lori Erickson, Badger, Minnesota; Christine Swanson, Canton, South Dakota; Angela Osland, Sycamore, Illinois; Robin Fosland, Oldham, South Dakota; Wanda Jacobson, coach. Kneeling: Debbie Schindel, Calgary, Alberta; Teri Olson, Reva, South Dakota; Kellie Olsen, Culbertson, Montana; Mindy Lee, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Wendy Qualley, Froid, Montana.



Back Row (L. to R.): Tim Berntson, coach; Tim Boyum, Kenyon, Minnesota; Wayne Welsch, Amery, Wisconsin; Justin Jones, Wyndmere, North Dakota; Steve Kruse, Burnsville, Minnesota; John Knuuttila, Pelkie, Michigan; John Greven, Plymouth, Minnesota; Craig Anderson, Dassel, Minnesota. Front Row: Dave Hovland, Sisseton, South Dakota; Matthew Greven, Plymouth, Minnesota; Jon Gunderson, Lake Stevens, Washington; Scott Erickson, Badger, Minnesota; Todd Bjorgaard, Argyle, Minnesota; Ron Engen, Eastend, Saskatchewan; not pictured, Jon Bylka, Cohasset, Minnesota.

HYMNAL PROGRESS REPORT

We are continuing to see progress on the new hymnal. Here is a recap of what has been accomplished and what remains:

- 1) The hymns are basically chosen; no more are being considered.
- 2) The worship service/resource section has been completed.
- 3) The committee will meet a day before the coming annual conference to give one final review of the hymn list and make slight changes.
- 4) The Scripture Reading section needs a final editing.
- 5) The hymn texts, tunes, and harmonizations need to be verified as being copyrighted or public domain.
- 6) Negotiate the copyrights with the copyright holders (this is the most time-consuming part of the process; pray that this will go quickly).
- 7) Seek donations from AFLC people to pay for copyrights.
- 8) Prepare indexes.
- 9) Prepare all materials for engraving and typesetting.
- 10) Proofread ... proofread ... proofread.
- 11) Typeset/plan page layout and style.
- 12) Print hymnal.
- 13) Sell hymnal for a reasonable price, yet enough to cover typesetting and printing costs (price will be comparable to other hymnals of same size).

IMMEDIATE NEEDS

- 1) Diligent workers to develop a topical index of hymns.
- 2) Workers to develop an index of suggested hymns for Gospel texts and other Scripture texts.
- 3) Money for copyrights to be purchased (some will require payment after printing).
- 4) General donations toward Hymnal Committee work.
- 5) Prayer.
- 6) An electronic typewriter (preferably one that uses a print wheel).

If you are able to help with any of these needs, please communicate with the Editor, Pastor Brian L. Davidson, P.O. Box 762, Rice Lake, WI 54868; Phone (715) 234-5197.

The release date will be at the annual Conference of 1992 or 1993.

— Rev. Brian L. Davidson

AFLBS men's and women's teams won at the regional level and played in the National Bible College Athletic Association tournament March 14-16 in Oklahoma City.

The women's team played in the championship game against rival St. Paul Bible College, St. Bonifacius, and were defeated 63-50. The AFLBS team had defeated Calvary Bible, Kansas City, in the first round.

Five AFLBS women were honored by the NBCAA. Christine Swanson and Wendy Qualley were named to the All-Tournament team, Teri Olson was named on the First Team All-American, Robin Folsland made Second Team All-American and Angela Osland was awarded Academic All-American. This is the first year that any AFLBS team has played in the national championship game.

The men's team played their first round against California Christian and lost in overtime. They came back in the second game and defeated Oklahoma Baptist 88-81. In the consolation championship, the AFLBS Conquerors lost to Nebraska Christian 78-72, for sixth place. Justin Jones was named Second Team All-American.

Congratulations to both coaches, the honored players and each member of the teams!

AFLBS teams represent one of the smallest schools in the NBCAA.

The Mustard Seed

23. What was the result of the farmer's simple act of faith?

Make note of its size and sturdiness.

The growth of the tiny seed into a giant plant was not the work of the farmer, but of the creator.

24. Sharing God's Word is also an act of faith. What results can we expect?

While we have dealt with this parable on a personal level, it is also interpreted to depict the growth of the church in the world. Beginning in the manger at Bethlehem, Christianity has become a great and mighty movement that today reaches to the ends of the earth.

Individuals and congregations who faithfully proclaim the true Word can take great encouragement from this parable.

"The grass withers, and the flowers fall, but the Word of our God stands forever."

Isaiah 40:8

Next month we will study "The Wedding Banquet"

HYMN SUGGESTION: "THY WORD IS LIKE A GARDEN, LORD"
(Concordia #88)

THE PARABLES OF JESUS

This is one of several parables that Jesus told in which He compares the Word of God to a living seed. Since our attitude toward the Word is basic to all spiritual understanding and growth, it is well that we pay careful attention to what He has to teach us in these parables.

Jesus' first parable in Matthew 13 stressed the importance of proper soil for the growth of the seed and success of the harvest. Then He told two parables which dealt with the indwelling dynamic power of the seed itself. Poor soil becomes productive soil when the Holy Spirit works through the good seed, God's Word.

We remember that Jesus drew His parable illustrations from everyday life. An expression commonly used among the Jews in Jesus' day was, "as small as a mustard seed". The Mustard Seed Parable is recorded in Matthew 13:13-32; Mark 4:30-32; and Luke 13:18-19. In this study, some repetition of thoughts from previous lessons is included for emphasis.

GOD HAS GIVEN US THE SEED

1. At this time of year, many of us are planting our gardens. Think for a moment about your ordinary garden seeds — the carrots, peas, beans. Are any of these seeds synthetic (man-made)?
2. What is inherent in a seed that man is unable to duplicate?
3. Who has placed this inherent quality into the seed? Genesis 1:11, 29
4. What specifics are encased in a tiny seed? (for example: the color of the leaves)

5. Now, consider the seed of God's Word. What is inherent in the Word?
John 5:24

6. Who has placed this quality into the Word?

7. What possibilities lie concentrated in the simple Gospel? (for example: repentance)

WE PLANT THE SEED

8. What two things did the unnamed man possess?

9. What simple, natural act did he perform?

10. According to the parable, did he do anything further to cause the seed to sprout and grow?

11. Spiritually speaking, where is your field or garden?

12. Could you possibly say that you have no seed?

13. What should be natural for the Christian? Romans 1:14, 15

Notice the simplicity of sowing the Seed. Many think they cannot do it. It is encouraging to know that power and life are in the Word, not in our skill, our talents, or our education.

14. We may be tempted to try to build God's Kingdom by using synthetic seeds. What are some of these synthetic (man-made) seeds?

GOD GIVES GROWTH

15. Consider your garden's growth. Is there life in the soil?

16. Do you find within yourself the power to make your garden grow?

17. Where is the power to be found?

By whom is this power released?

The seed, though very small, is a living thing. A growing seed is a miracle of God.

18. Now, consider spiritual growth: What is the natural condition of the human heart? Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 15:19

19. Can a teacher or preacher (the sower) cause the "seed of the Word" to grow? I Corinthians 3:6-7

20. Can we (the soil) of ourselves, or in ourselves, bring forth spiritual life or growth?

What one word in Ephesians 2:1 describes the natural state of man?

21. Wherein is found the power to produce spiritual life and growth? John 6:63

22. By whom is this power released? Ephesians 2:4-5

The putting of life into a seed (God's Word) is God's work. The bringing forth of life from the Word is God's work, too.

ARC UPDATE

ARC Board meeting items noted:

1. MANNA INN plans approved by State of Wisconsin Building Department.
2. Fund on hand for MANNA INN addition: \$3,500.
3. Only 73 days to Annual Conference. Can we be under roof by then?
4. Needed: Prayer — God's blessings and good weather.

Help — hammers, saws, etc.

Gifts — additional funds so no need for financing.



Oceanside, California — The youngest church in the AFLC is not only self-supporting but "other-supporting" as well. President Richard Snipstead (photo), who visited Oceanside in February to speak at a Valentine's dinner party, was presented with a check for \$2,500 to be divided as follows: \$1,000 to Home Missions, and \$500 each to the Administration Building Fund, Parish Education (for the new fourth grade material), and the Bible School and Seminary. The congregation also supports the "Jesus Film" project of Campus Crusade for Christ.

Neighborhood Bible Church, which meets on Sundays in a school at 850 Sagewood, consists mostly of young families, who are just getting established and trying to buy their homes. Worship attendance averages in the sixties, and 22 meet weekly for a ten-session adult confirmation class.

The emphasis for this new congregation has been to reach the unchurched, and there are presently no attenders who were members of other local Lutheran churches or who claimed membership in any area church.

The Oceanside church is served by Pastor Orville Hiepler, who lives only ten miles away in Fallbrook, and many of the midweek activities are held in his home.

Indianapolis, Indiana — St. Mark's Lutheran Church reports that giving to the AFLC benevolences had increased by 475% as of February 3!



BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA — Pictured are seventeen of the twenty new members of Calvary Free Lutheran Church, with the pastor, Kerwin Sletto, in the upper left.

Missionary Connely Dyrud and family will be returning to the U.S. for their furlough. As of May 1, 1991, their address will be 322 South Conely Avenue, Thief River Falls, MN 56701, (218) 681-3647.

Roseau, Minnesota — Rev. Del Palmer spoke at special meetings March 17-20, at Roseau Free Lutheran Church.

Northern Illinois — Several AFLC churches shared their pastors with one another for a series of Lenten services with the "I Am ..." sayings of Christ as a theme. Participating in this pulpit exchange were Pastor Harry Gimberg, Grace, DeKalb; Pastor Gary Jorgenson, Faith, Ottawa; Pastor Rob Lewis, West Lisbon, Newark; Pastor Mel Meyer, Fox River, Norway; Pastor John Skeie, Bethlehem, Morris; and Lay Pastor Mark Olson, Freedom-St. Petrie, Ottawa.



Roslyn, South Dakota — Saron Lutheran Church (Lake Region Parish) welcomed five new members in January, including Neil and Alice Rudebusch (left), and Scott and Judy Bellefy with their daughter, Amanda, (right). Pastor Lynn Wilson is pictured in the center of the photo.

LETTERS

500 Congregations?

This letter is being written in response to a panel discussion at the 1991 Pastors' Conference. This panel was referring to a resolution passed at the 1990 Annual Conference. The resolution expressed the desire to have 500 congregations in the AFLC in ten years or by year 2000.

There have been very positive comments made, and some not so positive regarding the possibilities of accomplishing this. I would like to add some positive comments, four "Ps."

First, the "Purpose" is there. Isaiah 54:2, says to enlarge the place of your habitation. An increase of 300 congregations looks monumental — a mountain. Let's change it to a mole hill.

On Parish Education

In response to a bulletin insert in our Sunday morning church bulletin several Sundays ago, we decided to make a contribution toward the fourth grade Printing Fund of our AFLC Parish Education Department. After making the contribution, we received a very encouraging letter from Mrs. Katha Tjelta, Parish Education Director, who mentioned that often it is perceived as the role of **women** in the church to provide for Christian education. She was especially grateful that our **men's** group had seen this need as one in which we should become involved.

Perhaps there are other men or groups of men in our AFLC that might be challenged to become involved in seeing that these Sunday School materials are published as soon as possible. Our children need our example as fathers, grandfathers, uncles, etc. that Christian education is as much the concern of men as it is of women. It is our heartfelt prayer that our children would learn to love Jesus as we do, and we believe the printing of these materials will help to answer that prayer.

— *The men of Calvary Free Lutheran Men's Brotherhood*
Eben Junction, Michigan

Divide 300 by ten is only 30 congregations a year. That would mean a new congregation "mothered" by every six existing congregations. It's possible!

Secondly, the "Potential" is there. We seem to focus much on the material sides of our needs. What really are our needs? In Luke 10:42, Christ's admonition to Martha was that only **one** thing was necessary. Also in Matthew 6:19-23, Christ says to lay up for yourself treasures in heaven.

Look at where your treasures are. Do not we have many "treasures" that are temporal, of this world, and cannot be eternal? Are we more interested in having earthly treasures, or souls that are saved eternally? As an AFLC, are our priorities right? Will it be earthly

treasures or eternal treasures. The "Potential" is there, and it's "Possible."

Third, the "Power" is there. Again in Matthew 28:20, Christ says "Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age." This is to be done in Christ's strength and not ours. Also, in II Timothy 1:7, "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power, and love and discipline." This is God's cause and He will give us the power.

The primitive church grew because of the lack of timidity and the use of the power. We can but do likewise.

Therefore, let us as an AFLC rise up and use the Purpose, Potential and Power God has given us. It is Possible. Whether we reach the goal or not, "Only what's done for Christ will last."

— *Rev. George Knapp*
Willmar, Minnesota

Annual Women's Retreat

Association Retreat Center May 3-5, 1991

Theme: Setting Priorities Speaker: Edna Blake Cost: \$46

Women of all ages are invited to join us. Featured will be a Christian radio personality from KDNW-FM, Duluth, Edna Blake, and a combined handbell concert joining St. Paul's in Cloquet, Minnesota, and Amery Free Lutheran in Amery, Wisconsin. Sunday morning worship will be led by seminarian Tonnes Pollestad.

A craft sale with all donations going to the ARC ministry has become a regular event. Please think of a special item you may wish to contribute. Send registrations to the ARC, Route 1, Box 92, Osceola, Wisconsin 54020. If your church has not received a brochure, please contact St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 18th & Wilson Ave., Cloquet, MN 55720, or call 1-218-879-5956. Your presence will enrich our fellowship.

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences - February 1 - February 28

FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	REC'D IN FEBRUARY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	%* TOTAL
General Fund	\$ 276,830.00	\$14,566.87	\$14,566.87	5
Schools - (AFLTS) . .	151,900.00	6,011.16	6,011.16	4
(AFLBS) . .	193,950.00	8,222.90	8,222.90	4
Home Missions	433,616.00	33,587.09	33,587.09	8
World Missions	373,715.00	14,593.21	14,593.21	4
Capital Investment . .	25,000.00	2,377.07	2,377.07	10
Parish Education . . .	62,670.00	2,418.32	2,418.32	4
ARC	20,000.00	1,238.68	1,238.68	6
TOTALS	\$1,537,681.00	\$83,015.30	\$83,015.30	5
1990 - 1991	\$1,441,565.00	\$47,972.53	\$47,972.53	3
*Goal 8%				

WHERE THE PULPIT MEETS THE PEW

The seminary is a place where the pulpit meets the pew in a special way. Georg Sverdrup, the chief formulator almost a century ago of our Fundamental Principles," was the champion of a distinct form of seminary education that he called "menighedsmaessig presteuddannelse." This Norwegian expression is not easy to translate into English, but can best be explained as a training of pastors in conformity with the spirit of the congregations. The seminary was envisioned as a place that would produce pastors who were truly committed to the struggle for free and living congregations.

It is not necessarily so. Seminaries have been known to produce religious professionals who seem to widen the distance between pulpit and pew, rather than shepherds with servant hearts who proclaim and practice the priesthood of all believers.

Half of my years in the ministry were spent on the campus of our AFLC Schools, and I can confidently state that a heritage of pastoral training shaped by the spirit of our congregations is alive and well in the seminary. A concern for building free and living congregations is more than a slogan to faculty and students. Our instructors are more likely to be called "pastor" than "professor." The inerrant, infallible Word of God is the guide for all instruction. May it ever be so!

But our seminary must never be taken for granted. The late Dr. Iver Olson once remarked that some of his generation were too confident concerning the orthodoxy of the seminary; if liberalism ever comes into our churches, they declared, it will be by way of the pew, not the pulpit. They were sadly mistaken, and their confidence seems tragic to us today.

The channel between congregation and campus needs to be clear and open. Get acquainted with the instructors through their writings and, whenever possible, by personal contacts. Pray for faculty and students by name. Visit the seminary and sit in on a few classes.

Many of our readers come from church backgrounds where they were betrayed by their seminaries, where the bond between pulpit and pew was broken. What went wrong? What could have been done differently? Let your past regrets be a reason for present participation.

Praise God for our seminary! He continues to call men to prepare for the parish ministry at our school, and provides

committed faculty members to teach them. The addition of Dr. Craig Jennings to our seminary family gives us once again at least one instructor in each one of the main areas of theological concentration.

The needs seem greater at times than God's supply. Why do the gifts to our seminary budget fall so far below the goals? Why are we seeing fewer graduates from our seminary at the same time as the demand for pastors seems to increase?

The past has proven that our seminary holds a central place in the heart and life of the church. No denomination can continue faithful to its fundamental precepts, as well as unified in spirit and purpose, unless its seminary is strong. A living heritage will collapse under the weight of traditionalism unless it is refreshed by continual renewal.

The place where the pulpit meets the pew needs the prayers and partnership of all God's people in order to become all that He wants it to be.

NEW NAMES

The AFLC Seminary celebrated its silver anniversary in 1989, and our Bible School will do the same later this year. Anniversaries can be a time for new beginnings, and there is a new beginning that I would earnestly suggest.

Isn't it time for our schools to receive "real" names?

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is a fine and adequate expression of our identity as a church fellowship. But "Association Free" seems to me to be a most inadequate and awkward title to give our schools.

The history of the adoption of these names is a confused and confusing account of misunderstandings and poor communication. The original charter of the schools simply said "Free Lutheran," and in my opinion the word "Association" was added almost by accident. The confusion is especially evident in regards to the seminary, as there are at least three different names that have been used on diplomas in the past, and even current catalogues and displays can be a bit bewildering.

Does anyone agree with me? Or are we already too attached to "AFLTS" and "AFLBS" to even consider a change?

COMING EVENTS

Thief River Falls, Minnesota — On April 12-14, Our Saviour's will host the District Youth Rally. The tenth annual Our Saviour's Missions Conference will be May 5-8. Guest speakers will be Missionary Connely Dyrud, Brazil, and Rev. Paul Larson, Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

Southwest Central Minnesota District will have their Spring Rally May 7, at Kvam Lutheran, rural Dalton.

Sioux Falls, South Dakota — The Sioux Empire Lutherans For Life is sponsoring a seminar on April 21, 2-5 p.m. at Faith Lutheran Church,

601 N. Cliff Avenue, Sioux Falls. Linda Bartlett is the speaker.

Newark, Illinois — "Toward a Growing Marriage" is the theme of a seminar that will be conducted April 26-27 at West Lisbon Lutheran Church. The leader will be Dr. Gary Chapman from Moody Bible Institute.

COLUMBUS, OHIO (EP) The Supreme Court of Ohio has dismissed a so-called "clergy malpractice" lawsuit, but in a manner that leaves the door open for some malpractice claims against clergy.

The court reversed the ruling of an appeals court and dismissed the Seventh-Day Adventist Church from a lawsuit filed by a couple who attended the Hill Church in Knox County. Their complaint alleged malpractice, fraud, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and non-consensual sexual conduct by the church's pastor.

The suit charged that the local, state, and national church organizations were responsible for the pastor's alleged actions, in the same way that employers may be held responsible for their employee's misconduct.

The state's Supreme Court ruled that there was no basis for a clergy malpractice claim because of a state precedent which bars malpractice claim when plaintiffs are able to seek redress through other legal means, such as claims of assault or duress.

The court also ruled that a church is not liable for the conduct of employees which is "outside the scope of employment." The ruling leaves open the possibility that clergy malpractice claim could be brought when other legal avenues are closed to plaintiffs.

Religious groups, including the National Association of Evangelicals, the National Council of Churches, the Baptist Joint Committee, and the American Jewish Congress, filed "friend of the court" briefs in the case, urging the Ohio Supreme Court to reject the idea of clergy malpractice.

FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA (EP) North Dakota became the last state in the nation to abolish "blue laws" which strictly limited good and services that could be sold on Sunday. Gov. George Sinner, a Democrat, signed a bill repealing the century-old laws in early February.

Supporters of the law said allowing Sunday shopping would bring prosperity to the state, since North Dakota's shoppers won't have to cross state lines to do business on Sunday. The

state tax department estimates that extra sales tax revenue will add ten million dollars to the state's general fund each year.

Critics of the change have already begun a campaign to put the blue laws before the state's voters.

NORMAN, OHIO (EP) Rutherford Institute attorneys charge in a federal lawsuit filed February 21 that public school officials in Norman, Oklahoma, violated the free-speech rights of a fifth grader by censoring her Bible reading and prayer on a school playground.

According to the federal complaint, an 11-year-old student and her friend were using their free time during recess to read the Bible and pray for students, parents, and school officials. At the invitation of the two girls, four other students participated in the devotions.

The religious activity was ordered stopped after a parent complained, and the principal admonished the girls "that such activity was illegal on school property," the lawsuit says.

School officials are charged with illegally censoring the student's personal speech because of its religious content. It also accuses them of ostracizing the child, causing her to suffer "humiliation, embarrassment, and mental anguish."

The Rutherford Institute is a nationwide, nonprofit civil liberties organization specializing in the defense of religious freedom.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) The U.S. Supreme Court agreed February 25 to decide whether an 1871 civil rights law intended as a legal weapon against the Ku Klux Klan can be used to keep pro-life activists from blocking entrances to abortion clinics.

In dozens of cases, abortion clinics and abortion advocacy groups have succeeded in getting court orders which block the sit-down demonstrations of Operation Rescue and similarly-styled pro-life groups. These orders are based on part of the Civil Rights Acts of 1871, which is known as the "Ku Klux Klan Act," which allows federal suits against people who "conspire" to deprive "any person or class of persons" of their civil rights.

The case before the high court is "Bray vs Alexandria Women's Health Clinic." Operation Rescue is appealing a September ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, which upheld an injunction a federal district judge had issued on behalf of a group of abortion clinics in northern Virginia.

The case does not center on the right to an abortion, but on the right to interstate travel. Lower court rulings held that because a substantial number of patients at the clinics in question came from outside Virginia, Operation Rescue blockades would have the effect of denying women's constitutional right to travel.