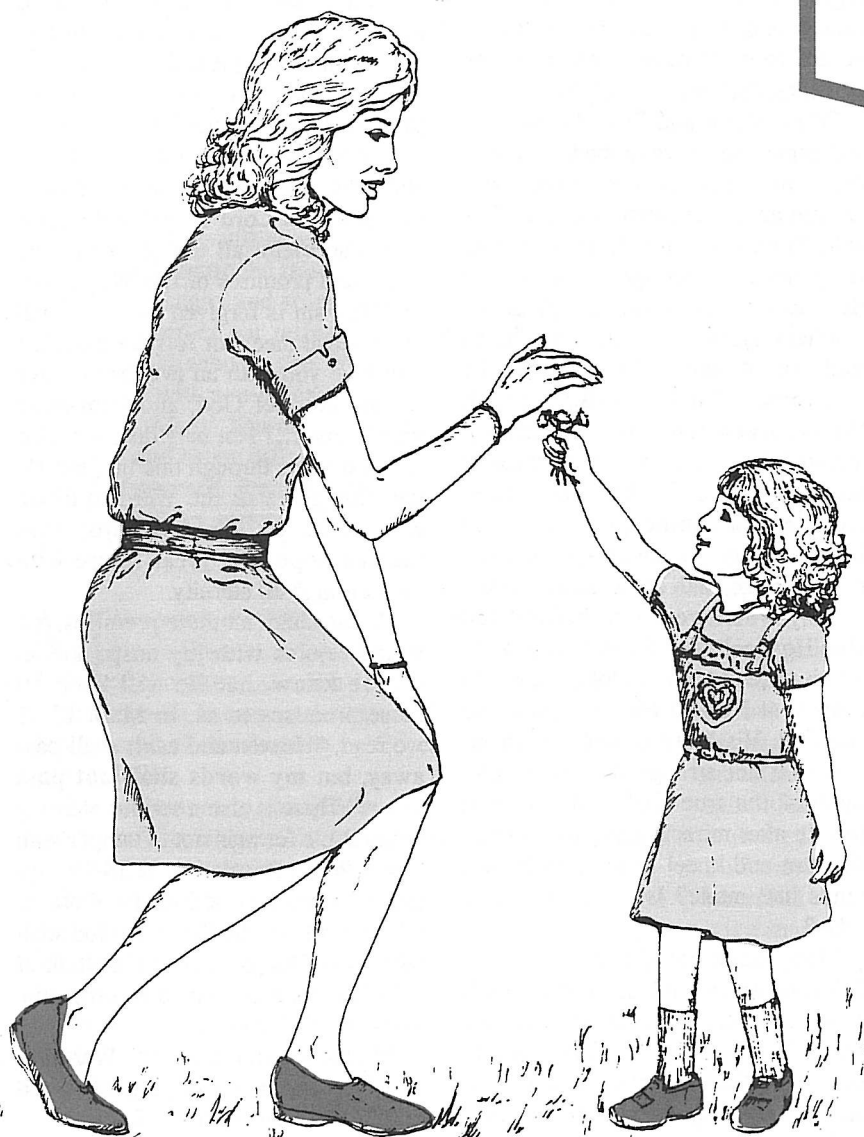


# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

April 30, 1991



## A CHILD'S PRAYER ON MOTHER'S DAY

God in heaven, I thank Thee  
This day on bended knee  
For the wonderful mother  
Thou hast given to me!

Her heart is kind and gentle ...  
Flowing with love and care;  
Her touch is warm and loving,  
Her life, a constant prayer.

How she so often draws me  
Into her arms to read  
God's Holy Word, the Bible ...  
Words that my heart should heed.

How often, too, I hear her  
Whisper my name in prayer!  
Never a childish problem  
But she is always there!

God in heaven, I ask Thee,  
Now while I bow to pray —  
In Thy great loving kindness  
Bless my mother today!

— Author Unknown

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Coming Next Time: 29th Annual Conference Schedule and Elections

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# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

April 30, 1991 • Vol. 29, No. 9

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## CONTENTS

A Tribute to Mother	p. 3
God Gave Us a Son	p. 4
A Meek Proposal	p. 6
Brazil Schools and the Future	p. 7
Youth	p. 9
Women	p. 10
Campus	p. 11
Four New Churches Join AFLC	p. 12
Annual Conference Registration	p. 14

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## The Word of the Lord

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope" (Romans 15:4). From the beginning of time, God's Word has stood sure and steadfast. In Isaiah 48:5 we are told, "I have even from the beginning declared it unto you."

When Adam and Eve fell into sin, God came and spoke to them, not only about the consequences of their sin, but also about the promise of the Messiah. Their relationship to God was being restored through the promised Messiah. God spoke to and through the prophets again and again. We often read this phrase: "The Word of the Lord came ..." In Isaiah 48:5 we read, "I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them."

Why was it revealed beforehand what He would do? So that they could not give credit to their idols, but would know that He and He alone was the true God. His Word is sure and steadfast. Is it not strange that those who knew of the true God and had seen miracle after miracle performed would still turn and kneel to idols their own hands had made? Is it not the same today?

Many have heard the truth since childhood and yet refuse to obey God's Word to humble themselves and surrender their hearts to the One who created them. We think the heathen foolish who worship their own creations, or the sun, moon, and stars. But really, there is no difference. The dictionary describes the heathen as "one who is not a believer in the God of the Bible; or pagan; or irreligious ..." What is the difference between the pagan and the rich farmer who trusts in what his hands have accumulated? Or the business man who trusts in his wisdom and power in running his company? Are

## Light on the Way

they not gifts received from Almighty God? One cannot buy health, inner joy, peace or eternal life.

I think we will have to conclude that those who have heard the Word spoken in truth, and still want to live for self and the pleasures of sin, are truly the most foolish of all. They are the greatest to be pitied.

But those who have allowed God's Holy Word to speak to them and have accepted the Lord Jesus as Saviour, may also claim all the other blessed truths and promises of His Word, such as: "Thy sin is forgiven thee ... I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee ... I will love you with an everlasting love ... and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ..." Not only does our God watch over us through this life, but He has also given us the Word to direct and guide us. We can enjoy that blessed hope of a great future with Him through all eternity.

As we claim all these promises, our hearts rejoice with joy unspeakable, for **we know** that He will keep all these promises to us. In Mark 13:31 we read, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but **my words shall not pass away.**" There is also a serious warning in the Bible for man not to tamper with God's Word. Revelation 22:18-19 says that no man may add to the Word or take away from the Word, or God shall take away His part out of the Book of Life. That is how holy, awesome, true and sure His Word is.

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the **Word was God,**" (John 1:1).



—by Rev.  
Alvin Larson

Mother went to be with the Lord on the evening of January 2. Two of my sisters and I were at her bedside as she quietly slept away. We had known that there wouldn't be any goodbyes, for she hadn't been able to speak for a long time and her memory was gone.

Mother had a long life, over 97 years. Her lifetime encompassed changes too numerous to mention — in science, including medicine, transportation, communication, politics.

Mother was the daughter of homesteaders. Because of that, she had a fund of practical knowledge useful in animal husbandry, in growing plants and fixing all kinds of things. She had learned the secrets of baking, cooking and preserving, necessary in an early age before gas and electric stoves and many other conveniences were available.

Mother knew the remedies that could give some relief to childhood's toothaches and lovingly bandaged our cuts and bruises before there were "bandaids" and other ready-made dressings. She bathed fevered brows and suffered our hurts with us.

Mother taught us five children our first prayers. Together with Dad, she set the tone of our Christian home. Daily devotions were a part of it. Our religious instruction wasn't confined to what we could receive in the church; we studied Bible stories and the Catechism at home.

Mother was left a widow at age 45, with five children, four still at home and no meaningful insurance plan. Dad had almost died five years before from a ruptured appendix and was hospitalized for a month at that time. Mother had an inner strength, and she was a good manager. From her father she had learned to fear debt. We lived carefully and when something had to be bought on time from Montgomery Ward, the payments were made promptly.

Mother wanted her children to receive an education. The help that she gave toward that was moral and spiritual rather than financial. Mother gave me \$25 or \$50 (I can't be sure which now) toward seven years of schooling beyond high school, and even that she could ill afford to give. We worked and got some help from others along the way. But Mother was our biggest encourager.

Mother was a wise counselor. Her advice was good. She wasn't an activist. She stayed more in the background. Her home and her family were primary concerns, but as a pastor's wife, she met the people well in parishes at



## A Tribute to Mother

Badger, Minnesota, Wildrose, North Dakota, Govan, Saskatchewan, and Westby, Montana.

Mother was interested in world and state affairs. She inquired of those with whom she visited concerning their views and knowledge of events. She talked easily of spiritual matters and had the spiritual welfare of others on her heart.

With advancing years came also the problems of age, almost imperceptible at first, then clearly discernible. Declining strength, loss of memory and of the ability to walk and talk, eventually the need for total care, these were sources of pain to my sister, Valborg, and me, who became the primary caregivers, but also to the other members of the family. But to share in these experiences of the past eight to ten years has been to be in the school of God, and we have learned from it.

Mother was laid to rest on Epiphany this year, not much over three miles from her place of birth. We thought her funeral service was beautiful. A lot of friends shared it with us. The opening hymn, "Rock of Ages," spoke of her testimony of the Savior. The closing one, "When Peace Like a River," expressed the same faith combined with a quiet and strong assurance that also in the day of the Lord, all will be well.

Mother's story was like that of some other mothers. You may see your mother in what has been written here, or perhaps yourself.

Thank you, Mother, for all you mean to us. We rise up and call you "blessed."

— Pastor Raynard Hugel  
Newfolden, Minnesota





# GOD GAVE

likely as the Israelites crossing the Red Sea all over again. Our papers were processed within the week. God was directing us to Romania.

Yet the following day we received news that the twins were no longer available. Why would God open this door only to slam it shut so quickly? Trudy reminded us of how God met the needs of the Israelites time and time again during their 40 years in the desert and yet they continued to doubt Him. She said, "There comes a time when you just have to take a step of faith." Though we no longer knew what God had in store, we knew that He was leading us to Romania. We chose to trust Him and step out in faith.

Within days we were driving through the villages of Romania inquiring at children's hospitals and orphanages as to the availability of adoptable children. Despite the impression portrayed by the western media, adoption in Romania is not like a candy store where one goes to pick and choose. After days of knocking on doors and numerous rejections, we finally were permitted to see two "adoptable" children. We were quite encouraged and began to actively pursue these children. God, however, had a different plan. We soon discovered that one of these children tested positive for HIV (the AIDS antibody) and the other child's mother had provided a false address and she could not be found. We would need to locate her to finalize the adoption.

We then headed for a distant town to meet with a government official. He could probably help us identify a child. We knocked on more doors along the way and were finally allowed inside a maternity hospital. There we were introduced to two "adoptable" children — a six-

**W**here he leads me I will follow ... He led and fortunately, we followed. On December 2, 1990, we boarded a flight in Minneapolis bound for Bucharest, Romania. Only a short two weeks earlier God began to swing wide the doors that would lead us to this oppressed land.

What some might call "being in the right place at the right time," we happened to hear about twin girls available for adoption in Romania. In retrospect, we realize that this was God's way of introducing us to the life-changing plan He had in store for us.

After hearing about twin girls available for adoption, we contacted our Senator's office with an unusual request. Our request referred to the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) papers we had filled out just two weeks prior. These papers, which are required for any foreign adoption, typically take 60-90 days for processing. After learning about the twins, we needed these papers processed immediately. According to our adoption social worker, Trudy Delich, the INS honoring our request would be about as

—by Scott and Judy  
Johnson  
Coon Rapids,  
Minnesota

## O Happy Home

*O happy home, where Thou art  
loved the dearest,  
Thou loving Friend, and  
Saviour of our race,  
And where among the guests  
there never cometh  
One who can hold such high  
and honored place!*

*O Happy Home, where each  
one serves Thee, lowly,  
Whatever his appointed work  
may be,  
Till every common task seems  
great and holy,  
When it is done, O Lord, as  
unto Thee.*

# US A SON

month-old boy and a three-year-old girl. Our paperwork limited us to children two years and under, so we could not pursue the girl.

For a number of reasons the director of the hospital strongly discouraged us from pursuing the boy. She did, however, encourage us to look into a lead she had on a child in a nearby village. Since the village was enroute to our original destination, we decided to check it out. After a harrowing trip up and down mud-laden roads, we discovered the child was no longer available. By this time it was dusk, we were tired, hungry and really dreading the return journey through the mud in the dark. Furthermore, we had now missed the person we had originally set out to meet.

This was a really low point for us. That evening, despite the length of the trip, we decided we needed to return to Bucharest to plan a new strategy. God, again, had a different plan. About an hour into the trip, our car experienced a major breakdown. Stranded in the middle of nowhere, we were finally able to flag down a truck driver who towed us into the nearest town where we would have to spend the night in a hotel. As God would have it, this town just happened to be the one where we had seen the two children earlier that same day. Having some time on our hands the following morning, we decided to revisit the hospital and this time we talked with the doctor of the infant boy. He gave us the opportunity to hold him again and spend a good period of time with him. It became clear to us that God had brought us back to this city and this hospital so that His purpose might be fulfilled.

We spent the next two days in that town with



no more than the clothes on our back taking care of paperwork and locating the birth mother. Numerous times during the last days of this process we were reminded of how God still works miracles today. Our non-Christian translator was witness to our faith and the power of God as seemingly insurmountable barriers crumbled as we encountered them.

On the evening of December 23, we arrived back in Minneapolis, where we were grandly welcomed by friends and relatives. A small stuffed camel, given by some friends, came with a tag on which appeared a star and the short inscription, "To remind you of your long journey at Christmas time." During this season God showed His love for man by giving the world His only Son, Jesus Christ. And so that a little boy might learn to know Jesus. God provided us with our son, Bret.

(For more information regarding Romania adoption or adoption in general, contact New Life Family Services, 9920 Zilla Street NW, Coon Rapids, MN 55433, phone: (612) 755-3035.)

Baptism day for Bret Johnson at Maranatha Free Lutheran Church, Coon Rapids, Minnesota. Pictured (left) are Bret's parents and (center) student pastor Tonnes Pollestad and godmothers Susan Paulson and Nancy Asp.

*O happy home, where Thou art  
not forgotten,*

*When joy is overflowing, full,  
and free;*

*O happy home, where every  
wounded spirit*

*Is brought, Physician, Com-  
forter, to Thee.*

*O happy home, where little  
ones are given*

*To Thee, O Lord, in humble  
faith and prayer,*

*To Thee, their Friend, who  
from the heights of heaven*

*Guides them, and guards with  
more than mother's care.*

*And when at last all earthly  
toil is ended,*

*All meet Thee in the blessed  
home above,*

*From whence Thou camest,  
where Thou hast ascended,*

*Thine everlasting home of  
peace and love.*

— Carl J.P. Spitta

## A Meek Proposal

When the Berlin Wall came tumbling down, the broken pieces included East German Premier Erich Honecker.

When he was evicted from his villa, Honecker and his wife, Margot, who was Minister of Education for twenty-six years, were taken in by a Lutheran Pietist pastor, Uwe Holmer and his family. Their parsonage became a refuge for the Honeckers. One of the Holmer children, eighteen year old Traugott, gave up his room for the deposed couple. He said: "It's crazy. Because I wasn't in the FDJ (the Communist youth organization), I wasn't allowed to do the academic track and had to learn cabinetmaking. Today the woman who refused me the Abi (Abitur, the German diploma that permits a graduate to enter the university) is living with us" (The Religion and Society Report, April 1990). It seems Mrs. Honecker's Ministry of Education had denied university admittance to eight of the Holmers' ten children. However, not everyone is pleased with Pastor Holmer's hospitality, including some church members. But he hasn't paid much attention to the criticism. Holmer directs a charitable foundation which provides shelter for over a thousand ill and handicapped people. When you are busy helping the homeless, there is always room for a couple more, even if it is an unemployed premier and his first lady.

The Holmers' engaging example of Christian compassion recalls Jesus' words.

As we do battle against the foul idolatries and empty philosophies of our day, we would do well to consider the portrait of graciousness painted by Stephen, Polycarp, and now the Holmers. While we are called to be steadfast soldiers of the Cross, we march to the sublime spirit of the Cross — "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34).

A nationally aired Christian columnist sarcastically said some time ago that National Organization for Women president Molly Yard is "meaner than a junk-yard dog and looks like one, too." One response was: "How much 'anti-Christian bias' do you suppose that mean statement fomented?" When we are mean, we are just like our enemies, we have stooped to their level, it's "dog eat dog." God help us to contend for the faith without being contentious; to publish glad tidings without being pugnacious. For it's still true, just like Jesus said, the meek, not the mean, shall inherit the earth.

— by Dr. Steven  
C. Lombardo



(Dr. Lombardo serves on the faculty of AFLC Schools, and resides in Maple Grove, Minnesota.)

*"Blessed are the meek:  
for they shall inherit the earth."*

— Jesus Christ  
(Matthew 5:5)

During 1991, the AFLC in Brazil is celebrating 25 years of mission to that great land. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (I Samuel 7:12b), serves as the theme for this year's celebration. As dean of the national Bible School and Seminary, I can truly testify that the Lord has been merciful to us.

The Bible School has helped hundreds of young people who have passed through its doors. Many students came with little schooling and without hope of a future. Today many are Christian citizens working in key positions in Brazil. For example, one graduate was a street urchin and his mother, a spiritist witch. Most of his sisters are prostitutes. A new convert from our Central Church brought him to hear the Gospel and there he received Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. After he graduated from our Bible School, he married one of his classmates and went on to further studies. Today he is regional director of the Social Security offices in the Amazon region. This young man shares his Christian convictions in an area where violence and hatred are commonplace. He also is a faithful contributor to help build AFLC churches in Parana. This and many other fruits of labors are cause for thanksgiving and praise to our Lord.

The AFLC Brazilian Seminary has trained many young men to preach the Gospel. Since our church did not have a home mission program to help sustain these graduates until ten years ago, many of these men are pastors in other churches throughout Brazil. Since the home mission program was installed, we have eight pastors serving our congregations. Four of them also teach part-time at our schools. We have seen national pastors start home mission congregations and are now praying that God would raise up national pastors to go out as foreign missionaries. Then the circle can be complete. The receiving church becomes the sending church.

# AFLC Schools and the Future

There may be some sincere Christians who say: "Then we do not need to send missionaries to Brazil anymore." Some may even think it would be financially wiser not to send missionaries to any foreign land. However, we need to remember the Lord's last command to go and teach all nations. Matthew 28:19 means just that. The Lord said to go, keep going and keep teaching until He returns. A church that loses its mission vision dies.

The future of the AFLC in Brazil looks very bright as missionaries, teachers and national pastors work side by side. Our first priority must always be working towards the salvation of souls, though many other church groups would encourage us to emphasize a social agenda. Our 1990 field conference adopted this statement: "The liberal movement of many missions have been to create political and social unrest in the Third World countries. The results have not always been positive for conservative missionaries, as we, many times, get associated with them and therefore it becomes more difficult to get permanent visas, etc" (from Ten-Year Plan, Section VII).

The best social program is and always has been salvation in the hearts and lives of individuals. Then homes and communities change. I have seen this to be reality in Lar Parana, where I worked with the poor for ten years. In many of these slum homes, the men would come home drunk each night and abuse their wives and children. Then Jesus Christ entered the hearts and homes. Today those homes are repaired and painted, and the children go to school and to bed without hunger pains.

Last year in Campo Mourao, we had six months of drought. The mayor called the evangelical pastors and asked if they would have their members collect food for the poor in the city. He said, "I know your members have food to eat and we need your churches as distribution centers to pass the food out to the poor." All our AFLC congregations participated.

Several of our members commented

that it was only a few years ago when they themselves would have been receiving the assistance. Now, with Christ, their lives had changed so much that they were the ones helping the needy.

Yes, our mission goals will continue to be as they were from the beginning. To bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who are lost, we need churches. Church planting is vital. We need the schools to train workers and pastors. In order for the Brazilian church to grow, we need at least six missionary families on the field who are equipped in these areas.

The missionaries called to plant churches will work with the national pastors in sets of two. That means that one missionary and one national pastor would work together for four years in an area. The missionary would go home on furlough and the national pastor would stay on and nationalize that church. After the furlough, the mis-

sionary would move to a new place with a different national pastor.

The Bible School and Seminary would not be limited to train Brazilians, but Spanish speaking peoples who would return to their countries with the Good News. Already we have had the privilege to teach three students from Paraguay in our Bible School. The language barrier between Portuguese and Spanish is not that great.

I am convinced that God truly led our AFLC to begin the work in Brazil. These doors have remained open while others around us have closed. God does have big and wonderful plans for our AFLC work here in Brazil. We must be faithful in praying forth laborers and supporting them and the work as it grows day by day until Jesus Christ returns.

— Connelly Joel Dyrud  
Dean of the Bible School and  
Seminary in Brazil

## From the Bakers

We are looking forward to our move to Londrina where we will study the Portuguese language full-time for one year. Upon graduation in December, we will be assigned to work with a national pastor for the remainder of our first term. When it is time for furlough, we hope to see one more Bible-believing church established and served by a Brazilian pastor.

The people of Brazil are very friendly, and there are so many open doors through which to go. The Lord has opened these doors and has instructed us to pray forth more laborers to take advantage of these opportunities while they remain. We consider it a joy to be able to represent our Lord and our AFLC in this land of opportunity.

"Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God

would open to us a door for the Word, to speak the mystery of Christ, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak" (Colossians 4:2-4).

— Rev. Tom and Patti Baker  
Andrew and Hannah

Our new address:

FIISK School of English  
915 RUA Pernambuco  
86,020 Londrina, Parana  
Brazil, South America

Two AFLC missionaries will be starting a year's furlough in May, 1991: The Connelly Dyrud family, Brazil, and the Dan Giles family, Mexico. Please contact the World Missions office with your request to have one or both of these missionaries speak in your church.

# First Amendment Invoked to Dismiss Lawsuit

**T**he AFLC will ask a federal court to dismiss a lawsuit brought by Bible Faith Lutheran Church of India under the leadership of Reverend Bhushana Rao Dasari.

United States District Judge Harry H. MacLaughlin will determine whether the lawsuit brought against the Association should proceed to trial. The court will hear a motion to dismiss the claims on May 1 in Minneapolis.

The suit is brought by a faction of the BFLCI under the direction of Rev. Bhushana Rao Dasari, who was the Mission Committee's field director in India until 1986, when he severed his ties with the AFLC.

In December 1988, a group of about 26 gospel workers, under the leadership of V. Benerji and D. Satyanandam, contacted World Missions Director Rev. Eugene Enderlein seeking reaffiliation with the Association. Benerji and Satyanandam were officers of the Indian Church until they were removed by Dasari in February, 1989.

The AFLC reaffiliated with the Benerji/Satyanandam faction in 1989 and continues to fund the gospel work of about 24 evangelists. Prior to 1986 the Association had spent more than \$100,000 on missionary work in India.

Resolution of the dispute would require the court to determine the true leadership and constituency of the Bible Faith Lutheran Church. Rev. Dasari's faction contends that the Association interfered with its "business relationship" with the gospel workers in India. The alleged interference is based upon the Mission committee's communications with the disaffected leaders and gospel workers who renounced Rev. Dasari's authority by requesting reaffiliation with the Association. Rev. Enderlein has also been named as a defendant.

The suit also claims that the BFLC was libeled by an article that appeared in *The Lutheran Ambassador* in April, 1989. The article was written by Rev. Robert L. Lee, who is also a defendant. The article reported the reasons given by Benerji and Satyanandam for the desire to reaffiliate.

Dasari's organization seeks at least \$150,000 in damages.

"We have a number of strong defenses, one of which is the First Amendment to the U.S. constitution, which guarantees freedom of religion," said Mary M. O'Brien, one of the attorneys for the defendants. The Association's brief cites numerous cases where courts have refused to decide cases involving religious disputes or factions within a church.

Morely Friedman, the Association's other lead attorney on the case, stated "The gospel workers and lay leaders who are affiliated with the AFLC left Pastor Dasari's leadership on their own initiative. They had a right to reaffiliate with the Association at any time, and they chose to do so without any prompting by the Association." Dasari's group cannot recover damages for the autonomous acts of the gospel workers and lay leaders, Friedman stated.

The documents submitted to the court show that the division of the BFLC into the factions occurred before the defendants took any action. The break resulted from the actions of the BFLC's own officers and employees. Defendants asked the court to dismiss the lawsuit because the Association's conduct in carrying out its missionary objectives was justified.

The libel claim should be dismissed, the attorneys argue, because the April 1989 article is protected by the First Amendment. The article accurately reported the reasons for the reaffiliation stated by the Indian Church officials. The magazine printed a "clarification" in June 1989, with the understanding that no claim would be brought for the earlier article. Instead, the BFLC now claims damages because of the timing of the published "clarification."

The Association also seeks a declaration of its rights to affiliate with and send funds for gospel workers regardless of the name they use for their church. The AFLC has also brought a counterclaim seeking damages against Dasari's organization for interfering with the reaffiliation.

The pretrial proceedings have

included ten days of sworn testimony (depositions). Depositions have been taken of Reverend Enderlein, Reverend Snipstead, Reverend Dasari, and attorney Jonathan Dyrud. Additional depositions are scheduled. More than 1,000 documents have been exchanged between the parties as part of the pre-trial discovery process. Several court hearings on pretrial issues have occurred during the ten months that the lawsuit has been pending.

A ruling on the motion for dismissal is expected by the end of June.

A separate lawsuit was started by Rev. Dasari alleging that he was libeled by the article in *The Lutheran Ambassador* and by statements made by Association officials. That lawsuit is pending in a Minnesota state court.

The parties to the lawsuit engaged in extensive attempts to mediate the issues before the lawsuits were started in June 1990.

The World Missions Committee, in response to the "Call to Prayer" editorial, requests that the people of the AFLC set aside special times during the month of May for prayer concerning this lawsuit.

## Grant Approved

The Co-ordinating Committee voted at their February meeting to approve a grant of four thousand dollars from the Capital Investment Fund to complete the construction of a new church building at Campo Grande, in Vitoria, Espirito Santo, Brazil.

Rev. Eugene Enderlein, AFLC World Missions Director, returned from a visit to Brazil in January convinced that the completion of the Campo Grande facility would free the congregation to consider further expansion and growth into the surrounding area. He presented this need to the World Missions Committee, who agreed to make a request to the Co-ordinating Committee for the necessary funds.

This grant marks the first time that AFLC funds have been used for capital investment in Brazil away from the campus of our schools at Campo Mourao.

## The trials and testings of our trip into Mexico

# Consider It All Joy

—by Wendy Hammer Kupser,  
Youth Director  
First Lutheran Church,  
Camarillo, California

*Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:2-4).*

It was these verses that came to mind as I look back to last August when fifteen senior high youth, the 1990 AFLBS California team, Intern Pastor Todd Schierkolk, his wife, Barb, and I, traveled from Camarillo to Obregon, Mexico.

Our trials and testing began when we were only an hour down the road. We rolled into Obregon somewhat later than expected due to four flat tires, a faulty fuel pump, and a radiator that kept losing its cool! But we learned to be joyful in our trials, and the conviction grew that God was preparing us for something great.

We settled into a hotel in Obregon, and now it was time for the work to begin. A small mission church was located in a farming community about 25 miles outside of the city, and it was our job to drive out there each day and paint the trim on the little building.

Now a new time of testing began, for the heat and humidity were almost unbearable, like nothing we have ever experienced before. Our fear was that we would be unable to finish what we had come to do. But the youth were determined, and they even wanted to go back at night when it was cooler in order to finish the job. By the grace of God and prayer, however, we accomplished what we had planned and even more.

I was so proud of our First Lutheran youth. You knew that they were Christians by their love for one another, and I had never seen a group of kids come together to help and encourage one another like this. When one was tired or sick from the heat, another would take over. When one was discouraged, another would encourage him. It was great to see.

Painting the church wasn't all that we accomplished. God gave us opportunities to share Jesus with these people. Living in southern California, many of our youth knew some Spanish, and so we were able to conduct two services while we were there, one in the church and one across the street from our hotel in a park. We sang, shared testimonies, and performed puppet skits in Spanish.

But our greatest joy of all came after the services when we visited with the people one by one and played with the children. They were all so hungry for the truth of God's Word! The thing that touched my heart the most on the night of our service in the church was

the lack of room. Their little dirt floor chapel was packed with every bench filled. People were standing in the back and in the doorway, too, and others crowded outside the open windows ... to hear about Jesus.

At the park in Obregon, the people wanted to know where we were from and if they could come to our church. It was sad to tell them that we would only be with them for a week and that there was no church to which we could invite them.

When was the last time that you saw your church overflowing with people? I never have, but I pray to God that one day I will. Oh, how we need revival in our land and in our churches!

Our trip to Obregon was a delight, and we hope to go back again. Not only did it open our eyes to the need in the country of Mexico, but it also helped us see some needs right here at home.

One last thought ... if any of you decide to do something like this, I pray that you will stick with it. After our fourth flat tire, it was very tempting to turn around and go home. But God had a plan and a reason for it all, and we understand it now. Without the trials and testings, the heat, food, water, language barrier, etc. might have been too much for us. But we learned along the way that we could handle it because He was there with us.

By the way, we didn't have a single breakdown on the way home. Coincidence? I don't think so.



## WOMEN

**Pipestone, Minnesota** — WMF members of Christ the King Lutheran Church, Pipestone, Minnesota, enjoyed a "Taste and Talent" night at their February meeting. Proverbs 31:10-31 was the basis for the program. Several members shared their talents by demonstrating spinning, making lefse, reading poetry and singing. All members were asked to bring something for a display table to show what they enjoy doing with their talents. We experienced that God had indeed blessed us with many gifts.



**Ferndale, Washington** — Pictured is Walborg Anderson on her 98th birthday. Helping her celebrate were three generations of Ogmundsons. This four generation family are members of Triumph Free Lutheran. Her family and congregation honored her on January 26, 1991.



**The National WMF Officers** — Seated: Karen Knudsvig, executive secretary; Linda Korhonen, president; Carol Haugen, secretary. Standing: Harriet Rolf, 2nd vice-president; Loretta Grothe, 1st vice-president; and Aini Myking, treasurer.



**Lake Alma, Saskatchewan** — During a Sunday morning Worship Service last fall at Faith Free Lutheran, Mrs. Josie Throssell and Mrs. Marie Throssell received Honorary Membership pins for their faithful and dedicated service to God.



**Newfolden, Minnesota** — Bethania Free Lutheran WMF presented honorary membership pins to Ruby Engelsrud and Aeline Stennes.

## Support Group for Widows and Widowers

A need has been expressed within the AFLC family to have a support group for widows and widowers of all ages. It would give an opportunity to share mutual concerns and needs with those who have gone through the same experiences.

We would plan to have a speaker and dinner on Friday evening, June 14, during the Annual Conference. Please let us know if you are interested in attending this dinner by contacting the Co-ordinating Committee at 3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard, Minneapolis, MN 55441 or calling 612-545-5631. If interested, please respond by June 1. Dinner will be held in the banquet room at the ARC for \$6.50.

**The Eastern North Dakota District WMF Spring Rally** will be held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Fargo, North Dakota, on Saturday, May 4, 1991.

Registration and coffee hour will begin at 9:30 a.m. and the morning session will begin at 10 a.m.

## Women's Missionary Federation

*In memoriam gifts*

Anna Erickson, Dalton, Minnesota  
Sally Benedick, Erskine, Minnesota  
Evelyn Johnson, Chicago, Illinois  
Tom Hendrickson, Wahpeton, North Dakota  
Floyd Pederson, McVile, North Dakota  
Albin Eversvik, McVile, North Dakota  
Carla Christianson, Valley City, North Dakota  
Mary Sorensen, Valley City, North Dakota  
Olga Borstad, Tioga, North Dakota  
Cledith Mortenson, Tioga, North Dakota  
Melvin Gravgaard, Tioga, North Dakota  
Rose Boe, Tioga, North Dakota  
Lurinda Perkins, Faith, South Dakota  
Mrs. Arlie Sunne, Wallace, South Dakota  
Elsie Fogel, Wallace, South Dakota  
John Enderlein, Cleveland, Ohio

*Blessed are  
those who die  
in the Lord*



## Choral Club and Choir Complete Tours

March 16-29



The 1991 AFLBS Choral Club.

Comments from host congregations:

"All our people here were greatly renewed in faith and in the joy of salvation as a result of your coming."

—Tulia, Texas

"The choir members conducted themselves in a way that brings honor to AFLBS and to Christ."

—Pleasanton, Texas

"It was so refreshing to see young people testifying for Jesus Christ, and their happy faces while they sang praises to Him."

—Weslaco, Texas



Members of Christ Lutheran Church, Wichita Falls, Texas, presented the Choir with a banner.



## AFLBS Hosts Campus Days

What is Bible School? What is it like to live on that hill overlooking Medicine Lake? These and many more questions were answered for high schoolers who came as guests to AFLBS' annual Campus Days, April 5-7.

They attended sample classes and got a taste of campus life. On Saturday night they heard Sergei Metelsky, Leningrad, share his testimony. Sergei is pictured here with Rev. Don Greven, AFLBS dean.



Beautiful weather permitted the small group sharing-time to be held on the spacious grounds.

# Four New Churches Join the AFLC

from Alabama, Missouri,  
Nebraska and Oklahoma

The AFLC became more of a nation-wide church family recently, as the Co-ordinating Committee approved the membership applications of four congregations from four different states, three of which have no other AFLC churches.

The first, **Salem Lutheran Church, Salem, Alabama**, is only the second Lutheran congregation in the county, in a state where Lutheran churches of any kind are far from common. Located in rural Lee County, close to the Georgia border, it was organized in 1983 by Pastor Willard Conradson, a retired military chaplain who had moved to the area during the previous year.

The unique worship facility, a "converted" barn near Pastor Conradson's home, serves the small congregation well for the present, as they reach out with the Gospel in an area known for a "Bible Belt" heritage, but with a clear need for living faith. Currently, a **Three-for-Three** program involves each member in praying three minutes each day for three new active families.

Visitors from other AFLC churches who travel through Alabama are encouraged to worship with Salem Church, which is located at 2130 Lee Road, Salem, AL 36874. The telephone number is (205) 298-0574.



**Immanuel Lutheran Church, Springfield, Missouri**, was born at a meeting in 1955 of an organization known as the Lutheran Missionary Homestead Association, which had been organized by Rev. Carl O. Carlson, an Augustana Synod pastor, to provide a home for returning Lutheran missionaries on land donated by Mrs. Gertrude Hult.

The congregation remained independent for several years before joining The American Lutheran Church in 1963, when Rev. Vincent Will became its second pastor. Since that time, Immanuel Church has erected a new

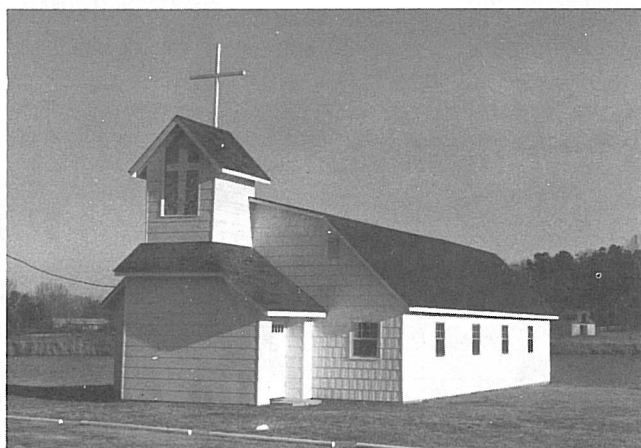
worship center and endured two mergers, while faithfully preaching the Gospel locally and in many countries around the world through an active mission program.

Located in the southwest corner of Missouri's capital city, the church is in a fine area for future outreach. "It is the conviction of our people that God has directed us into the AFLC," writes Pastor Will, "and we pray that we can, together with you, serve our Lord Jesus Christ more effectively."

The address of Immanuel Church is 2756 Blackman Road, Springfield, MO 65809. Phone (417) 881-1020.



(Above) The barn as it looked at time of purchase. It never housed an animal. (Right) The completed Salem Lutheran Church. The work was done by Pastor Conradson and the men in the congregation.



The newest of the four new congregations is **Faith Lutheran Church, Fairbury, Nebraska**. Located in the busy county seat of Jefferson County

near the Kansas border. Faith Church was organized in October, 1987, by a large number of concerned Lutherans who were unable to withdraw their former congregation from the ELCA.

merger. Present membership is about three hundred.

Rev. Raymond Klug, who has ministered in Fairbury for almost six years, accepted a call to be the pastor of the new congregation, which he continues to serve together with Abiding Word Lutheran Church (independent), Deshler, Nebraska. Rev. Howard Franzen, Hastings, Nebraska, is the assistant pastor of the parish.

A new worship facility, located at 1630 I Street, will be dedicated on Sunday, June 9, with Dr. Francis Monseth officiating.

The final congregation of the four, **First Lutheran Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**, is also the oldest, organized in 1902 under the auspices of what later became the United Lutheran Church of America. It has seen several

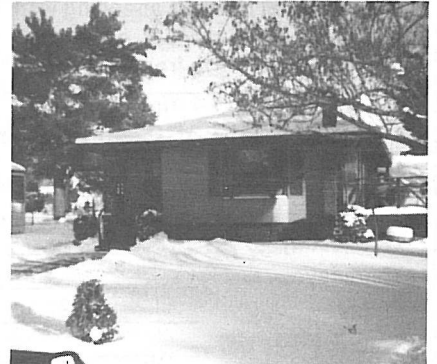
synodical changes over the years, and a growing concern over the theological and social issues led the congregation to request withdrawal from the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), and they were released by the synod together with their church property.

First Lutheran Church, located at 1300 North Robinson, has "mothered" several other congregations in Oklahoma City over the years, and experienced the membership decline common to inner-city ministries. But Pastor Gerald Peterson, who has served the church since 1987, is positive about her future, and reports a growing outreach to younger families in the area.

The four new AFLC congregations will be officially welcomed at the annual conference in June.



**Escanaba, Michigan** — Fourteen new members were received into the fellowship of the Escanaba Free Lutheran Church on Sunday, February 24, three by the rite of baptism and 11 by the affirmation of faith. Jerome Nikunen is the pastor.



**Bagley, Minnesota** — The Message of Hope Free Lutheran Parish recently finalized the purchase of a house to be used as a parsonage. The parish, which consists of the following congregations: Grace Free, Alida Free, and Rice Free, had been renting housing for Pastor and Mrs. Lyle Twite since their coming to the vicinity in 1987. Pastor and Mrs. Twite took up residence in the parsonage during the first part of December. On December 30, an open house was held at the parsonage in honor of the Twites and in appreciation of their ministry to the parish and community the past three and one-half years.

Pastor Twite, in addition to his three-point church ministry, also conducts a Sunday morning radio ministry (sponsored by the parish) and may be heard on Fosston radio and Channel 5 TV.

## Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

### AFLC Benevolences — February 1 - March 31, 1991

FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	REC'D IN MARCH	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	%* TOTAL
General Fund . . . . .	\$ 276,830.00	\$13,116.42	\$27,683.29	10
Schools - (AFLTS) ..	151,900.00	2,578.60	8,589.66	6
(AFLBS) ..	193,950.00	4,428.49	12,651.39	7
Home Missions. ....	433,616.00	13,052.18	46,639.27	11
World Missions. ....	373,715.00	13,445.44	28,038.65	8
Capital Investment ..	25,000.00	1,954.42	4,331.49	17
Parish Education ...	62,670.00	1,265.82	3,684.14	6
ARC .....	20,000.00	327.89	1,556.57	8
<b>TOTALS . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,537,681.00</b>	<b>\$50,169.16</b>	<b>\$133,184.46</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1990 - 1991. ....</b>	<b>\$1,441,565.00</b>	<b>\$98,136.49</b>	<b>\$146,109.02</b>	<b>10</b>

\*Goal 8%

# AFLC ANNUAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Association Retreat Center • Route 1, Box 92 • Osceola, Wisconsin 54020 • (715) 294-2877

June 12-16, 1991

**LODGING AT THE ARC — Pre-register by June 1. \$5 per person or \$10 per family.** This is not refundable. (Includes pool, sauna, lake, beach, game room, football, softball, horseshoe, frisbee golf.)

Names	Dorm Preference	Nights	R/V Parking
_____	_____	Indicate with an "x" the nights you will need lodging.	_____
_____	Rates: \$10 per person.	Tuesday _____	\$7.50 daily
_____	Tabitha, Covenant,	Wednesday _____	Price includes
_____	Daniel, Bethany, \$10	Thursday _____	electricity and
Age _____	nightly.	Friday _____	showers.
_____	Note: no children	Saturday _____	Two dollars daily
Age _____	allowed in Covenant.	Crib _____	additional for
_____	*Good News Lodge is	Bedding _____	R/V's using air
Age _____	already full.	\$2 per person	conditioners.
Please list all children attending with you: age 4-17 are 1/2 price, age three and under are free.		You are encouraged to bring your own bedding and cribs/playpens as the ARC has a limited supply.	

**MEALS AT THE ARC — Please pre-register by June 1.** (Indicate the number of people registering for each meal.)

	Ev. Dinner	Breakfast	Lunch
Tuesday	_____	_____	_____
Wednesday	_____	_____	_____
Thursday	_____	_____	_____
Friday	_____	_____	_____
Saturday	_____	_____	_____
Sunday	_____	_____	_____

## Special Meals

_____ Wednesday — WMF Luncheon	\$ 4.50
_____ Thursday — WMF Breakfast	2.50
_____ Thursday — Builders Fellowship Luncheon	4.00
_____ Thursday — Schools Corporation Dinner	4.50
_____ Friday — Missions Corporation Breakfast	2.50
_____ Friday — ARC Supporters Luncheon	4.00
_____ Friday — Pastors' Banquet	10.75
_____ Saturday — Laymen's Breakfast	2.50

If you are registering for any of the Special Meals, do not register for a regular meal for that time.

## Cost of Regular Meals

**Breakfast:** \$2.50 ages 9-adult  
\$1.25 ages 4-8  
Ages 3 and under, free

**Lunch:** Same price for all ages  
Hot and cold sandwiches - \$1.50;  
Soup - 75¢; Salad - 75¢.

Beverage and chips available at individual prices.

A la carte lunches will be served Thursday through Saturday noon.

**Evening Dinner and Sun. Noon:** \$4.50 ages 9-adult  
\$2.25 ages 4-8  
Ages 3 and under, free

A nursery will be provided each day except Sunday. The hours for baby-sitting are: 8:45 a.m. to noon; 1:45 to 5 p.m.; and 8 to 9:30 p.m.

The cost will be \$2 per morning, per afternoon, and per evening session. One dollar for each additional child in a family. Special baby-sitting arrangements for Pastors' Banquet on Saturday evening can be made.

There will be a separate program for grades 1-12. The hours for this program are: 9 a.m. to noon; 2 to 5 p.m. There will not be any youth program on Sunday.

For accommodations in area motels, see the March 19th issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador*.

## THANKS, MOM!

Holidays are a dime a dozen these days, and no end of new ones is in sight. Call me Scrooge, but I confess that it is difficult to get excited about "Grandparents Day" and "Sweetest Day," for example, much less remember when they fall, and a cynical spirit makes me suspect that some of the new holidays originated in the offices of the greeting card manufacturers. One is tempted to boycott all of the artificial celebrations.

Almost all of them. There are exceptions, of course, and one of them is Mother's Day.

Established by the U.S. Congress in 1913, the basic spirit of the day seems to survive and thrive, in spite of cynicism and commercialism, in a day when the traditional role of mother in home and family is often rejected, even by women themselves.

Mother's Day still touches a sentimental spot in most of us, perhaps because the relationship of mother and child is so close to our hearts and so essential to our society. Mother's Day still deserves our response because it deals with a role that is established in the Word of God and needs to be emphasized with new determination in our day.

Thanks, Mom! You deserve far more than the carnations and cards and phone calls, for you gave us the gift of life and the gift of yourself. Praise God for the gift of you!

P.S. It's okay to remember grandmothers and even our "sweetest" on Mother's Day, too.

## PLAYING GOD

Many readers of *The Lutheran Ambassador* live in North Dakota, and it was encouraging to see reports of the strong pro-life legislation that was recently passed by both houses in the state. What a disappointment, then, to read of the decision by Governor George Sinner to veto the bill!

One statement in the governor's message demands a response: "Government must not overstep its bounds," he declared. "It must not play God."

But that's just the point. The establishment of abortion on demand is a decision to legalize the destruction of unborn life, which puts the government in exactly the place that Governor Sinner seeks to avoid.

The other result of this position is even more frightening, if possible, for it allows a woman to play God by giving her the authority to abort the developing life within her body.

Let us hear no more of politicians who proclaim their

personal opposition to abortion, but who say that they must vote to preserve the freedom of choice for women. What is the reason for this personal opposition? Is it because of a conviction that an unborn child is a real person? If so, then a commitment to choice is a strange and contradictory place to stand.

Let God be God.

## A CALL TO PRAYER

A news article in this issue updates the status of lawsuits that have been instituted against our church body concerning mission involvement in India. Little has been included in the pages of *The Lutheran Ambassador* regarding the lawsuits because of a legitimate concern about publishing anything that could be misconstrued and further complicate the situation, especially since it was a news report in this magazine (April 4, 1989) that led to the first threat of legal action.

A deputy sheriff came to the door of the parsonage on February 19 to officially present me with two summonses, one on behalf of Rev. Bhushana Rao Dasari and the other from his organization in India, as the lawsuits have been expanded to include me personally for writing the 1989 news report. Others who are mentioned by name are Richard Snipstead, Eugene Enderlein, and Einar Unseth, and the revisions are also directed against the Co-ordinating Committee and the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, instead of only the Mission Corporation.

Many aspects of this matter are difficult to understand. It is hard to comprehend the decision of fellow Christians, especially one who was a former faculty colleague, to seek satisfaction through the secular courts, rather than submitting our differences to Christian mediation, as we requested by letter from Rev. Dasari and the Bible Faith Lutheran Ministries to India. Surely God is not glorified when His children air their conflicts in a courtroom; instead, it is a shame (I Corinthians 6:5).

Please continue in prayer concerning this problem. God is able to change hearts and to bring repentance wherever it is needed. The expenditure of time and energy, as well as funds, has already been burdensome. Pray for those who have been named in the lawsuits, for the believers in India, and for Pastor Dasari and his family.

## Letter

To the Editor:

I certainly agree with your suggestion to change the names of our schools to names which are unique and exciting. Also, couldn't the Bible School dorms be changed to names other than Boys and Girls Dorms?

— Rev. Dennis Gray  
Greenbush, Minnesota

## In Memoriam

**Olga Langager Borstad** — 85, Tioga, North Dakota, widow of the late H. Morris Borstad, passed away on March 4 at the community nursing home. Her funeral was held on March 8 in Zion Lutheran Church, where she was a long-time active member.

**Leif K. Fostervold** — a familiar figure at annual conferences, died on December 2, 1990. His funeral was held in the Zion Free Lutheran Church, Willmar, Minnesota, where he was a charter member and senior deacon.

**Miami, Florida (EP)** — Deposed Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega says he found Jesus Christ in the Miami prison where he's been held for fourteen months awaiting trial for conspiracy to smuggle cocaine.

"I received Jesus Christ as my Savior May 15, 1990, at 11 a.m. in a small room, like unto a cave, in the Metropolitan Correctional Center of Dade County, Florida," Noriega wrote in Spanish.

Noriega's religious conversion has been confirmed by his attorney, a paralegal aide, a Miami Baptist layman, and the two Southern Baptist evangelists who led him to Christ, according to a *Baptist Press* story by Greg Warner and Mark Wingfield. The five attesting to his conversion are among the few people permitted to visit Noriega, who lives in virtual solitary confinement for security reasons.

Noriega has not been allowed to speak to the press since he surrendered to American agents in Panama on January 10, 1990. Only recently did his attorney give permission for this story to be released.

Though many will question whether Noriega's profession of faith is a ploy to get favorable treatment in his June trial, the evangelists who helped lead him to Christ say that they believe his conversion is genuine. Noriega is being disciplined in a weekly Bible study program.

**New York, New York (EP)** — Bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) voted to delay implementing "unity" initiatives with the Episcopal Church, ELCA officers said.

A meeting of the bishops voted 45-12 to recommend that no action be taken on the joint "full communion" plan until they've determined it will not jeopardize church doctrine and practice.

ELCA Bishop Herbert Chilstrom said that he felt "our young church is becoming overburdened with demands in too many areas." The 5.2 million member ELCA was formed in 1988.

### People and Places continued

**Osceola, Wisconsin** — A Labor Day Family Camp is scheduled for August 30 through September 2, at the Association Retreat Center (ARC), sponsored by the Hauge Foreign Missions. Dr. Steve Lombardo, AFLC Schools, will be the evening speaker.

**Rev. Raymond Klug** has been approved by the Co-ordinating Committee for the Fellowship Clergy Roster. His address is 1041 G Street, Fairbury, Nebraska 68352, phone (402) 729-3296. Pastor Klug serves Faith

Lutheran Church, Fairbury, which is featured elsewhere in this issue.

**Rev. Wayne Hjermstad**, St. Paul, Minnesota, has resigned from Victory in Christ Lutheran Church, where he has served since 1987, in order to accept a call from the Faith, South Dakota, parish (Bethel and Emmanuel), effective July 1. Solveig Hjermstad, wife of Pastor Hjermstad, will continue from South Dakota to work with *The Lutheran Ambassador*.

## PARISH EDUCATION

### Gifts For Confirmation or Graduation

"A Faithful Guide to Peace with God" by C.O. Rosenius is a true classic of Lutheran devotional writing that speaks to the Christian life. Rosenius presents an accurate handling of the Word of God, of Law and Gospel, that demands truth in the inner man and leads to a peace that comes from God on the basis of faith. (Soft cover is \$4.95 plus postage and handling, AFLC Parish Education.)

"Rosenius' Daily Meditations" is a daily devotional book which also speaks to the life of the inner man. Poems and prayers have been included in this second printing of the book. (Hard cover is \$5 plus postage and handling, AFLC Parish Education.)

**Sunday School Is For You** is the title of our new tract written especially for children. It is a colorful 4x5 1/2 inch card, which lists eight important reasons why children will want to come to Sunday School. And there is still enough space to add the name of your church, pastor, phone number, etc. or a note announcing your fall Sunday School Rally Day.

Now would be a good time to order a supply to give to your students before summer begins or as a Sunday School invitation to neighborhood children who attend your VBS.

Send your request for **Sunday School Is For You** to AFLC Parish Education, 3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard, Minneapolis, MN 55441. (Tracts are three cents each plus postage and handling.)