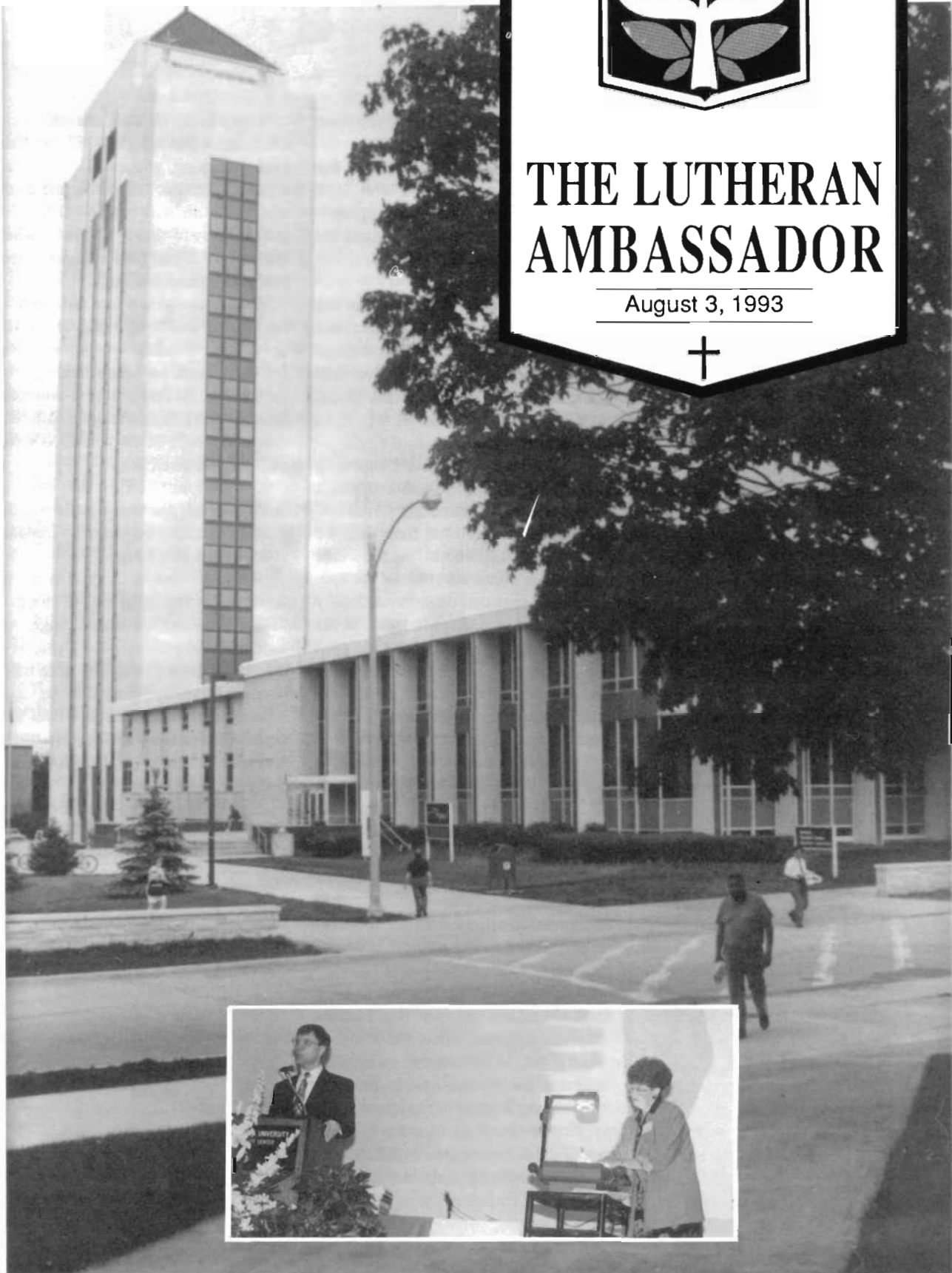




THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

August 3, 1993



1993 Annual Conference Review

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COVER: Holmes Student Center, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb. Insert: President Robert Lee, assisted by Mrs. Karen Anderson, accept committee nominations. Conference photos by S. Hjermstad.

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Rev. Robert L. Lee, Editor
Mrs. Wayne Hjermstad, Assistant to the Editor

Editorial Board:

Rev. Wendell Johnson, Chairman
Dr. Francis Monseth, Secretary
Mr. Robert Knutson

Light on the Way

Freedom

All over these United States we recently celebrated freedom. Many take their freedom for granted. However, others who have come out of bondage to take up residence in a free land will have an overwhelming sense of appreciation for freedom.

I have been privileged to open my arms at the train depot to welcome families into freedom. I have walked with them hand in hand. I have held their children. I have seen how priceless freedom is to them.

Freedom is truly a gift of God.

I asked our Wednesday morning Bible study group to think through the subject of freedom with me. Besides the basic four freedoms we enjoy, we talked about specific kinds of freedom. Here are some of the specific freedoms that came immediately to our minds: to vote; to move about as you please; to criticize officials; to be educated and be freely employed; to marry the one of choice; to have as many children as the Lord blesses and the freedom to voice opinions.

The list could continue. As a nation we are so richly blessed with untold freedoms and for those freedoms we thank Almighty God, the giver of all good things.

However, our study group agreed that there are some freedoms that are more precious than all the others. These are the ones that affect the soul.

We should all be grateful to be a part of an Association of Free Lutheran Congregations where the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity and that the Word is held to be without mistake from cover to cover.

For some of us who have come away from church bodies where that truth is not held, the word freedom has special meaning.

Jesus Himself encouraged every Christian when He said: "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." He makes it even more emphatic when He adds: "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

Luther described that as freedom from sin, death and power of the devil. That freedom was a costly one. Oh there were no beach landings, no air strikes, no fox holes; it was purchased with just one single death. But that one single death was God's one and only Beloved Son.

Our Scriptures tell us that He "has freed us from our sins by His blood." Calvary is about freedom — freedom at the hands of a King.

We can shout with Paul when he writes to the church at Rome: "Thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin ... you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness."

Along with this freedom Paul also shares this warning: "You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love." May God help us.



— by Rev.
Walter Johnson

Refreshed in the Lord

1993 Annual Conference Review

The Northern Illinois University campus in DeKalb, Illinois was a construction site June 16-20, 1993. Streets were being improved and parking structures were being erected. Inside the Holmes Student Center, lives, congregations and a church body were being refreshed in the Lord as the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations met for their 31st Annual Conference.

Conference committees met during the day on Wednesday, June 16, making nominations and preparing resolutions to be discussed on the

conference floor, and sessions of the Women's Missionary Federation, were held in the morning and afternoon. At 6:30 p.m. the conference officially began with an hour-long concert of prayer. The opening worship service led by Rev. Thomas Gilman of Milford, Illinois, followed. Rev. David Molstre of Palmdale, California, shared a message on the conference theme, "Times of Refreshing," taken from Acts 3:19.

On Thursday morning the conference business sessions began with reports being given by various boards and committees. The Committee of Seven's report was a major item on the day's agenda. This committee was brought into being at the 1992 Annual Conference "to study and evaluate the ministries, structure and finances of the AFLC ... in order to bring spending ... into balance with income and in order to promote greater efficiency." The first resolution proposed concerned the relationship between the AFLC Annual Conference and its corporations, staff, boards, commissions and committees. After being amended and discussed, a resolution was passed stating that "any decisions adopted by the AFLC Conference be considered the intent of the congregations and, whenever possible, be binding on corporations, staff, boards, commissions and committees within the AFLC."

The proposal to create a full-time position of Director of Business Services was referred to the Coordinating Committee for further study. Similar action was taken regarding a change in the position description for the Director of Development.

The Committee of Seven had been directed to study the potential benefits of membership in the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA). The conference encouraged further action to be taken in this direction. An annual audit by an independent public accounting firm is a required part of membership in the ECFA. The results of the recent audit done of the AFLC's finances were provided.

The most intense concerns received by the Committee of Seven related to the World Missions Department and involved finances, communication, structure, decisions and the Director of World Missions. The conference directed the World Missions Committee and Missions Corporation to address these concerns and bring solutions to the next annual conference. The proposal to call for a vote of confidence for



Prayer hour was held at 11:30 a.m. each day.



A quartet from the host congregation, Grace Free Lutheran Church, DeKalb, sang during a session at the Carl Sandburg Auditorium.



Rev. Amos Dyrud, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Mr. Loiell Dyrud, Thief River Falls, Minnesota; Mr. Cliff Seldal, DeKalb, Illinois.



Melissa Kruse Jameson, Yorkville, Illinois and Becky Abel, Brazil.

REFRESHED IN THE LORD

directors and deans who have held their position for ten years or more was defeated.

Thursday evening was the Mission Festival Service conducted by the Women's Missionary Federation. The speaker was Rev. Allen Monson of Dickinson, North Dakota. "The church has an S & L crisis," he declared, "a salt and light crisis." He encouraged his listeners to be the salt and light Christ calls them to be.



Members of the Committee of Seven listen as their report is discussed.

AFLC President Rev. Robert Lee spoke in his report of the desire to soon see the AFLC debt free. This desire was shared by the conference. Other resolutions in the area of administration included thanks given for the progress made towards the new Ambassador Hymnal. Hope was expressed that the hymnal would become a reality in 1994.

In the discussion regarding the AFLC Bible School and Seminary, thanks to God was given for the 16 years of service on the schools' faculty by Rev. Phil Haugen. Prayer was requested for the Schools' Board of Trustees as they seek to fill Rev. Haugen's position. The seminary's continued operation in a financial deficit was made known and the need for prayer and financial support was expressed.

The conference took a break each day at 11:30 a.m. for a prayer hour led by Rev. Ray Klug of Fairbury, Nebraska.

On Friday evening the pastors gathered for a banquet and a message from Rev. Charles S. Mueller Sr. The same evening a laymen's service took place with Randy Sommer of Sparland, Illinois as the speaker.

A highlight of the discussion in the area of World Missions was the announcement that a schedule had been set for missionary candidates Rev. and Mrs. David Nelson and Rev. and Mrs. Todd Schierkolk to soon begin full-time deputation work. This will be for the purpose of raising prayer and financial support in preparation for serving on the mission fields of Brazil and Mexico.

The Home Missions Department expressed



Mr. Ernest Miedema, AFLC Director of Development.



Mrs. Grace Syverson, Tioga, North Dakota.



Mr. Al Brazier, Greenbush, Minnesota.

thanks to God for four new congregations that came into existence in the past year. These are in Topeka, Kansas; Cambridge, Minnesota; Monroe, Washington; and Tucson, Arizona.

Information was given regarding the Partners in Planting program. This is being encouraged as a means of providing the funds for the calling of a full-time pastor for congregations in Topeka and Cambridge.

Thanks was given for Rev. John Abel's service to the AFLC in the area of evangelism. Discussion took place regarding the lack of funding for the position of full-time evangelists. The Commission on Evangelism was directed to "present a total picture of placing an evangelist in our Association to next year's annual conference, after going through the budget process."

The Parish Education Department gave information on the materials and resources they have available. These include the recent reprinting of *The Way of Life* by A.W. Knock and *The Adult Class Manual* by Martin Anderson. Also available are a set of four full color posters illustrating *Luther's Small Catechism*. Support was encouraged for the AFLC Parish Education Book Fund.

The mission and purpose of the Christian Academic Education Board was discussed. The conference decided not to fund the Board but to encourage interested individuals and congregations to support this ministry.

Information was presented regarding some of the past and upcoming events in the area of AFLC Youth Ministry. Desire for more co-ordination among the various ministries involved with youth was expressed. Also brought forth was interest in seeking a full-time AFLC Youth director.

Gratitude was expressed to the Pension Board for much work in the recent development of the AFLC's new, partially self-funded health plan. Thanks was given for increased opportunities, services and participation in the plan.

Further resolutions included a restatement of the AFLC Annual Conference's opposition to abortion. This opposition was to be made known to various elected officials. Disapproval was also expressed regarding the proposed lifting of the ban on homosexuals in the United States Military. The appropriate governmental authorities were to be informed of this resolution.

Nominees for editor to be chosen by the Coordinating Committee were accepted.

The business sessions of the conference closed with the issuing and acceptance of invitations to hold the 1994 Conference in Valley City, North Dakota, the 1995 Conference at the ARC in Osceola, Wisconsin and the 1996 Conference in the Pacific Northwest.

Rev. Gary Skramstad brought the message during the Saturday evening youth night service. He reminisced about 30 years of youth work in the AFLC. Drawing from the book of Nehemiah he made the point that, "God counts all and God wants all in His family."

The message during the Sunday morning communion service was shared by Rev. Gerald Peterson of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He reminded the congregation that times of refreshing come when we acknowledge sin.

James Molstre was ordained into the pastoral ministry during the closing worship service of the conference. Rev. Molstre is the son of Rev. David Molstre, the brother of Rev. Mark Molstre, and the grandson of the late Rev. Harry Molstre, all pastors in the AFLC. A call has been accepted by Rev. James Molstre to serve Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Zumbrota, Minnesota. Rev. Robert Lee functioned as the ordainer for the service while Dr. Francis Monseth, Dean of the Free Lutheran Theological Seminary, spoke on the impossible expectations of the Christian life that are made possible through Christ.

—by Rev. Craig Johnson
Eugene, Oregon

President's Report

These past five years have also witnessed a continual strong growth rate for our church body as a whole, with the total number of congregations in the U.S. and Canada increasing by almost 18% ... We are in contact with other congregations, too, including some who are only beginning to look in our direction, as well as those who are already in the process of voting to change affiliation, and the indications are that the AFLC will continue to expand in membership. Our 219 congregations are currently located in 25 states and three provinces, and we could be in two or three new states by the time of next year's conference. It is indeed an exciting time for our church association!

Yet our goal is not only to be a growing fellowship of congregations, but to be a fellowship of growing congregations as well ... In an interview last fall, I was quoted as saying that Lutherans in general have not done a very good job of reaching the unchurched, and my opinion has not changed, in spite of many encouraging exceptions. To paraphrase one of our Canadian brothers, it is time for concerned Lutherans to get concerned about reaching the lost for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our theme for the 1993 Annual Conference was "Times of Refreshing," (Acts 3:19). This gospel invitation is a powerful call to repentance, which we pray might be heard and heeded by each delegate, as well as carried home to every congregation. The Word of God clearly shows that Christians are usually slow to learn and quick to forget, and so the need for revival is always present ...

There is a growing need among our pastors for a support ministry. Crisis situations have arisen in several congregations during the past year, and some have led to pastoral resignations. Thankfully, our percentage of parish problems is quite low, in spite of stressful times and high expectations, yet it would still be tragic if there were only one. We must remember that our battle is a spiritual one (Ephesians 6:12), and that nothing would give our old enemy greater satisfaction than to see a pastor's ministry shipwrecked and a congregation's witness wounded....

We thank the Lord, also, for the adequate supply of pastors who are presently available ... However, as pastors retire or leave the parish ministry, and as new congregations affiliate or organize, there will continue to be openings for our seminary graduates as well as for the pastors who seek to join us....

It is good to be able to report that the AFLC has begun this fiscal year with what could be the most encouraging first quarter on record ... We need to express our gratitude to God for His provision through His people.

Our healthy financial report also includes a total budget that is over \$300,000 lower than the previous year's, which is a clear witness to each board's careful efforts to bring their spending in line with income. Since this objective has been accomplished at the expense of expansion in certain areas on ministry, particularly missions, one can expect to hear the call for higher budgets at conference this year. But

Highlights From Conference Reports

the better way is to vote with our checkbooks by **exceeding** the budget goals instead of **increasing** them to unrealistic and discouraging levels.

The Budget Analysis Committee recommends a 3.9% total increase for the 1994-95 fiscal year, with the two largest increases in missions.... There is ample opportunity to support further expansion of our ministries through special gifts over and above regular donations. Parish Education, for example, welcomes contributions to the Book Fund for new materials; Home Missions offers the Partners in Planting program, and World Missions continues to encourage designated support for new missionaries, as well as inviting gifts for debt retirement ...

The second financial challenge that faces the AFLC is to deal without debt. World Missions has begun to make payments on its 1990 loan to the Church Extension Fund, which presently amounts to about \$47,000. The balance sheet reveals that the seminary operates under the burden of a \$123,000 deficit, which indicates the extent to which Bible school funds have been used to finance the operations of its sister institution. But the major debt that is carried by any AFLC department will be discovered in the General Fund report.

Our General Fund deficits can be grouped in the following categories:

1. Administration Building (approximately \$128,000).
2. The Association Retreat Center (approximately \$175,000).
3. Operating Expenses (approximately \$84,000).

The first area of debt consists of loans from AFLC members and friends, on which interest is paid. The second includes three district amounts: the so-called "forgiven" debt of \$85,000, a long-term loan of \$67,648, and a loan for \$22,700 on which payments are being made. The total has nothing to do with the original mortgage on the ARC, which was paid off in 1990, but represents the accumulated operating deficit over many years. The two largest amounts are included in notes payable to Capital Investments, on which the General Fund is also paying interest. The third category is the result of a gap between ministry goals and income, and has accumulated over several years.

AFLC-2000-Vision is both a challenge to free present ministries from their current debt and a commitment to finance future ministries. Our goal is \$460,000, which can be considered in terms of the following "faith promises:"

- \$2,000 promises from 20 people.
- \$1,000 promises from 200 people.
- \$200 promises from 1,000 people.
- \$100 promises from 1,000 people.
- \$20 promises from 1,000 people.

The result of these special gifts, over and above our regular donations to local congregations and the AFLC ministries, would be a church body debt free in 1993!

But let's not stop with this year. If each friend of the AFLC who makes this faith promise would continue the commitment, as the Lord provides, for the rest of the decade, think what it could mean for every area of ministry: new missionaries commissioned and new congregations established; the publication of our new hymnal, other devotional classics, etc. and the entire curriculum for the "Ambassador" Sunday School series; the strengthening of our seminary and Bible school through new and improved facilities, additional faculty as well as improved salaries and advanced training for current faculty; an evangelist, youth advisor, and needed office staff.

The key to AFLC — 2000 — Vision is not the financial commitment, however, but the faith promise to become part of a 2000-person prayer shield. This primary commitment is to pray for the congregations, pastors and leaders of the AFLC on a certain day every week. I can personally testify to the sense of protection that my wife and I experienced during this past year as people throughout the AFLC faithfully remembered us in prayer. Those who join to form this prayer shield will become part of a special fellowship circle, and will be kept informed concerning prayer requests and praises throughout the year.

There is another aspect to AFLC — 2000 — Vision that should also be emphasized. Basic to the commitment of thousands of Christians in the AFLC to provide special prayer and financial support for our ministries during the rest of this decade is a commitment from our departments to abandon the practice of deficit financing which is the cause of much of the debt, and to avoid any funding that is dependent on borrowed money. One way that God used to direct His people is to withhold support from any area of ministry that may be going ahead of Him, and we must not reject this direction when it comes by relying on loans instead of the Lord ...

The AFLC was born with a vision for building free and living Lutheran congregations. This vision must be renewed for each new generation, for it can grow dim and unfocused in the midst of the hustle and bustle of church organization and administration. The local congregation, not the AFLC itself, is the reason for our existence, yet this can be forgotten when we concentrate on building our church body instead of serving our congregations.

This vision is a worldwide one. The great mission fields of our own land lie heavy on our hearts, and we rejoice in the open doors for Home Missions that continue to stretch our resources, as well as in the enthusiasm with which our emphasis is received. AFLC missions outreach also extends into three other nations — Brazil, Mexico and India — and we dare to hope that the commitment to building free and living Lutheran congregations might take root in these lands, too, in spite of differences in culture and background.

— by Rev. Robert L. Lee
President



President Robert Lee and Vice President Kenneth Moland. Rev. Moland was re-elected on the first ballot with over 75% of the votes.



The 1993 Conference Committees gathered on Wednesday morning, June 16, to receive instructions and room assignments.



Newly elected Co-ordinating Committee member, Rev. Terry Olson, Valley City, North Dakota, and Rev. Scott Gray, Morris, Illinois.

CONFERENCE REPORTS

HOME MISSIONS DIRECTOR

AFLC Home Missions has given encouragement, counsel and financial help to 35 congregations during the course of the 1992-93 fiscal year ...

Four new AFLC congregations were born in 1992 ... Cutting this present year's budget by \$115,000 has brought gifts and budget very close for the first three months. We could continue on reduced budgets for another year, but the Home Missions Committee believes it is necessary to increase budget again for 1994-95 so that we don't get comfortable in a no-funds-for-new-work, non-growth mode ...

— *Rev. Elden Nelson*

CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

A special thank you to Rev. David Barnhart and Rev. Wendell Johnson for their faithful work on the committee. We thank Rev. John Rieth for filling in for Pastor Barnhart these past four months until our conference could elect a replacement ...

— *Rev. David Molstre*
Chairman

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

Again we are encouraging congregations to purchase boxes of envelopes from the AFLC. In these boxes is an envelope for each month concerning the various ministries of the AFLC. If you haven't ordered your envelopes, you can still place your order.

— *Rev. Les Galland*

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

It has become apparent in the area of wills and estates that what was okay yesterday is not okay today. People are encouraged to become involved in a trust and are told that this will handle all their problems — this is not quite true. A trust **does not** eliminate the need for a will ... Please do not hesitate to contact me either directly or through your pastor, and I will assist you in any way I can.

I am very thankful for the construction activity going on in many of our churches. So many are getting new church buildings, and others are enlarging and remodeling.

— *Ernest J. Miedema*

ARC BOARD

... The other major change in staff is the addition of Ken and Bev Hokkanen as Assistant Directors. Our goal is a year of transition and training as Bob and Carol (Dietsche) plan to "retire" the first of 1994.

— *Cliff Seldal*
Chairman

DIRECTOR OF THE ARC

We have remodeled and winterized the House of Matthew (our registration building, near the flag pole) which is now the ARC office, complete with computer, copier, two-way radio and gift shop ...

My enthusiasm for the ARC has not diminished. God's continual blessing on it has confirmed that the purchase of this property was His will and the ministry of the ARC is expanding His Kingdom ...

— *R.L. "Bob" Dietsche*

HYMNAL COMMITTEE

The AFLC Ambassador Hymnal is almost a reality! By the time you read this, most of the copyrights should be secured and the hymnal should be ready for typesetting ... As of this writing (April 30) we have received over \$20,000 of our \$70,000 goal for money to typeset the book and get it ready for press. We hope that the remainder can come in by December. If the money comes in, we will work night and day to get this hymnal to you by the 1994 Annual Conference!

— *Rev. Thomas C. Olson*
Chairman

STEWARDSHIP BOARD

We believe with all our hearts that this Biblical principle is not for the individual Christian alone, but for the local congregation as well — to be a sending station. It is sad to read in the *Ambassador* that some area of ministry is being curtailed because of the lack of funds. May God help our congregations to pray and tithe for the ministry of our AFLC. He promises to bless.

— *Ralph Johnson*
Secretary

COMMITTEE OF SEVEN

... With the direction of the 1992 Annual Conference, our goal has been

to "promote greater efficiency in the operating of our ministries," so that they might reach the greatest number of people with edification of the saved and salvation for the lost ...

Our committee was directed by the conference to "interview and listen to concerns expressed by individuals, congregations, AFLC staff, boards and committees." We attempted to meet with all the boards, committees, directors and staff of the AFLC.

After the receipt of comments from various entities, we categorized the comments and began to develop a plan ... as we were instructed by last year's conference ...

We must thank the people of the AFLC for their prayers, comments and support. We realize that some of our recommendations will not be popular with everyone, but we have come to a unanimous decision on every recommendation. We believe that the passage of each resolution will better the work of the Kingdom of God through the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations and that "Everything should be done in a fitting orderly way," (I Corinthians 14:40).

— *Rev. Del Palmer*
Chairman

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

... Because of past budget shortfalls, our seminary had accumulated a \$122,986 debt to the Bible School. Our schools operate out of one "check-book," but separate records are kept



Rev. David and Janet Abbot



Rev. Bruce Dalager, Grand Forks, North Dakota, was elected AFLC secretary on the fifth ballot.

with the goal of having both schools self-supporting. The board recently took action in eliminating the debt to the Bible School by deeding over to the Bible School a piece of property that had been willed to both schools. We are very grateful for God's provision to erase this debt and the opportunity to clear the slate ...

This past year, AFLC Schools became the stewards of the Chapel building. Remodeling has been done in an effort to get all of our school faculty in the same building. Our next remodeling project will be moving the resident head's quarters in the boy's dorm to the first floor, in order to gain a few more dorm rooms on the second floor. We pray for wisdom in planing for the future needs of our school.

— Rev. Lyndon Korhonen
Chairman



Brooklyn Park, Minnesota.



Mrs. Alan Arneson and son, Brady, Badger, Minnesota.

DEAN OF THE BIBLE SCHOOL

We thank God for the past year at AFLBS. God has given us unique ministry in the Lutheran church to bring about times of refreshing. He has given us a faculty who have a love for the Lord, His Word and students. We had 104 students last year from ten states and the countries of Brazil, Canada, China and Norway. Next summer we will be hosting the Third International Conference of Lutheran Bible Schools.

— Rev. Don Greven

WORLD MISSIONS DIRECTOR

Over the past year and a half, the World Missions office has received numerous requests for assistance from a number of church groups and congregations in various countries of Africa.

One of these requests has come from a group in Mozambique, which is a Portuguese speaking country ... When this information about the contacts with Mozambique was shared at the Brazilian National Church Pastors' Conference this past November,



Rev. Mel Meyer, Marseilles, Illinois, spoke on the conference floor.

they were overjoyed....

New construction continues on the campus at Campo Mourao. Since last year's annual conference, the women's dormitory has been completed and is in use. Earlier this year the Miriam Infant Home was completed ... Construction continues of the health care facility or clinic. We are thankful to Global Health Ministries ... They have provided the \$12,000 that is being used for the construction ...

The Dan Giles family continues in the work in the Aguascalientes area serving the Springs of Living Water congregation. A major prayer concern for them at this time is that God would raise up a national pastor to serve this particular congregation....

Our participation and encouragement of the Gospel ministry work in India continues. We continue to provide financial subsidy for 26 national workers who carry on a Gospel preaching ministry at approximately 50 different preaching points. Our support takes the form of approximately \$25 per month per worker....

— Rev. Eugene Enderlein ◇

Lutheran Brotherhood to Provide Flood Assistance

Lutheran Brotherhood announced the creation of the "Lutheran Brotherhood Flood '93 Assistance Fund." The society will match the first \$100 contributed which will be distributed to flood victims. Gifts, which are not tax deductible, should be sent to Lutheran Brotherhood Flood Assistance, 625 Fourth Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55415.

Lutheran Brotherhood is providing another \$150,000 for local flood relief.

CONFERENCE REPORTS

COMMISSION ON EVANGELISM

We believe, we teach, we preach and testify that we are born again Christians, and that we are a body of believers who believe and live by the Word of God as it is written. There is a responsibility that comes with this commitment. Reaching out to the lost and hurting — this is evangelism.

— *Pastor Lyle Twite*
Chairman

PARISH EDUCATION BOARD

Since God's Word is settled, the "textbook" for Christian education will not change. There will be no new teachings tomorrow, and no old truths to discard.

Grades Two and Four of the "Ambassador Sunday School Series" are completed and being used in many (but not all) of our churches. We are currently working on kindergarten and first grade, and hope to have these two grades ready in the "near" future ... We plan to provide deacon and trustee tracts on the duties and responsibilities of those offices, as well as baptism and confirmation certificates and cradle roll packets used by the WMF ... (Another project) has resulted in a set of four full-



Mr. and Mrs. Eldon Kinnunen, Hancock, Michigan; Rev. Yeddo Gottel, Mrs. Christine Stendal and Mr. and Mrs. William Toivenen, all of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

colored posters illustrating "Luthers' Small Catechism." They can be used to enrich any curriculum, especially the "Ambassador Sunday School Series."

Our thanks to Rev. Richard Anderson and Mrs. Kenneth Moland for their years of service on the Parish Education Board and their invaluable contributions to the work ...

— *Rev. Wesley Langaas*
Chairman

PENSION BOARD

Since we have gone to a \$500 deductible we are suggesting that the congregations consider a plan where they would assist the pastor with the

deductibles. We are also again encouraging the churches to pay the entire health premium. There are definite tax advantages for the pastor in providing this.

We have our ongoing pension program with over \$3,000,000 invested mostly in annuities, and some other investments.

The H.I.S. (Help in Service Fund) has again been used to assist those with special needs. We thank those who have contributed to this special ministry. There is about \$37,000 in this account.

— *Rev. Gary Skramstad*
Chairman



Rev. David Nelson, Tucson, Arizona, and Rev. Todd Schierkolk, Evergreen Park, Illinois, received the go-ahead from the World Missions Committee to begin full-time deputation work on 1994. The Nelson and Schierkolk families are preparing to go to Brazil and Mexico, respectively. Designated funds for their support are already being received at the World Missions office.



At the ordination of the fourth Molstre to serve as an AFLC pastor: (center) Mrs. Sylvia Molstre, Fergus Falls, Minnesota; Rev. David and Sandra Molstre, Palmdale, California, (back left) Rev. Mark and Lori Molstre, Tioga, North Dakota and their four children and (back right) Rev. James and Kristin Molstre, Zumbrota, Minnesota and their two children. James was ordained during the Sunday worship service at the conclusion of the conference.

Lord, Teach Us To Pray



Prayer:

Guidance

Key Verses:

"Make me know Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths," (Psalm 25:4).

"And when they (Paul and Timothy) had come to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bythunia, and the spirit of Jesus did not permit them," (Acts 16:7).

In our complicated, confusing and uncertain world it is indeed a wonderful assurance that God in His Word promised guidance to His children. Sometimes we learn what this guidance is through "closed doors" such as Paul and his companions experienced. What does Scripture teach us about receiving guidance? Corrie Ten Boom has written about prayer, "The Lord longs to hear all of our concerns — any concern too small to be turned into prayer is too small to be made into a burden." *Clippings From My Notebook*.

1. What is God's promise in Psalm 32:8?

To whom has the Lord promised to reveal His leading?

2. Psalm 25 — a. Verse 4

b. Verse 9

c. Verse 12

God's guidance upon our lives has an ultimate purpose that we should be conformed to the image of Christ, (Romans 8:28, 29). We can, through this process of conformation, have confidence in His promise, "He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus," (Philippians 1:6).

"If anyone should continue on in performing the work of prayer, he will become a channel for the will of God. Whenever the Lord has anything to do, He will seek that person out. Let me say this, that the will of God is always in search of a way out. The Lord is always apprehending someone or some people to be the expression of His will. If many will rise up to do this work, He will do many things because of their prayers." p. 36, *Let Us Pray*, Watchmen Nee

Using Scripture from this lesson, write your own prayer for guidance.

*"O take my hand, dear Father, and lead Thou me,
Till at my journey's ending I dwell with Thee.
Alone I dare not journey one single day,
So do Thou guide my footsteps on life's rough way."*

— Julia von Hatzmann

3. Proverbs 3:5, 6

(Have you ever read through the book of Proverbs? References throughout the chapters declare to us the benefits of following God's wisdom.)

4. John 10:27

God has led and guided His people in a variety of ways. What are some of them, as shown us in the following passages?

5. Genesis 12:1

6. Exodus 3:13-17

7. Exodus 13:20, 21

8. II Samuel 2:1

9. II Kings 3:11

10. Acts 1:23-26

Scripture records that people were not always willing to follow the guidance God offered them. (Acts 7:52, 52) How is it with us? Do we have a willing heart? Ask Him to give you one.

11. What do the following references say about our sources of guidance?

a. Psalm 37:31

b. John 16:13

12. Read Psalm 23:3, 4. What do we learn about the path?

13. God instructed His people that there were some places they should not look to for guidance. What were they? Deuteronomy 18:9-15.

Let's look at some examples of prayers for guidance in Scripture.

14. Genesis 24:12-15. For what did Abraham's servant pray?

15. Judges 13:8. What did Manoah pray for?

16. I Samuel 23:10-13. What was David's prayer?

17. I Kings 3:17-9 what was Solomon's request?

1993 Conference Election Results

Vice-President: Rev. Kenneth Moland, Kirkland, Washington.

Secretary: Rev. Bruce Dalager, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Committees and Boards

Co-ordinating Committee: Rev. David Molstre, Palmdale, California, 5 years; Rev. Terry Olson, Valley City, North Dakota, 3 years; Rev. John Mundfrom, Bismarck, North Dakota, 1 year.

Home Missions Committee: Rev. Allen Monson, Dickinson, North Dakota, 5 years; Lay Pastor Henry Mohagen, Towner, North Dakota, 5 years.

World Missions Committee: Rev. Jeff Swanson, Newark, Illinois, 5 years; Mr. Vernon Russum, Grafton, North Dakota, 5 years.

Schools Board of Trustees: Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, Cokato, Minnesota, 5 years; Mr. Emory Flaten, Newfolden, Minnesota, 5 years.

ARC Board: Rev. Tonnes Pollestad, Blaine, Minnesota, 4 years; Mr. Cliff Seldal, DeKalb, Illinois, 5 years.

Board of Publications and Parish Education: Rev. Thomas Olson, Cumberland, Wisconsin, 3 years; Mrs. James Berge, Maple Grove, Minnesota, 5 years.

Commission on Evangelism: Mr. Paul Anderson, Bloomington, Minnesota, 5 years.

Christian Academic Education Board: Rev. Todd Olson, Pipestone, Minnesota, 5 years; Rev. Larry Haagen, Buxton, Minnesota, 2 years.

Youth Board: Rev. Lloyd Quanbeck, Northhome, Minnesota, 4 years; Mr. Paul Kneeland, McVile, North Dakota, 5 years; Mr. Marshall Nessa, Cloquet, Minnesota, 1 year.

Stewardship Board: Rev. Rob Lewis, Newark, Illinois, 5 years; Rev. Mark Antal, Leeds, North Dakota, 2 years; Mr. Roger Rasmussen, Pennock, Minnesota, 1 year.

Board of Pensions: Mr. Larry Gustafson, Thief River Falls, Minnesota, 5 years; Mr. Rodney Kjersten, Roseau, Minnesota, 4 years.

Committees and Boards

Missions Corporation: Rev. Einar Unseth, London, Minnesota; Mr. Robert Christian, Newark, Illinois; Rev. Philip Haugen, Culbertson, Montana; Rev. Mark Antal, Leeds, North Dakota; Miss Carol Knapp, Willmar, Minnesota; Rev. Peter Franz, Cloquet, Minnesota; Mr. Tom Schierkolk, Plymouth, Minnesota; Mrs. Grace Syver, Tioga, North Dakota; Mrs. David Nelson, Tucson, Arizona; Rev. James Asp, Brooklyn Park, Minnesota.

Schools Corporation: Rev. Jon Benson, Ortle, South Dakota; Mr. Arne Berge, Binford, North Dakota; Rev. Scott Gray, Morris, Illinois; Rev. Craig Johnson, Eugene, Oregon; Rev. James L. Johnson, Fosston, Minnesota; Rev. Gary Jorgenson, Ottawa, Illinois; Rev. Jerry Moan, Minot, North Dakota; Rev. James Molstre, Zumbrota, Minnesota; Rev. Mark Molstre, Tioga, North Dakota; Mr. Ralph Peterson, Portland, North Dakota.

ARC Corporation: Mr. Cliff Seldal, DeKalb, Illinois; Mr. Don Berge, Fargo, North Dakota; Pastor Ken Thoreson, Janesville, Wisconsin; Mr. Arne Anderson, Dassel, Minnesota; Mr. Steve Johnson, Upsala, Minnesota; Rev. Joel Rolf, Radcliffe, Iowa; Mr. Harlan Clark, Amery, Wisconsin; Rev. Curtis Emerson, Sartell, Minnesota; Dr. Tracy Wolf, Maple Grove, Minnesota; Mr. Merle Jacobson, Deer Park, Wisconsin.

1994 Conference Committees

Committee #1: Dean Crouthers, Nogales, Arizona; Rev. Tonnes Pollestad, Blaine, Minnesota; Arne Berge, Binford, North Dakota; Rev. Tim Hurley, Smith, Alabama; Eric Westlake, Hamel, Minnesota.

Committee #2: Ken Thompson, Nogales, Arizona; Pastor Mark Olson, Ottawa, Illinois; Arden Jacobson, Champlin, Minnesota; Junell Remme, Pipestone, Minnesota; Jerome Rice, Tioga, North Dakota.

Committee #3: Rev. Roy Johnson, Ortonville, Minnesota; Rev. Steve Odegaard, Tioga, North Dakota; Mrs. Jim (Marsha) Johnson, Reva, South Dakota; Ralph Beyer, Osceola, Wisconsin; Roger Hoikkala, Apple Valley, Minnesota.

Committee #4: Rev. Rick Larson, Abercrombie, North Dakota; Rev. Reuben Unseth, Roseau, Minnesota; Michael Peterson, Thief River Falls, Minnesota; Sheldon Een, Minooka, Illinois; John Sogge, Leeds, North Dakota.

Committee #5: Rev. Jerry Moan, Minot, North Dakota; Rev. Steve Snipstead, Kalispell, Montana; John Kyrola, Forest Lake, Minnesota; Albin Haugen, McVile, North Dakota; Bruce Wolla, Minot, North Dakota.

1994 Nominating Committee

Eastern North Dakota: Gerald Knudsvig, Buxton, North Dakota.

Western ND-Eastern Montana: Jerome Rice, Tioga, North Dakota.

SD-Nebraska-Kansas: Dr. Wayne Sletten, Faith, South Dakota.

Northwestern Minnesota: Martin Johnson, Badger, Minnesota.

North Central Minnesota: Gayle Melby, Winger, Minnesota.

Southwest Central Minnesota: Art Arneson, Spicer, Minnesota.

Lake Superior: Doug Niesen, Cloquet, Minnesota.

Minneapolis #1: Tony Onnen, Cokato, Minnesota.

Minneapolis #2: Irvin Hodnefield, Radcliffe, Iowa.

Northern Michigan: Walter Peterson, Ishpeming, Michigan.

Southwestern: Ernest Schneider, Wichita Falls, Texas.

West Coast: Al Tollefson, Astoria, Oregon.

Eastern: Bob Lawson, Massapequa, New York.

Illinois: Jack Dawson, Chillicothe, Illinois.

PEOPLE and PLACES

Rev. Kerwin Sletto, Bismarck, North Dakota, has accepted a call to be the chaplain for the Pleasant View Luther Home, Ottawa, Illinois, an inter-Lutheran retirement and nursing home community. Pastor Sletto, who previously served AFLC parishes at Buxton and Bismarck, North Dakota, is completing a CPE residency at Jamestown (ND) State Hospital, and will begin his new ministry in September.

James Haga, a 1993 graduate of the AFLC Seminary, accepted a part-time call to serve Redeemer Lutheran Church, Cambridge, Minnesota, and will be ordained on August 8 in his home church at Wheatland, Iowa. The Home Missions committee is providing a partial subsidy at present, with a commitment to assist the congregation in expanding the call to a full-time ministry when the 1994 budget goes into effect.

Rev. Wallace Jackson, Perham, Minnesota, is the interim pastor at Zion Lutheran Church, Tioga, North Dakota, while the congregation awaits the arrival of their new pastor, Rev. Mark Molstre, in late August.

Glyndon, Minnesota — Maranatha Free Lutheran Church has opened their doors this summer to a Friday evening Spanish service at 7 p.m. Jose Flores is the preacher, and his wife, Olga, translates the messages into English so that all who attend can hear and understand God's Word.

Lakeville, Minnesota — Minnesota Valley Church will sponsor "tent meetings" on the church grounds August 19-24 at 7 p.m. nightly, with Evangelist Willmore Gunderson. This is a new and unique venture for the suburban congregation, and the prayers of AFLC friends are requested.

Rev. Timothy Hurley, Salem, Alabama, and **Rev. Joseph Schultz**, Tulia, Texas, were added to the regular AFLC Clergy Roster by action of the Co-ordinating Committee. Both men entered the church through a colloquy program and have served at least one year on the Fellowship Roster.



St. Peder's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nysted.

Dannebrog, Nebraska — St. Peder's Evangelical Lutheran Church, located in the Nysted community, about four miles from Dannebrog, has its first full-time pastoral ministry in over a generation as senior seminarian **Tim Hinrichs** serves the congregation for the summer months. The church, with its rich Danish heritage, was organized in 1883, and has also retained its Lutheran identity while being served by pastors from another denomination for over 20 years.

Affiliated with the American Evangelical Lutheran Church (formerly the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church) and the Lutheran Church in America for most of its history, the congregation

Rev. Norman Hoffeld, Shakopee, Minnesota, has been removed from the AFLC Fellowship Roster at his own request. He served as pastor of Faith Lutheran Church of Shakopee from 1992-1993.

A commissioning service for **Dr. Francis Monseth** and family will be held during the 9 o'clock morning worship hour at Medicine Lake Lutheran Church, Plymouth, Minnesota, on Sunday, August 29. Dr. and Mrs. Monseth and their two youngest children will be spending a year in Jurmala, Latvia, while he teaches at a theological institute sponsored by the German Lutheran Church.

Rev. John Rieth, Amery, Wisconsin, submitted his resignation as pastor of Amery Free Lutheran Church, which he has served since 1987. His future plans include institutional chaplaincy training.

sponsored a "folk school" for 50 years in facilities across the street from the church, which are currently used as a Free Methodist campground.

The attention of visitors to St. Peder's is instantly captured by the impressive altar and pulpit, carved by a skilled Danish craftsman named Jes Smidt, who believed that woodworking was his way of preaching. The detailed carvings of the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, seem to support the pulpit, and the altar painting, also done by Smidt, pictures Jesus in the home of Mary and Martha, with the Danish inscription: "Et er fornødent" (Only one thing is really necessary) from Luke 10:42.

In 1972 the church decided to change affiliation, voting to join the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC), which is currently assisting them in the process of calling a pastor for the fall.

Dalton, Minnesota — Kvam Free Lutheran Church will celebrate its 125th Anniversary on August 29, 1993. The 10:30 morning worship service will be followed by dinner and a 2 p.m. commemorative program.

For Sale: Good Shepherd Free Lutheran Church in Cokato, Minnesota, has church pews as well as altar furnishings (pulpit, altar, baptismal font) available. Call 612-286-2861.

The next issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* will be on August 31, 1993. Look for the WMF Convention and LLF Convention reports and photos.

A REFRESHING CONFERENCE, INDEED!

Refreshing was a word regularly heard as delegates sought to describe our 1993 Annual Conference. Although the attendance was less than anticipated, the smaller registration did not seem to be a discouraging factor, and may indeed have contributed to a closer bond of fellowship.

Many positive comments were expressed about the "concert of prayer" with which the conference began for the first time this year, and Pastor Ray Klug's prayer sessions each day were appropriately short on preaching and long on praying. The evening messages were clear, convicting and convincing, adding to the strong sense that God was at work in our midst.

"There is life here," observed one visitor, and one AFLC pastor commented that he had learned more about our church structure at this conference than ever before. "The best conference we ever attended!" said several others, and some stated that there was less of a spirit of "us and them" than at recent conferences, too.

Perhaps the report of the Committee of Seven was potentially the most explosive issue that the conference considered. Yet, after the first day, any apparent differences were resolved in a family spirit which left our system of checks and balances intact while calling the corporations and boards to greater accountability. Some of the committee's resolutions were referred to the appropriate boards for further study, in response to concerns that the conference was not adequately prepared to act on them, a decision which promises some interesting discussion for next year.

The reports of the various ministries reveal that the AFLC continues its strong rate of growth in almost every department, and the "plateau" where we seemed to be stalled a few years ago has been left behind in the dust. Eleven new congregations (plus one in Canada) were officially welcomed at conference, and elsewhere in this issue is the announcement that three others have voted to affiliate with us since then. The AFLC-2000 plan, which was introduced at the opening service, offers our church the opportunity to be debt-free before next conference, as well as providing a fund for future ministries and a fellowship for prayer support.

Yes, it was "refreshing" to meet together in DeKalb, and to look forward as a church family to a challenging future! All of grace! All glory to God!

THE FUTURE OF OUR ANNUAL CONFERENCES

The heart of our association of congregations is not an office or an institution but an annual conference. This unique assembly characterizes our whole approach to church work, not by exercising control over local congregations, but by providing information and promoting concern and support for our common endeavors. The sessions are intended to be inspirational more than administrative, and the necessary business must never be permitted to overshadow the devotional nature of the gathering.

The words of Professor Sven Oftedal in 1909 describing

the annual conference of the Lutheran Free Church as a "great spiritual powerhouse" still convey the same vision for renewal and recommitment to our corporate ministries that they did over 80 years ago.

Today the AFLC is a melting pot of pastors and congregations from several Lutheran families. To some of them, the annual conference is an assembly that is reserved for certain elected delegates, and there is not the tradition of participation that characterizes our "free church" heritage. This was especially evident at our recent annual conference, which was held in an area where most of the congregations are new to the fellowship and were represented by few if any of their lay people.

This year over 40% of our pastors did not attend the annual conference. Most of them were unable to come for various legitimate reasons, including a national youth convention that was scheduled only one week later, and it must be noted that this percentage does not allow for retired pastors who may be unable to attend due to physical limitations.

In spite of any excuses, however, it was disturbing to hear about the unusually high number of "no-shows" for the conference committees, especially since this means that people who were elected last year did not even bother to inform anyone that they would be absent. Still more disturbing is the fact that one of our midwestern districts was not represented by either pastor or layman on the Nominating Committee.

In light of these realities, what is the future of the annual conferences? When the Lutheran Free Church declined to the point that only one-third of the congregations were represented at conferences during the 1950s, the solution was an elected delegate system based on local church membership. Yet our AFLC founders were convinced that this was the first step in the attempt to transform a free association into a synod, as the merger a few years later seemed to confirm.

The conviction embodied in this editorial is that widespread and informed participation in our annual conferences is an important key to our health as a church fellowship and to our future as a free association. Our condition is not yet crucial, by any measurement, and no doubt the attendance at next year's conference in Valley City, North Dakota, could reach record highs. Yet it is also a fact that there is a problem, which will spread if a solution is not found.

Let's resolve, first of all, that each of our pastors would plan to attend conference next year ... including the weekend! Then add to this resolution an equally worthy goal that each of our congregations would be represented by at least one lay person. This is not the first time that this suggestion has been raised in the pages of *The Lutheran Ambassador*, but could we not strive together now to make it a reality for 1994?

All of our pastors and all of our congregations, renewed and recommitted to what the Lord wants to do through a fellowship of free congregations!

CONFERENCE REPORTS

CHRISTIAN ACADEMIC EDUCATION BOARD

... We have also decided to reclassify our materials so they are more oriented to the anticipated user. These new classifications will include home schools, church schools, public schools and legal and legislative policy

— *Chuck McKeen*
Acting Chairman

YOUTH BOARD

As a Youth Board and Directors, we continue committed to provide resources to congregations, pastors, youth leaders and youth in the AFLC. This is being accomplished through quarterly mailings, the Cornerstone Team, youth Bible studies, resource books, video tapes and other helpful information. This year we have begun a quarterly bulletin insert called, "Youth Insight." ... Requests have been made also desiring more direct contact with the youth. As a result, periodic devotional type letters are being sent to youth to encourage them in Christ.

— *Rev. Joel Rolf*
Chairman

LUTHER LEAGUE FEDERATION

Through the past four years, I have observed much that causes me today to bring a mixed report to you. On the one hand I am encouraged with the burden for youth that I see in our Association. I have been blessed to pray with men and women who have wept for the souls of the young people in their churches and our nation.

I would strongly encourage us to give attention to at least two matters of great importance:

1. A working model of organization between the Youth Board, the LLF and the Youth Ministries Directors ...

2. That we immediately seek a qualified individual to serve as our full-time Youth Ministries Director. Pastor Gray and Mr. Halvorson have done all that we have asked and much more. But they are one-quarter time in their positions ... We have a window of opportunity in this ministry; let us enter without hesitation.

— *Rev. Terry Wold*
President

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Second-Class

A Testimony: "We at the Northern Illinois University Holmes Student Center have thoroughly enjoyed being of service to the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations Conference. We have had many compliments from our staff about how courteous and friendly your group has been. Many groups use our facilities and you have

rated at the top of the class.

Kudos to Cliff and Donna Seldal and Dave Osland for their hard work, much appreciated cooperation and top-notch organizational skills ...

— *Phyllis Roush*,
Food Service Director
Debbie Blakeley,
Conference Coordinator

Three Churches Choose AFLC

Churches in Minnesota, Georgia, and Texas recently voted to affiliate with the AFLC, bringing our total congregational membership in the U.S. and Canada to 225.

Elim Lutheran Church, Clinton, Minnesota, passed a resolution at their congregational meeting on June 16 to withdraw from the ELCA and affiliate with the AFLC. This was their second vote, but, due to the fact that they are a former LCA church, approval from the regional synod must be secured this fall in order to finalize the action. Abiding Faith Free Lutheran Church in nearby Ortonville has agreed to share their pastor, **Rev. Roy Johnson**, with Elim congregation as they make the transition to their new fellowship.

Christ Lutheran Church, Savannah, Georgia, voted for AFLC affiliation on June 20 and confirmed the decision at their regular voters' meeting in July. Organized during the 1960s as an independent congregation, Christ Church has been a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) for most of her history. **Rev. Paul Jecklin**, pastor of the church for 16 years, was accepted by the Co-ordinating Committee for the Fellowship Roster after a colloquy interview.

The latest to affiliate with the AFLC is **Faith Lutheran Church, El Campo, Texas**, which approved a resolution on July 11 to become the sixth member congregation in the Lone Star State. Still served by their first pastor, **Rev. Clyde Grier**, who moved to the east Texas community after his graduation from Faith Seminary, Tacoma, Washington, in 1988, the congregation meets in a "converted" medical center that provides ample space for ministry and growth. Faith Church's previous membership was with the World Confessional Lutheran Association (WCLA).