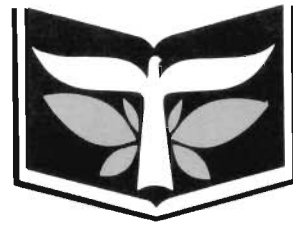
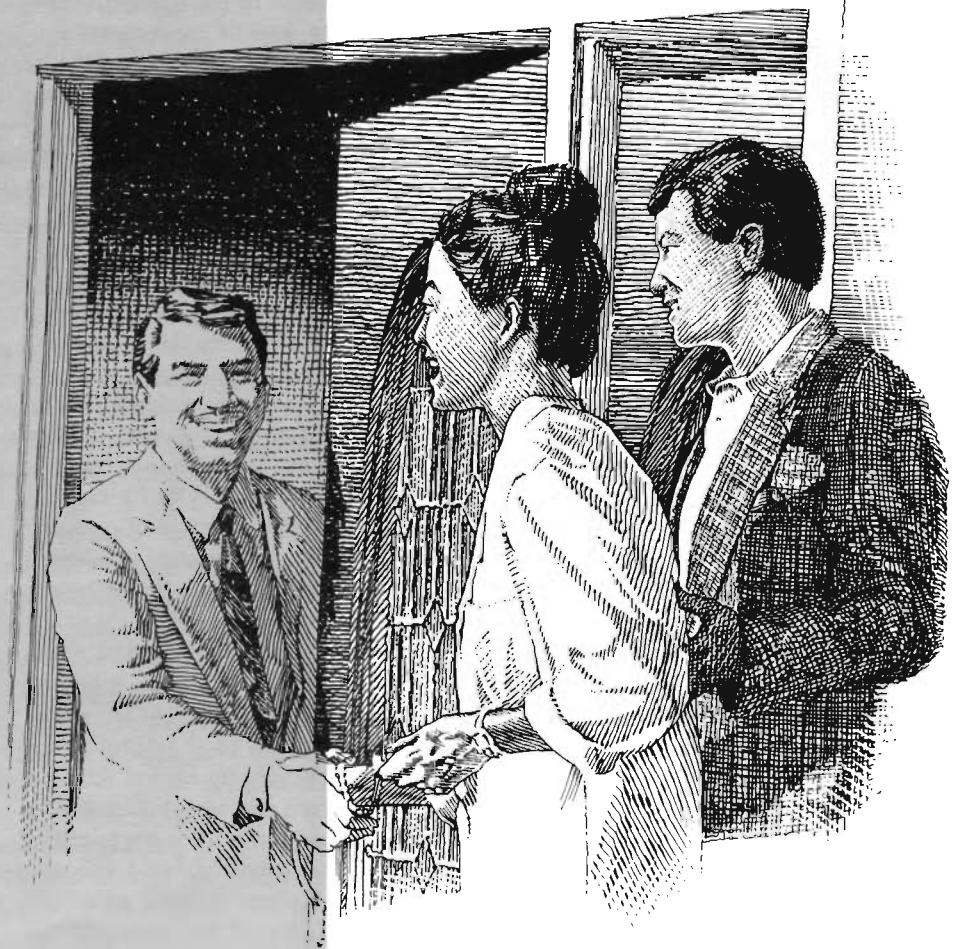


Willing Servants Sharing the Good News



**THE LUTHERAN
AMBASSADOR**

January 5, 1992³



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

January 5, 1993 • Vol. 31, No. 1

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

is published biweekly (except for the second issue of July and the second issue of August) by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441.

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Subscriptions: \$12.00 year, U. S.

\$15.00 year, International

Write to:

The Lutheran Ambassador

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Send all communications concerning this magazine to: Solveig Hjermstad, Assistant to the Editor, Box 423, Faith, South Dakota 57626. Phone (605) 967-2381. Fax (605) 967-2382.

USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413

Second-class postage paid at Minneapolis, Minnesota, and additional mailing office.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *The Lutheran Ambassador*, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441.

Rev. Robert L. Lee, Editor

Mrs. Wayne Hjermstad, Assistant to the Editor

Editorial Board:

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Light on the Way

God's Wrath of Love

In this column, we begin a series of messages from Paul's Letter to the Romans. Paul opens his letter by addressing the church of its faith and its sin.

Paul begins by declaring that all unsaved people are guilty of rejecting Him. He says there are three ways people reject the Lord (1:19-22). First, they refuse to acknowledge God's creation despite the fact that their consciences reveal it to them. But they suppress the truth. Why? In spite of the clarity of revelation, the love of sin prevents people from admitting the Lordship of God over the universe — over their individual lives.

Second, people reject God as one who has authority over them; One who is deserving to be worshiped.

Third, they reject God's commandments even to the use and abuse of their own bodies. So "God gave them up" to practice their own vices because they refuse to listen.

Have you ever wondered about the militancy of those who demand silence in our public schools concerning any "possibility" of a creator, despite all the evidences of creation? This is not an intellectual problem. It is spiritual! There are forces greater than the intellect at work.

Have you ever wondered about the militancy of those who are described in verses 26-27, whom "God gave up to shameful lusts: women exchanging natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another? It is not primarily a physical problem, it's a spiritual one. That is why the only successful rehabilitation of homosexuals has been spiritual.

As the God given gifts of life become warped, twisted, abused, natural results are: dissatisfaction,

disease, divorce and disillusionment. The consequences of male homosexuality is clearly predicted 2,000 years ago in 1:7, "Men commit indecent acts with other men and receive in themselves the due penalty of their perversion," (NIV). This is not some "hot shot" in Minnesota talking. This is God's Word in Romans 1:27 predicting the AIDS epidemic!

Now the last thing for any of us to do would be to sneer, hate or act superior to the unfortunate men, who perhaps due to childhood experiences have become caught up in this sin. However, neither can we condone sin!

God is holy and just as well as perfect love. His wrath against sin is indignation at that which violates His love for us and causes us ultimate pain. Do I dare say it? It is a "wrath of love." God cannot save an unrepentant sinner because of the conflicts of his attributes of love and mercy, justice and holiness. God can not simply wink his eye at our sin. Nor can He overlook it or excuse it. Were that true, then Jesus would never have needed to come.

Sin demands a ransom: "The wages of sin is death." Jesus came to die that death on the cross for you and me.

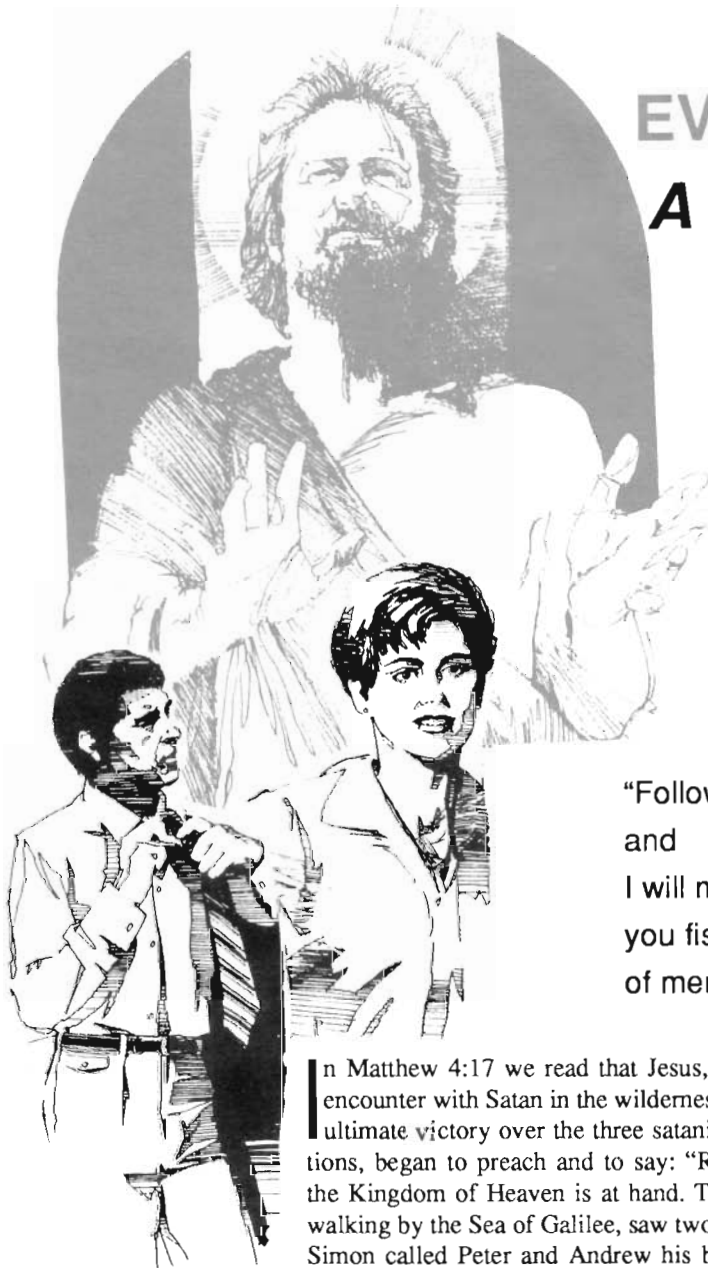
"Jesus paid it all.
All to Him I owe,
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow."



— by Rev.
Lloyd Bjornlie

EVANGELISM EQUALS

A Body Under Orders



**"Follow Me
and
I will make
you fishers
of men."**

In Matthew 4:17 we read that Jesus, after His encounter with Satan in the wilderness and His ultimate victory over the three satanic temptations, began to preach and to say: "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Then Jesus walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother ... and He said to them, 'Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.'"

Jesus first command to these disciples and to others was to "fish for men." His last command to all His disciples (there were 500 of them gathered together at one time after his resurrection) was "go therefore and make disciples of all the nations ..." (Matthew 28:19) and "you shall be witnesses unto me ..." (Acts 1:8).

From these and other Scriptures we can deduct a basic principle which all pastors and church members ought to remember. It is this: **"The church is a body under orders by Christ to share the Gospel (Good News of Salvation) with the whole world."**

The Apostle Paul said: "We are not ignorant of the wiles of Satan," II Corinthians 2:11. Satan

has been trying for centuries to spread the idea abroad that it is the task of the minister or the clergy to fight the battles of Christ.

D. James Kennedy puts it this way: "What would you think of a propaganda machine that said to our soldiers: 'Wars are dangerous and complicated operations and ordinary soldiers could get hurt, therefore, they should go home and let the generals and admirals fight the war.' Well, we would all say this is treason. It is ridiculous and ludicrous but this is the idea that Satan has sold the church."

Jesus on the other hand, told all of his disciples after His resurrection: "as the Father has sent me, even so send I you ... Go into all the world and preach (explain) the Gospel to everyone," (John 20:21 and Mark 16:15).

All of us are "Soldiers of the Cross!" All who accept Christ as their Savior are saved to serve. Our Lord said: "A servant is not above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master," (Matthew 10:24, 26). In His great prophetic sermon Jesus talked about his return to earth; His coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. He said: "Blessed is that servant whom his Master, when he comes, will find so doing (serving)" (Matthew 24:46).

Thus we see clearly that as members of the body of Christ (the church) we are a part of a body that is under orders by Christ Himself to share the Gospel with all people.

Another basic principle in the Christian life is that obedience always brings blessings. Oh, not always material blessings, sometimes we may even experience persecution and suffering. But obedience always brings a blessed inner peace. Dr. Bill Bright, head of Campus Crusade for Christ with a witnessing training ministry in over 100 countries of the world says: "Disobedience to Christ's great commission brings defeat and unhappiness. I have lived with Christians from all walks of life. I have been with them in thatched huts and dirt floors and also with those who live in mansions, but do you know something interesting? I have never found an unhappy obedient Christian, neither have I ever seen a happy disobedient Christian. Circumstances do

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EVANGELISM EQUALS

Following Christ

Paul in II Timothy 4:3 speaks about something in the future of which the Church must be aware. "For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine, instead, to suit their own desires, they gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will

turn from the truth and turn aside to myths." It is very clear that we are living in that time. It is a very dangerous time because people are led into believing false teachings concerning their eternal home.

This same Paul also says to the church: "Do the work of an evangelist." He is speaking to the Christians who have a biblical plan of evangelism. They are the only ones who can save people from the itching ear syndrome and guide people into what is needful; a heart that desires the pure Word of God.

As Evangelism Committee chairman, I again reported to the annual conference last June that

UNDER ORDERS

not determine our happiness, rather, obedience does."

In our work of training lay people to share the Good News in a clear and loving way, we have found that the greatest problem to be addressed is not that of knowledge, but rather the problem of "fear." People, like myself and Ruby, are by nature scared stiff of going to someone's home to share the way of salvation with them. But through the years, we found most of this is imagination. We imagine that people are going to be embarrassed or maybe even ask us to leave, but this normally never happens. People are for the most part overwhelmingly gracious and some even later express their gratitude for the visit. This is especially true if you visit people who have at least visited your church once, as they know where we are coming from.

Pastors, how do we overcome fear in witnessing? Well, how do you overcome fear in learning to drive an automobile or in learning to fly an airplane? By on-the-job training, of course, we get the learner in the seat beside the instructor and we show them how it is done and we let them do parts of it a little at a time until they can handle the car or the airplane. This is called "incremental" learning experience, you learn a bit at a time until you can do it all by yourself.

Jesus did it this way, he called the disciples that they should be **with Him**. For three years they walked and talked, saw and listened as Jesus ministered. They learned to do like Jesus did, for they saw it in the Master.

Our people today are listening to our sermons on evangelizing or witnessing and often say in their hearts, "I agree pastor, but how do we do it? **Show us how.**" As pastors, we can't

just say "do this" or "go that way." We must lead the way. We should never ask our people to do what we are not doing. The first characteristic of a leader is that he or she leads. Jesus said, "follow Me."

Do we agree that the Church of Jesus Christ is a body under orders from her Lord and Savior to take the good news of salvation (the Gospel) to all the world? Will we follow and obey our Lord and start right at our own Jerusalem? Then pastor, think seriously about how you are going to fulfill Ephesians 4:11, 12. "God gave ... pastor-teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, unto the edifying of the body of Christ."

Paul was doing this, and he wrote to young Pastor Timothy: "The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men (people) who will be able to teach others also," (II Timothy 2:2).

Pastor, if you will teach your people by classes and by going out with them (on-the-job training), even though it is often slow going and sacrificial, how to share their faith and present the Gospel, some day they will rise up and call you blessed.

A young businessman, recently on Ruby's visitation team said, as several people have told us previously, "This is what I've always wanted to do since I became a Christian!" Yes, many lay people want to share the Gospel. Shall we help them do it?



— Evangelist John Abel Hitterdal, Minnesota

'This is what I've always wanted to do since I became a Christian!'

we as an AFLC need more and different methods of evangelism. As I left the conference, the Lord spoke to me saying: "Lyle, this is the second year you have said this. When are you going to do something about it?" I spent time this past summer in prayer and reading and asking the Lord: "What should I do?" I encourage you to ask these same questions. "Is what we are doing in the church worth doing? Is it getting the job done?"

I desired the best teacher and the best material; the Bible and Jesus Christ Himself. His call to evangelism is compelling: "Come, follow Me." The four Gospels describe Jesus' training those few who answered the call to follow Him. He taught them to witness. The results are specifically explained in Acts.

A few of us here at the Message of Hope Parish have set our hearts and minds on how to answer that call: "Come, follow Me." Last fall, with fears and doubts, I sent out letters to a few men at random. (Since then, all have been invited.) I invited the men to meet with me on a weekly basis to look into God's Word and to act upon it. I was both surprised and encouraged to see the number of men who came. Others have since joined us. We meet at 7 each Saturday morning for breakfast provided by the men of the host church. We eat and talk until 7:45 after which we study the Word until 9 o'clock. We have no leader. Jesus Christ trained His first disciples and they changed the world. We do assign someone as a mediator to keep us on the subject and to encourage all to participate.

We began the studies in Matthew 4 and progress only as quickly as the Lord leads. From the first Saturday, I have been thrilled how each one shares thoughts on the Scripture. They share how they not only have studied that particular portion of Scripture but also have sought by God's grace to live it.

How many personal evangelists have we sent out into the community? None. But we remember that Jesus did not give the disciples a crash course then send them out. He sent them out prepared.

There are areas in the lives of all Christians that must be acknowledged and prepared before personal evangelism can be effective.

Christians have to see the need. People are dying and going to hell. Why? "My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They are scattered over the whole earth, and they have no one to search for them," (Ezekiel 34:6).

The fear of being rejected is a reality that must be overcome. Jesus has special words of



encouragement: "Do not be afraid little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom," (Luke 12:21).

Many Christians hide behind the claim: "I don't know how." Jesus saw something in His first disciples that He wants to see in each of us. We need to be teachable: clay in the potter's hands.

Perhaps the most important area of his life that the Christian must examine is one's priorities. Matthew 16:24 gives us the guidance for our priorities. "If any one would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me."

The Lord can prepare us to go out and be His witness as we take time to sit at His feet and allow Him to teach us and to change our lives. It is vital to do this with others because there is encouraging strength in numbers.

What do I expect from this? Through these times of meeting together, I pray that all the road blocks in personal evangelism will be removed. Also that these who are faithful will be able to go out into the field that is ripe to harvest.

We are waiting for the Lord to give us the Word to take another step in faith as in Matthew 10:5 where Jesus sent out the twelve.

What can the Lord do with a few good people who are willing to be taught? May each one of us take the words of Paul to heart as he instructs us in II Timothy 4:5: "Do the work of an evangelist."

"Perhaps the most important area ... the Christian must examine is one's priorities."



— by Pastor Lyle Twite Bagley, Minnesota
Chairman of the AFLC
Commission on Evangelism

EVANGELISM EQUALS

Changed Lives

Ten months ago, Sharon (names have been changed in this article) knelt on her knees in the quietness of her apartment and asked Jesus to become her personal Savior. She had grown up in an abusive family situation and had never known how to trust anyone. Trusting Jesus was the most difficult thing she had ever done. However, she had nowhere else to turn so she stepped out in faith. God saved her and she has begun to walk with Jesus as her Lord. She is learning to be a disciple!

Jerry and Susan were getting married in a few months. Many decisions would be made in the coming weeks; transitions to adjust to. In a small office setting one evening they came face

to face with the Gospel and met Jesus Christ as their Savior. Their lives changed! Later I heard him tell me how he and his wife were praying about a business decision. A year ago they would have simply relied on their own human wisdom. Now they are asking the Lord to guide them in their business. They are presently involved in discipleship training. Having been won to Christ, they are being established in the basics of the faith. While others are teaching and modeling the basics of the Christian walk, they are being equipped to use their spiritual gifts for the Kingdom of God.

Paul was faced with a struggle in his family life. He had to literally make some life changing decisions. Someone shared with him the potential consequences of sin (the Law) and the hope of the Gospel. Through this difficult time he too met the Savior personally. Now his perspective on life and his reason for living has changed. Priorities have been changed. How he and his family spend their money has changed, along with how they spend their leisure time. The

Perspectives on Life

For Mark Lindgren, Bloomington, Minnesota, an Emmaus councilman, June 27, 1992, is a day that he will not soon forget. In this article, he shares his experience and the things God has taught him through it.

A friend picked me up at the Omaha, Nebraska airport and was driving me to my parents' home. Suddenly we came upon a slow moving pickup pulling a horse trailer trying to cross a busy four lane highway. In our attempt to avoid the pickup and trailer, our car was struck, forcing us into a ditch where we hit a cement slab sticking up out of the ground. The car flipped over and rolled until it landed upside down. Shook up and bleeding but still alive, we crawled out of the car. Through the hours and days that have followed, many spiritual and biblical truths about life on this earth have come home to me.

1. Even though I knew that "someday" I would die, now I know for sure that I am mortal and I will die — it could have been that day, it may be today. Hebrews 9:27 confirms this mortality of man: "Just as man is destined to die once and after that to face judgment."

2. The cold hearted reality that life is short hit me. I realized that after a time of remembrance, my name would end up on a line in a family history book, showing my name, birth date, and date of death. Psalm 103: 15, 16 says: "As for man his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone and its place remembers it no more." I am here on earth for a purpose according to God's plan: my life needs to be dedicated to things of eternal significance, and I need to make that a priority in the time I have.

From an Accident Survivor

3. For several hours after the accident, I was alone. I was comforted, rushed to the hospital and cared for by people I didn't know. No friends, no pastor, no family were there with me. I'm so thankful that I could call on my friend and Savior Jesus Christ during this time of pain and fear for His mercy and His will. It's comforting as one of God's children to know that he says: "Never will I leave you. Never will I forsake you."

4. As I laid in the X-ray room waiting for the results of my neck X-ray, my thoughts were on the continuous pain in my back and how I would take it away in a second if I had the power. I realized Jesus had experienced much more pain than I when He hung on the cross, and He had the power to be relieved of that pain instantly. But He willingly endured the pain of the cross for my sin; it was His love for me and the world that kept Him on the cross until death, enduring suffering for our sake.

Holy Spirit has changed the desires of his heart. God has made him into a "new creation."

Here at Christ the King Lutheran Church we have sought ways to help equip one another for outreach evangelism. One evening we held a session on how to share Christ using the Gospel tract, "Steps to Peace With God." At the end of the session we asked people to raise their hand when they had identified someone they could specifically pray for and seek an opportunity to share the Gospel. At the time of this writing, we have seen the first fruit of that training session. A young high school boy, with no church background, asked to receive Jesus Christ into his heart last night. Praise the Lord for how He brings people into the Kingdom through the work of His Holy Spirit as we are willing to be used as His tools. A saying that is included in our evangelism and discipleship training material is very helpful to us. "Success in witnessing is simply sharing Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, and leaving the results to God," (Churches Alive, Growth Group Leader's Guide, p. 71).

All the testimonies referred to have come about because real people, who are being trained to share the Good News, were willing tools in the Master's hand. Most committed Christians desire to share Jesus with other people. However, they have never been equipped to be able to do it effectively. That is what discipleship is all about. We are a disciple making church committed to being disciples and to making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:16-20).

We are also having struggles in our evangelism efforts. Satan attacks us when we are soul winners equipped and excited about sharing Jesus Christ with a lost world. Our old sinful nature naturally resists sharing the Gospel with others. Nonetheless, we must continue to boldly share the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit and leave the results to God. He is in the business of building His Church through us. He will continue to do so until the Day of His Return. Praise be to God!



—by Rev. Todd Olson
Pipestone, Minnesota

5. I was fortunate that the car took most of the damage; I could have been maimed or killed if my body had taken the full impact of this accident. Jesus took the full impact of our sin on the cross. If He hadn't, I would be paralyzed or crushed spiritually with nothing to look forward to but eternal death. I still live with some pain, and in this world there is going to be pain, but it's nothing compared to the pain that we would know if God dealt with us according to our sin — then none of us could stand. God shows His mercy in Psalm 103:10: "He does not treat us as our sin deserves or repay us according to our iniquities."

"The experience ... has caused me to now desire to collect the imperishable crowns of life ... "

6. I found it very difficult to move or sleep the night of the accident; even when I moved my hand or a finger, the pain in my back became worse. How could movement of a small part of my body cause more pain in a larger part of my body? Had my "small" sins caused God as much pain as moving my finger was causing me? If they had, then I had no "small" sins — God takes every sin seriously and grieves over each one. John 8:34 states: "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin." As we grieve over our sin, we have even more hope in God's grace as we find in Romans 5:30: "The Law was added so that the trespass might increase. But when sin increased grace increased all the more."

7. Since the accident, I have noticed two television specials about car accidents, one in which car roofs collapse on impact, and one in which seat belts detached on impact. Even though the car in which I was riding flipped and rolled, the roof didn't collapse and the seat belts stayed intact. I call this an

accident, but it really wasn't. The Lord was waiting at 228th and West Dodge Street at 12:30 that sunny Saturday afternoon. He not only kept us alive but kept our bodies from any permanent damage or injury. While recovering at home that week, I found this verse which encouraged me that God has a plan for me and wants me to fulfill it. It's Psalm 119:50: "My comfort in my suffering is this: Your promise preserves my life."

The Apostle Paul wrote about seeking the imperishable wealth found in Jesus Christ instead of the perishable wealth of this world. Basketball star Pete Maravich, who was given a six foot, six inch trophy in his image for being the best college basketball player in the country said that trophy is in his attic rusting away and collecting dust.

Many of my goals and awards in life will someday do the same. The experience of my "accident" has caused me to now desire to collect the imperishable crowns of life and someday lay them at the feet of Jesus.

—from *The Emmaus Light*
December 1992

From Living Word to Living Faith

Have you ever wondered how the germ of an idea becomes three Sunday School quarterlies? In the AFLC the process is both complex and fascinating.

Most churches that publish their own curricula have paid staffs of writers, artists, editors, proof readers and developers of activities and teachers' manuals. The AFLC has a staff of volunteers, beginning with the Board of Parish Education and its Director of Parish Education, and including gifted members of AFLC churches everywhere. Each contributor to the process has other full-time work and must find the time for volunteer work. When the sheep are lambing or a family wedding occurs, progress bogs down.

When our annual conference decided to publish Sunday School material in full color, the process of revising the original Ambassador Curriculum was begun. Before long a call for volunteers went out to pastors and churches, who then nominated church members gifted in the several areas.

In the meantime the Board and Director were building an overall plan for graded, high school and adult class materials. The challenge was to develop a Lutheran and biblical curriculum which would teach God's Word to children and adults in such a way that living faith would be born and grow "until we all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ ... no longer children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine," (Ephesians 4:13-14).

Why should the Ten Commandments, for example, be taught to second graders and the Apostles' Creed to fourth graders? Second graders think

concretely; they are doers rather than thinkers, and when they think, it is to remember what they have done and plan what they will do. Early teaching of the Ten Commandments is important for development of a sense of sin that prepares them for the Savior.

Fourth graders' language has developed to a level at which children can understand some ideas. They can learn what "Christ redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature" means. They still understand only concepts that are concrete, and they learn ideas by having them translated into words of action. Christian vocabulary must be defined and illustrated for children, and a great deal of review is necessary before an idea "lives" for them.

Word lists were developed, using graded lists of words used and understood at each level, including a vocabulary which must be taught so that learners might attain to the knowledge of the Son of God and come to living faith.

After the list of nominees was completed, the volunteers completed questionnaires and were interviewed to determine if they could appropriately write or illustrate for a particular age level and if their understanding of Lutheran doctrine was clear enough so that they could explain it to students.

Writers submitted sample lessons and artists their drawings; activities developers and others all sent samples which were read by the board and critiqued. A decision was then made as to the team of volunteers who should be asked to develop a year's lessons.

Ideas and theories began to become



Peer

During the past two Luther League Leadership Schools there have been sessions on Peer Counseling. The response to the sessions has been quite positive. At the 1992 Leadership School we were able to go into more depth since we had each session two hours. More time could have been used.

Incidentally, Youth Leadership Schools are held on the campus of our AFLC Bible School. The schools are for high school youth leaders and advisors. The school is held the third week of July every other year.

Peer Counseling is none other than Peer Conversations where youth are involved. Dr. Barbara Varenhorst has published a book titled "Peer Ministry." The book can be the basis for pastors and advisors, youth speakers and leaders, to teach Peer Conversations to their youth and others. Her book is printed by Group Publishing, Colorado Springs, Colorado. AFLC Youth Resources has a few copies we will sell you for \$7.

A few years ago this writer had the privilege of talking with a few young men who were attending Bethany Bible Camp near Bemidji, Minnesota.

actual Sunday School lessons. The process that evolved with the second grade curriculum continues. When one quarter's lessons are received, the board reads and rereads each lesson and makes changes so that the lesson will be suitable to the age level. Board members listen as a lesson is read, to see if it contains the essential points and if it is Lutheran, scriptural and evangelistic. Sometimes another reading is necessary to determine if the language "flows" naturally and yet is appropriate to the age level.

Sometimes lessons are returned to writers for recommended changes. Each time more reading and proof reading are done.

Evangelism

These young men were talking about the various problems fellow high school students were having and expressing their concern about it all.

Such groups of young people happen every now and again. Normally, an adult is not there. How can we help young people and how can young people help one another? This world is crazy and so mixed up!

Once an adult leader told me that Peer Counseling training was totally not needed. Youth should be taught to bring their problems to qualified adults. Certainly I would agree with this. However, many of the problems do not get to adults. Many of the concerns are discussed by youth in their peer groups. It seems logical then that they need to be trained and helped to minister to their age mates.

Adults only think they know what youth are talking about! Even those who are out of high school for just a few years let alone months, may not be aware of what is happening in youth culture. It takes much study and work to know what our youth face. It takes working with them in a personal way to be able to know them and what is happening. Unless they

tell us, we will not know.

Another name for Peer Counseling is Peer Evangelism. We do not want people to think we are training for counseling here! Counseling is something which requires skill and training. We are training young people to work with their age mates. This may also be called Peer Evangelism. When the problems get too complicated, it is best to refer such persons to qualified help.

Teens have a ministry to their peers. They minister right in the schools. They can establish Bible Clubs right on the campus of their high school. They do share problems and concerns.



They can provide the Biblical answers to these problems. They can be taught how to lead fellow youth to Christ. They want to be taught.

I feel, as your youth director, we need to challenge our youth to be involved in ministry not only to those in their schools and communities but to those in their local congregations.

AFLC Youth Ministry offers:

1. Seminars on youth leadership.
2. Seminars on Peer Evangelism or Peer Ministry.
3. Win Teens Seminars for adults and youth.
4. Publications for youth and adults.
5. Consultation with congregations who are struggling with youth ministry and who wish to revitalize or evaluate their present situation.

6. Peer Counseling Training.

Call us for information. Mr. Robert Halvorson is in the national Luther League office on a regular basis. He is our Associate Youth Worker and I am available here in Greenbush to talk about youth work.

— Rev. Dennis Gray

AFLC Youth Resource Director

After being approved for content, lessons are sent to activities developers, teachers' manual and Bible background writers and artists. When each piece of work is received in the Parish Education Office, more discussion occurs by telephone, by mail and in meetings.

Art work and activities must be age appropriate and suitable to the outline which has been developed by the Board and Director. The process continues to evolve and become smoother. Curriculum teams are currently developing kindergarten and first grade material.

Memorization of God's Word and catechism is an essential part of all

Ambassador curriculum. The Director of Parish Education has developed a master list of Bible memory verses so that verses important to the sequence are memorized and reviewed and unnecessary repetition is avoided. "For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword," (Hebrews 4:12).

After materials are approved by the board, they are sent to the printer. When he sends back his work, again proof reading is necessary before color is finished and another proof reading occurs.

While all these tasks are being completed, AFLC churches and members

are contributing to the Book Fund. Sometimes the fund is complete before the books are. When that happens, board members feel the pressure just as you do. But we are grateful for all we have learned and for the joy of being workers together with you.

The numerous volunteers who have devoted and continue to give untold hours of labor are greatly appreciated because without their contributions, there would be no curriculum revision.

— by Dr. Mary Lindquist
Grand Forks, North Dakota
Member of the Board of Parish
Education and Publications

1982-1992

AFLC School's Christmas Concert



Mrs. Marian Christopherson, Choral Club director, accompanied the Seminary Chorus. Right: The combined choirs and guests sang the traditional concert conclusion, Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus."



The Seminary Chorus at the December 13th concert.



The Schools provided the evening meal after the concert. Pictured are Pam Jones, Mike Rice and Brad Jones, all of Minneapolis, and Mrs. Phyllis Jones, Willmar, Minnesota.



AFLBS Parents' Day was on Saturday, December 12th. Mr. and Mrs. Dean Franz, Cloquet, Minnesota, sat with their son Mike, at the evening banquet.



Vrenda Bengtson, AFLTS librarian, Mrs. Ralph Peterson and Mr. and Mrs. Bernhard Nelson, all of Portland, North Dakota.



Mr. and Mrs. Steve Jacobson, Sebeka, Minnesota, and daughter Angi.

*Teach me to pray, Lord, teach me to pray;
This is my heart-cry, day unto day;
I long to know Thy will and Thy way;
Teach me to pray, Lord, teach me to pray.*

*Living in Thee, Lord, and Thou in me;
Constant abiding, this is my plea;
Grant me Thy power, boundless and free:
Power with men and power with Thee.*

—Albert S. Reltz

Write your own prayer based on Scripture passages from this lesson. A few suggestions to highlight and personalize are: Jeremiah 29:12, 13 and John 15:7 (the key verses) Hebrews 4:16, James 4:8a, and John 14:13.



Lord, Teach Us To Pray

Prayer:

A Relationship

Key Verses:

“Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:12, 13).

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7).

God’s desire for us is that we seek Him and find Him. People were created for a relationship with God. Through prayer we experience this fellowship. We were brought to God in prayer at our baptism. Our church teachers and pastors prayed with us. Ideally, there were prayers in our home — more than just at meal times. At our confirmation or another time when the Holy Spirit led us, we confessed our personal sin and yielded our wills to Christ in prayer. We depend on God daily in prayer for all our needs. (Luke 11:1, 2)

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray he instructed them to say, “Our Father.” These words describe a relationship. God is the creator of all people. He is the Father of those who have believed and received Christ (see John 1:12) and live in a relationship of trust and obedience. In this relationship He promises to hear and answer prayer (John 15:7, key verse).

1. Read Galatians 4:6. What has God done for His sons (and daughters)?

If possible read from the Catechism, Question #278, “Why would God have us speak to Him as ‘Our Father’?”

2. What does Matthew 6:5-8 assure us of concerning our Father in Heaven?
3. What do the following passages tell us about the prayers God hears?
 - a. Proverbs 15:8
 - b. 1 Peter 3:12
 - c. Psalm 4:3
4. What is God's attitude toward the person who seeks Him?
 - a. 2 Chronicles 16:9
 - b. Isaiah 65:24
 - c. Psalm 34:15-18
5. What are the assurances in Scripture when a righteous person comes to God in prayer?
 - a. Hebrews 4:16
 - b. James 4:8a
 - c. James 5:16b

Psalm 27:7,8 says, “Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice, and be gracious to me and answer me. When Thou didst say, ‘Seek My face,’ my heart said to Thee, ‘Thy face, O LORD, I shall seek.’” What has your heart said to the Lord?

Communication in a good relationship should work two ways. Prayer is not only speaking. It is also listening. There is a place in prayer to say, “Speak, Lord, for thy servant is listening.” (1 Samuel 3:10)

6. What does Psalm 62:1 say about silence?
7. Read Psalm 85:8. What attitude of the psalmist should also be ours in prayer?

Relationships need time and care—as every living thing does. It is good to have a set time for prayer and protect that schedule as far as possible.
8. What was the psalmist's practice in prayer? Psalm 5:3
9. What was Daniel's habit in prayer? Daniel 6:10
10. When did Jesus pray? Mark 1:35
11. What is the purpose of prayer?—to get what we want? Read John 14:13. What does Jesus say concerning the purpose of what we ask in His name?
12. Look up 1 Thessalonians 5:17. What instruction is given for our prayer life?

*Blessed are
those who die
in the Lord*



Emma Utne, Waubay, South Dakota
Ruby Crooks, Watertown, South Dakota
Bertha Hutchings, Morris, Illinois
Janice Erickson, Morris, Illinois
Myrtle Plante, Erskine, Minnesota
Joyce Cook, Erskine, Minnesota
Blake and Jordan Sundby, Argyle, Minnesota
Haakon Hove, Tioga, North Dakota
Alfred Colton, White Earth, North Dakota
Frances Hartsoch, Ray, North Dakota
Evelyn Sharping, Pukwana, South Dakota
Ralph Melby, Dalton, Minnesota
Frances M. Willand, Ferndale, Washington
Rev. J.G. Erickson, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Obert Solhaug, Argyle, Minnesota
Marvin Bye, Lakota, North Dakota
Glorys Haakenson, Tioga, North Dakota
Anna Erickson, Greenbush, Minnesota
Ellen Melby, Greenbush, Minnesota
Leon Baker, Anoka, Minnesota
Jeanette Larson, Valley City, North Dakota
Judith Ryan, Zumbrota, Minnesota
Sandra Schuur, Zumbrota, Minnesota
Mabel Thompson, Shevlin, Minnesota
Edna Knochenmus, Roseau, Minnesota
Oscar Lund, Roseau, Minnesota

Women's Missionary Federation *In memoriam gifts*

Brooten, Minnesota — Elvira Odell, a member of Our Saviors Lutheran Church, celebrated her 103rd birthday last October at the Belgrade Nursing Home. Mrs. Odell's eyesight is failing but she continues to enjoy mail and visitors.



National WMF officers L. Korhonen, K. Knudsvig, H. Knapp, C. Haugen, S. Skordahl and J. Preitauer. Mrs. Bob West was absent.



Wadena, Minnesota — The WMF of Zion Free Lutheran Church decided to help support the Miriam Infant Home in Brazil with a monthly contribution in honor of their pastor's wife, Miriam Klemme, who spent her younger years in Brazil with her missionary parents, Rev. and Mrs. Robert Fedde. Pictured is Mrs. Iris Erickson presenting a "Miriam" name plaque to Mrs. Klemme in honor of the occasion.



Glenwood, Minnesota — Scandia Lutheran Church gave honorary membership pins to Mrs. Donna Sandquist, Mrs. Sally Welte, and Mrs. Edna Lee.



DeKalb, Illinois — Grace Free Lutheran recently enrolled five babies into their cradle roll program.



Lakeville, Minnesota — Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran graduated 10 children in their first graduation program last fall. Pictured are some of the parents and children of the 20 remaining on the cradle roll.

PEOPLE and PLACES

Rev. Alvin Pinno, together with his wife, Dorothy, and their three children, arrived in Eagan, Minnesota, on December 6, from Frontier, Saskatchewan, and his first service as pastor of Living Word Lutheran Church was on December 13. The Pinnos temporarily can be reached at the church address of 4300 Nicols Road, Eagan, MN 55122 or by phoning 612-456-0249 or 454-4967.

Rev. James Ritter, Bloomington, Minnesota, has accepted a call to serve as the senior pastor of Emmaus Lutheran Church, where he has been the associate pastor since his graduation from the AFLC Seminary in 1988.

Rev. David Barnhart, Eagan, Minnesota, submitted his resignation from the Co-ordinating Committee in a letter to the chairman dated December 2, effective immediately, for health reasons. The committee will consider a replacement for him during their January meeting.

Mr. Rodney Kjersten, Roseau, Minnesota, has been appointed to fill a vacancy on the Pension Board that was created by the resignation of Eugene Nesland.

LaCrosse, Wisconsin — the framing is now enclosed for the new church home of Christ Is Lord congregation, and the siding will be put on as weather and funds permit. The altar, pulpit, and baptismal font will be provided through a memorial gift that was recently received.

Pipestone, Minnesota — Christ the King Lutheran Church recently broke ground for a new 6,260 square foot addition, which will provide a new brick sanctuary as well as extra Sunday School rooms. The growing congregation, which is served by Pastor Todd Olson, expects to complete the project by spring, and the current sanctuary will be converted into a fellowship hall.

Mrs. Olga Monseth, 85, widow of the late Rev. Fritjof Monseth, passed away on December 5, 1992, at Fergus Falls, Minnesota. An obituary will follow.

Whose Pictures Are Those?

I can show you terrific pictures of the interior of Alaska. But if you asked, "Were you there?" I'd have to say, "No, these are my friend's photos." The pictures are genuine, but they're not mine. My descriptions of Alaska would never have the energy of Katharine's, because she saw it — I didn't.

Songs are the written expression of someone else's worship when they saw God. **We have their songs and may sing them often, but it's not worship unless we see what they saw.** This principle applies to all expressions of worship.

"Amazing Grace" was the personal response of a grateful John Newton who knew that God had saved Him by the work of Jesus Christ. He recorded it. And now, we who follow can make **his worship** our starting point rather than having our own fresh view of grace. The solution is not self-indictment, but simply the willingness to take the time to remember to look, and then exclaim, "Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!"

It's ironic that in the white water of today's worship scene, it is precisely because we very much want to worship that we may find ourselves unintentionally "trying to worship." There are no shortcuts to worship. We can't

WORSHIP

neglect the looking and sing the song well! but if we look at Him long enough, we shall soon sing a powerful song that is worship.

Psalm 22:3 (KJV) says that God inhabits the praises of His people. He will not be offended when I take time to frame my praise in the honest tunes of a full heart.

— Sharon Torgerson
Mojave, California

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences - February 1 - November 30, 1992

| FUND | TOTAL BUDGET | REC'D IN NOVEMBER | TOTAL REC'D TO DATE | % TOTAL |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| General Fund | \$295,450.00 | \$15,073.56 | \$158,655.05 | 54 |
| Schools - (AFLTS) . . | 149,535.00 | 11,369.21 | 68,315.39 | 46 |
| (AFLBS) . . | 208,625.00 | 10,300.96 | 97,819.61 | 47 |
| Home Missions. . . . | 433,616.00 | 24,515.60 | 223,839.09 | 52 |
| World Missions. . . . | 409,715.00 | 28,626.81 | 254,880.31 | 62 |
| Capital Investment . . | 30,000.00 | 1,236.23 | 15,539.94 | 52 |
| Parish Education . . . | 84,385.00 | 11,364.48 | 59,406.47 | 70 |
| ARC | 20,000.00 | 862.60 | 6,248.55 | 31 |
| TOTALS | \$1,631,326.00 | \$103,349.45 | \$884,704.41 | 54 |
| 1991 - 1992 | \$1,537,681.00 | \$105,455.71 | \$836,158.62 | 54 |
| Goal 83% | | | | |

A CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH

The Church of Jesus Christ is living in the last decade of the century, approaching the conclusion of the second millennium since His first advent. The good news of salvation through faith in Christ has been announced around the world, and millions have confessed Him as Savior and Lord. New doors for evangelistic outreach have opened to the former Iron Curtain countries, and there is no doubt that we are living in a day of exciting opportunities for the church.

The other side of the story, however, is that "untold millions are still untold." The steady advance of Islam in many parts of the world has led to new waves of anti-Christian persecution, and doors that were open to the Gospel for generations have suddenly been slammed shut. Closer to home, secular humanism continues to expand its harmful influence, replacing true religious faith in the lives of a growing multitude who consider themselves too modern for the old idols. A missionary in France, where this secular spirit seems to command a majority allegiance, wrote that the old categories no longer apply. We used to speak of atheists, who believe that there is no God, and agnostics, who are not sure. But today, the missionary maintained, we have a new category of people who **do not care** if there is a God or not.

The Church of Jesus Christ must be challenged to reach this generation with the saving gospel! There is no time for resting on the laurels of past victories, proudly protecting our little kingdoms by majoring in the minors of doctrine and practice, while souls are dying without the Savior. We must not be content with merely shifting discontented saints from the membership rolls of one church to another when condemned sinners need to be saved.

The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations has an evangelistic heritage that still lives today. Not only are we convinced that congregations should be encouraged to schedule an annual series of evangelistic services, but there is also a commitment to providing evangelism training for pastors and lay people. God continues to send gifted evangelists to serve within our fellowship, as well as parish pastors whose congregations release them for a week or two each year to serve in this capacity.

Yet there is room. The whitened harvest fields are still waiting, from small villages to the vast urban jungles, in the neighborhood and around the world. Our work is not finished until the Master calls us home, and He commands us to occupy until He comes.

The Lord of the Church calls His children to awake from the sleep of churchly contentment, and challenges us to give evangelism the highest priority in 1993.

What am I doing?

What more can I do?

While there is time!

INTRODUCTIONS

The first issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* for a new year means that it is time to introduce new writers, as well as to express our gratitude to some whom we have grown to know during the past six months.

Our publication currently contains two regular series, "Light on the Way" and "The Last Word," both of which continue with the same writers for half a year. The first is a devotional meditation included in every issue, and the second, which is evangelistic in emphasis, alternates with "World Watch" on the back page. Both provide their writers with an opportunity as well as a challenge to minister through a succession of articles instead of a one-time effort.

Rev. Larry Severson, pastor of the rural Roseau, Minnesota, parish (Rose and Spruce congregations), is an early graduate of the AFLC Seminary and has also served churches in North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin. Several years on the Home Mission Board also provided him with a first-hand opportunity to give leadership and guidance to the growing edge of our church body. His "Light on the Way" series reflected a warm devotional emphasis, and one of them had the distinction of receiving a request for reprinting from another magazine.

Our "Last Word" writer, Pastor Rodney Stueland, Kenyon, Minnesota, was a likely choice to prepare the series, for he served as an evangelist with the Hauge Federation and as editor of their publication, *Morning Glory*, before entering parish ministry in the AFLC. His burden for evangelism was evident in the articles, and some of his unique, memorable illustrations will no doubt be included in future sermons by many pastors.

Thank you, brothers!

This issue includes the first in a new series for "Light on the Way," by Rev. Lloyd Bjornlie, Winger, Minnesota, who is the pastor of Dovre and Union Lake congregations. Coming to us from the Church of the Lutheran Brethren, he has served both as a pastor and an educator, and we are looking forward to the special perspective that his varied ministry will provide for his articles, which will be based on the Book of Romans.

Our second new writer, whose first article will be included in the next issue, is Rev. Craig Johnson, Eugene, Oregon, pastor of Spencer Creek Lutheran Church. His call to Oregon upon graduation from the AFLC Seminary brought him back to his home state, where he also received his college education. An excellent article by him in the 1991 Christmas issue suggested to the editors that he would be a good choice for "The Last Word" series, and his future contributions are eagerly awaited.

Welcome, brothers!

'Hunger Report' Offers Answers to Persistent World Crisis

The "Hunger Report," a new booklet prepared by World Relief, attempts to answer many of the questions that surround the problem of world hunger.

Despite decades of attention and assistance, hunger continues to kill millions. Meanwhile, individuals in the world's developed nations are increasingly asking "Why? Why aren't things getting better? Why should we continue to donate to efforts to feed the hungry?"

Christians may also wonder: "Is it good stewardship to continue to devote so many precious resources to feeding the hungry? Is there really any solution to hunger in a world overtaken by greed and injustice?"

These are good questions, and they deserve intelligent answers. "The Hunger Report" will help readers understand many of the causes, effects and solutions to world hunger.

This helpful resource is available free of charge by contacting Linda Keys at World Relief, 708-665-0236, ext. 202.

World Relief is the emergency aid, development assistance and refugee service arm of the National Association of Evangelicals.

World Relief Ships \$250,000 in Medical Supplies

Recent contributions have made it possible for World Relief and partner evangelical agencies to ship more than \$250,000 of medical supplies to war victims in the city of Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. These supplies were distributed by World Relief's partner relief agency Agape, an evangelical relief agency in Mostar.

In late September, World Relief also shipped more than \$20,000 of personal care supplies to the large population of refugees in Ljubljana, Slovenia. In addition to ministries in Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, World Relief is helping evangelical partners in the Serbian cities of Belgrade, Backi Petrovac and Novi Sad provide personal care items and heating fuel to refugees.

Our Chaplain Writes

Dear Friends in the AFLC:

It is always difficult to be away from family and friends, but the recent trip to Kuwait with Task Force 3/41 was a truly rewarding spiritual experience! To deploy to what is often referred to as the "frontier of freedom" with a combat unit is a unique and often challenging event. When the border of Iraq is only a few miles away, where incidents continue to occur between the two countries, it makes one aware of how tenuous the "peace" of our world truly is! And, it also makes one aware of the reality that if the world were truly living by Christian precepts, how wonderful it would be!

Seeing firsthand the effects of Islam, one sees how it truly is a "religion of convenience" that allows its practitioners to exploit one another in ways that would leave even the most nominal Christian in awe. Far from being the benevolent and even-handed religion that its proponents would have us believe, it is oppressive, narrow, and hypocritical in its practices. And, far from being a unifying force, it will continue to be a source of divisiveness for the Arab peoples. Coalitions are formed on the basis of Islam only for so long, and as far as, they are beneficial to the individuals involved.

So, what should our reaction be? I believe continued prayer for and support of missions. Just as our mission-

aries have expressed, I could **feel** when there were people praying. What a power and boldness was felt when I received cards from those who were praying, such as the WMF of Zion in Wadena, and a beautiful worship banner from Wichita Falls WMF! Contacts such as those lifted my spirits and encouraged me ... may we not forget to communicate with our missionaries on a regular basis!

By the time this letter is received, I will be back with my family at Fort Hood. The ministry will go on, and I will be faced especially with challenges from those families who have not dealt with the separation in a positive way. Pray for those soldiers and their families, that they can discover the **power of Christ** for healing their marriages and relationships. Our unit will go directly into a very intense field training schedule, with even more separation from families ... and so the challenges and opportunities will continue! Pray for my family as well, as we are not immune to the pressures of military life! Praise God we have the sustaining power of Christ, as revealed in Psalm 62!

Keeping the focus on the mission ... that is what our unit tried to put into practice in Kuwait. And, that is a good message for every Christian! May each of us focus on the mission that God has given to us, to bring the Good News to our generation.

In Him,
CH (CPT) Michael Crowell