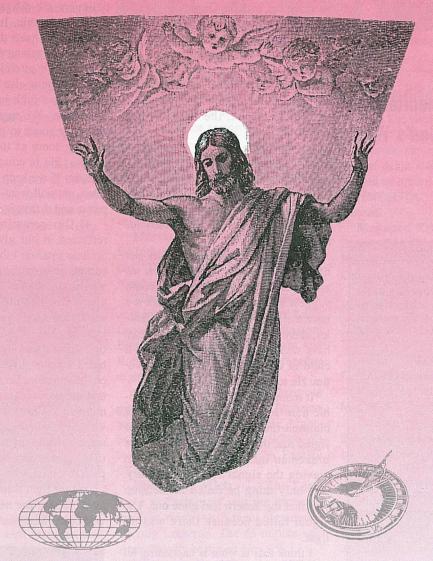
AMBASSADOR

January 9, 1990



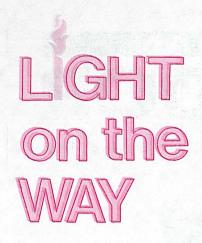


The coming of our Lord is drawing nigh. We must press the kingdom work as never before.

-R. Snipstead

The AFLC and the 1990s

A million points of light



meditations on God's Word

Volume 28 Number 1

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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

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Subscriptions: \$10.00 per year.

Write to:

The Lutheran Ambassador 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd. Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

All communications concerning contents of this magazine should be addressed to: Rev. Raynard Huglen, Editor, Newfolden, Minn. 56738.

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

USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413

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

Hebrews 12:1, 2

hen President George Bush took office, he said that he wanted this to be a kinder and gentler nation showing forth a thousand points of light. That was a high and lofty goal. Whether or not he will succeed, only time will tell.

But, we, as believers in Jesus Christ, have a higher goal. We are to show forth a million points of light as we reach out with the Gospel.

Some of our churches had candlelight services during the Christmas season. In the darkened church, as the candles were lit, one from the other, the whole church was soon aglow as the candles were held high, bearing witness to Christ, the Light of the world.

As we begin the new year and a new decade, we cannot help but be impressed with the responsibility we have to let our light shine. People are not going to get to know the truth unless those who are Christians let their lights shine.

How, then, are we going to let our light shine? How will people know we are the children of the Light? I would suggest several ways: 1) Be sure we have the light. If Christ is not our Savior, there is no light to shine. We may have many of the characteristics of a child of God, but still lack the salvation He supplies.

It reminds me of the story of a terrible train wreck in which the engineer claimed the brakeman had failed to signal that the bridge was out. But the brakeman insisted that he had been waving the signal lantern furiously. The only thing he failed to mention was that the lantern had gone out. The signal failed because there was no light.

I think that is what is happening all too often. We try to let our light shine when we don't have the light. Only as we confess our sins to Jesus and open our hearts to Him can we have life in Christ. Only then can our light shine.

2) The light of Christ will shine through us when we daily study His Word and take time to pray. We believe the Bible is the Word of God. It is the instrument by which the Holy Spirit reaches our hearts. If we believe this about the Word, shouldn't we be diligent to study it every day?

Prayer must be an integral part of our study of the Word. Ask the Lord to open up your heart so that you can speak to Him and know that He will hear and answer prayer.

3) The light shines forth when believers are diligent in their attendance at worship. It is a sad fact that many do not take this very seriously. Almost everything else takes priority over church attendance. They go if there is nothing else to do. Even people who profess faith in Christ are lax in this matter. We agree that we are not saved by going to church. God is not keeping score as to how regular you are, but He is concerned about your attitude. If we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, we will want to worship Him in praise and thanksgiving.

4) Our commitment to Christ is reflected in our giving. When I first became a pastor, I thought that if a person committed his life to Christ, he would automatically become a good giver. But I found out that it didn't work that way. A Christian needs to learn to give. He must see the blessings that come from systematic giving. I heard a pastor give an enthusiastic talk on stewardship. He made the statement that the only measure of a man's commitment to Christ is his giving. While I would not wholly agree with that statement, I would say that it contains some truth. Our giving bears witness to our faith in Christ.

Let the light shine forth through you as we begin the new year. Then this will be the best year ever!



— by Pastor James Asp

AHEAD LOOKING

In this and the following issue of the *Ambassador* we will read what leaders of AFLC work see as they look ahead into the decade of the 1990s. They share their vision of the task and mission of our church fellowship, specifically as it relates to their particular field of responsibility. We begin here on page 3 with the comments of our president, Pastor Snipstead.



Our president writes

— Pastor Richard Snipstead

e are about to move into the last decade of this century. That is significant enough, but when we realize that this is also the last decade of this millennium it gives even greater cause for reflection on the past and contemplation of the future.

A portion of the Word that bears on where we are as an AFLC is the letter to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia. In Revelation 3, that church is described as having "a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name."

The AFLC has grown during the last decade. In fact, it is a very respectable growth. There were 131 congregations in the AFLC 10 years ago. Today we number 200. Indications are that the AFLC will continue to see growth into the next decade.

Ten years ago the annual conference approved a budget subsidy of \$582,237.00. Last summer the conference approved a budget subsidy of \$1,462,566.00. It is true that inflation makes up a part of this increase, but it is also an indication that the ministries and outreach of the AFLC have grown.

There are additional factors that could be referred to that would give support to the observation that the AFLC had truly experienced growth in the last decade. On the basis of what we have shared, it could be said of the AFLC what is recorded about the church in Philadelphia, "thou hast a little strength." What folly it would be for us to begin to trust in the little strength that we may feel we have because God has blessed. Our sole source of strength for the coming decade must be in the resources of God and His continued blessing.

Of the church in Philadelphia it was said, "and hast kept

My word, and hast not denied My name." If there is any one reason for God's blessing on the AFLC, not only in the last decade, but since its beginning, it would be because of our stand on God's Word. From our beginning, we have declared "that the Bible is our only authentic and infallible source of God's revelation to us and all men, and that it is the only inerrant and completely adequate source and norm of Christian doctrine and life." This we must maintain as we move into the new decade and begin to prepare for a new century and a new millennium.

There is a precious promise given to the Philadelphian church. It is in the 10th verse. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." There is no question that we are moving into a decade where Christians will begin to experience in an increasing way the pressures and hostilities of the world. If the incredible, rapid changes of the past decades continue, what does the coming decade hold for the church of Christ?

Because the promise of God is there, "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation," it behooves us as a church to get our priorities in order. There are indications that the clock of time is winding down. We could well be in the closing days of history. The coming of our Lord is drawing nigh. We must press the kingdom work as never before. The coming decade may be the last we will have to reach souls for Christ. Let us give ourselves to prayer and for an awakening and for an increased vision of our opportunities to make an impact for Christ.

The 11th verse of Revelation 3 states, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." The coming of Christ is coming near. World events should be underscoring the message that Jesus gave: "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). Oh, that every person in our AFLC would begin each day of the new decade with the thought, "Maybe today Jesus will come."

ENTERING A NEW DECADE



"Church
planting is that
procedure
whereby a field
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need."

n attempt to look into the future can be both exciting and frightening. The Christian finds it exciting in that Christ is coming again. In that dimension of life the Christian will experience the ultimate goal of heaven and sitting at the feet of the Savior. Perhaps that wonderful event will happen in the '90s. However, we cannot sit back and wait because there are billions of souls yet today that are not prepared to meet Christ. That is the frightening part of looking ahead. Thus we as an AFLC press on in faith and obedience to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord.

A resolution passed at the AFLC's 1980 annual conference adopted a goal of 30 new congregations in the '80s. It seemed rather ambitious at that time. Now, ten years later, we give thanks to God for 46 new congregations during the past decade. These new congregations are now part of the base that is being built and in the next decade will have a significant part in the outreach and growth of the AFLC.

Church planting is that procedure whereby a field is selected because of its potential and need. Thus the Home Mission Committee takes the initiative to develop new congregations. Less than 15% of new starts in the past ten years were the result of church planting. The vast majority began where the Home Mission Department received from a small group of people the Macedonian call, "Come over and help us." We therefore could conclude that the latter procedure is the most productive. However, we must qualify that statement by saying it was the better procedure for that period of time. Now we are looking ahead to a new decade. Inquiries are fewer and farther between than they were

two years ago or even one year ago. It may be that we will again see a flood of inquiries and hear the calls for help, but in the meantime, with the Great Commission still before us, it becomes necessary to be in search of new areas and to send workers in to open the fields and develop new congregations. Church planting differs from answering the Macedonian call in two respects. First of all, in church planting there isn't a nucleus of people waiting to get started. The pastor's first task in church planting is to knock on doors and draw together a nucleus of people interested in developing a church where the Word of God is taught and preached in all its power so that people in their community are reached for Christ. That nucleus often is made up of people new in the faith and unacquainted with congregational life. Thus there is need not only for sound biblical preaching and teaching but also for wisdom and patience as a new congregation develops.

The second difference is that in church planting it usually takes more dollars to bring a new work to the point of being self-supporting. Ten years ago the average subsidy to each Home Mission congregation was \$657.39 per month. For the 88-89 fiscal year, average subsidy to each Home Mission congregation was \$622.59. It is very likely that average monthly subsidies for church planting in the next decade could be two to three times more than what it has been over the last decade. We might be led to think that the cost is too high, but our mandate has not changed. Our God has said, "Go!"

As we set foot in the '90s we dare not depend on past achievements or our ability. We must follow the leading of our God for every step we take. He will faithfully lead and provide so that His will shall be accomplished. For this decade He requires nothing more than He has in years past. He requires that His people listen carefully to His Word, that they be faithful in prayer and committed to the task of proclaiming the Gospel both at home and abroad.

Let us together embark on the path before us claiming the promise of our God from Joshua 1:9, "Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."



— Pastor Elden Nelson Director of Home Missions, AFLC he 1990s, the last decade before the end of the second millennium after Christ, is a milestone toward which man has often focused his attention. Within the missions community the year Two Thousand serves as a target date for prayerful fulfillment of reaching all people with the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Never in all the history of the church has there existed such a realistic possibility of evangelizing the world as in the next decade. The church's mission is to evangelize the lost, to edify the believers and to establish local congregations (Acts 14:21-23). If this is not the program in which we are involved, then we are not involved in biblical missions. This program of ministry is clearly laid out for us by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in Matthew 28:19-20 (The Great Commission).

We see that our responsibility before the Lord is to make disciples, to win converts to Christ throughout the world, among all people. They are to be brought into the fellowship of the Body of Christ, nourished, and strengthened, baptized and taught. All of this can be seen where and whenever the Apostles and the early Church brought the Gospel to their world. This was Christ's mission and the commission that He left us. As each believer sees and assumes his personal responsibility for reaching out through his talents and means even to the ends of the earth, the task before us can be accomplished. Obedience on our part is the key to world evangelization.

Statisticians tell us that the world's population is increasing by (2%) 100,000,000 people a year. Daily some 130,000 people die and most of them never have heard the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. These are not just numbers, each is an eternal soul for which Jesus Christ gave His life. The Savior is bidding you to do your part that they all might have that precious opportunity of hearing the Gospel of Life, receiving Christ and being saved.

As an integral part of the Body of Christ, we, of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, seek to be obedient to Christ's Commission to carry His Gospel to all people. We are actively carrying on work in two of the most populous nations of the world, Brazil and Mexico.

Our Heavenly Father has blessed our meager efforts to be obedient to His command. It is now 25 years since our first missionaries began work in Brazil. Through their faithful work, souls have been saved, the church planted and believers strengthened and established. Today our Brazilian AFLC, under national leadership, is seeking to reach out with the Gospel and plant the church in new areas. I believe that in these coming years we will see our missionaries and national pastors working in a team type of ministry of evangelism and church planting. In this coming year we will see additional teaching responsibilities assumed by Brazilians at our Seminary and Bible School at Campo Mourao. Our Brazil AFLC has set for itself the very ambitious program of duplicating itself in the next few years. I believe and trust that during this next decade we will reach the long-standing goal of our AFLC to have six missionary couples on the field who are laboring with our Brazilian brothers and sisters in realizing this goal.

Nearer to home is our neighbor to the south, Mexico. New opportunities for growth and outreach are before us! I believe that it is critical for us to prayerfully call out and send at least one couple to serve as co-workers to the Giles family in Mexico. Already our congregation in Nogales is supporting a sister congregation across the border in Northern Mexico. I believe we will see our work in Mexico expand to and grow along the border area. I foresee the opportunity of joint Home Mission/World Mission work along new areas of the border similar to the ministry presently being carried on in Nogales.

I also believe that the time has come for us as a church to begin to reach out to the many Hispanics who now make their home among us. Although we all bear before the Lord a responsibility to reach out to the uttermost places, there may be an opportunity to be cross-cultural missionaries on our very door step.

World Missions

REACHING ALL WITH THE GOSPEL



—by Pastor Eugene Enderlein Director of World Missions

Commission on Evangelism

THE FUTURE OF EVANGELISM IN THE AFLC

s long as the Lord tarries, we must be about His business. As Jesus tells us in the book of Luke, "Occupy until I come."

We, the Commission on Evangelism, are thankful to God that Rev. John Abel and his wife Ruby will be conducting evangelistic meetings, as well as teaching how to share our faith, for the first four months of 1990. We trust that they will be able to continue again in the fall, as long as the Lord desires.

However, we've considered this as only the beginning of something that will and must multiply many times over. We hope that in the future we will be able to have as many full-time and part-time evangelists preaching and teaching as the Lord directs. I remind you of a Scripture that has been used many times, the words of Jesus Christ in Matthew 9: "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." These words should carry a special meaning for those of us who live in, or are acquainted with, rural America. We are well aware of what the end result is for a crop that is left in the field and never harvested. It is lost. As we think of souls leaving this life for eternity apart from God, let us pull together and pray for evangelism in our beloved Association.

We have a larger goal in evangelism

than one or 100 full-time men. Our goal is that the evangelists, along with pastors, would be Spirit-filled and Spirit-led to challenge, to encourage and to equip every Christian to do the work of evangelism, as Paul instructed Timothy (II Timothy 4:5).

May each of us be a living testimony of the saving grace of Jesus Christ in our actions, our attitudes and our speech. Our goal is not only for men "for the road," but that every Christian in the AFLC would be a powerful, living force of love and concern for the eternal destiny of our fellow men.

How does this come about? Proverbs 29:18 (King James Version) says it like this: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." I believe the vision lies within the churches, the Christians, in the AFLC. My prayer and my goal (and I'm sure I speak for the others serving on the Commission on Evangelism) is that the Christians in the AFLC would have a vision of the eternal state of those who are perishing. We need a burden for those who are led astray by liberal preaching, for those who seem to just not care nor have any concern at all for our young people. Our young people live in a difficult world and are trying to make something out of it. We need this vision in the Lutheran Church as well as other churches.

I pray that this vision would encompass what Jesus Christ has done for us and what He could do for all our fellow men. It will become a vision, it will become a burden upon our hearts that we have the same zeal as the early church in the book of Acts.

There is another touchy area I believe we have to conquer. I have been told, and I have heard, that it's not right for us to speak to people from other churches because this is what is called "sheep stealing." I do not agree. If souls are in danger of being lost, my friends, we cannot draw any line and say "No Trespassing" here. It is our call to do what we can to change the course of as many lives as we can. I believe the AFLC can have a great future not only in size or in numbers but as a stable spiritual people, a true witness for the Lord and a place where others can turn in time of need. I believe that this has begun to happen. Evangelism must play a great role in the future of the AFLC. Let us remember that God has brought us out and God has established us for a purpose — to evangelize.

God bless you this year.



– Pastor Lyle Twite, Chairman

"As we think of souls leaving this life for eternity apart from God, let us pull together and pray for evangelism in our beloved Association."

Parish Education

BUILDING ON THE PROPHETIC WORD

nd so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts" (II Peter 1:19).

The overall goal and ministry of AFLC Publications and Parish Education for the future remains what it has been and always must be: to supply Christian education material for our churches that upholds the purity and integrity of biblical, Lutheran doctrine. The next decade will demand a strong Christian education presence if the church is to stand against the darkness. We will continue to build on the prophetic Word, to keep the lamp shining in a dark place. As the day of the Lord nears, the darkness deepens. But the Word will continue to shine brightly and we will pay attention to it that we and our children will be prepared to meet Jesus.

Therefore, some of our work will be to:

1. Complete the Ambassador Sunday School curriculum for the AFLC. We want to see a complete Sunday School curriculum for all ages, preschool through adult, that is biblicallystrong and built around the Catechism and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church. We also plan to provide suitable material for Vacation Bible

School and confirmation classes. Along with these basic materials, we will need supplementary teaching aids and resources for a complete educational ministry in the AFLC. These commitments mean continuing growth of the AFLC Parish Education Department.

2. Look beyond the AFLC. There is an urgent need for sound biblical and Lutheran material in our own congregations that reflects our doctrinal beliefs and practices and we must provide for that first. But the Lord's commission to the church demands that we also look beyond ourselves. Not only do we want to see our own churches using material produced by the AFLC, but there is a wide-open door for the same kind of material in other, particularly Lutheran, church bodies. Some interest has already been shown and we must be ready for that opportunity for Christian witness.

3. Revive the classics. The Scripture remains at the center of our preaching and teaching ministry. Paying attention to that light and teaching it correctly will nurture living congregations and personal faith in the years to come. But the Lutheran Church also has a great tradition of devotional writings that edify and enlighten the believer. We look for renewed interest in and appreciation for the classics of

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Lutheran doctrinal and devotional writings, many of which are no longer available. As time and finances permit, we are fully committed to reprinting and publishing this material.

But most important, the Lord Himself holds and secures our future and will provide for the continued prayers, encouragement and support of His church for His work.

> — Pastor Wesley Langaas Chairman, Board of Publications and Parish Education

the New year and the old rugged cross

"The idea seems to be that if we improve this or change that, God will be pleased..."



— By Rev. Dale A. Mellgren Tioga, N. Dak.

ith the coming of the new year there are normally resolutions which reveal a desire for improvement. Nowhere is the desire for an improved life more alive than in the church. With a saving knowledge of Christ comes the continual longing to be more like Him, to make Him known to others, to be faithful. While the world looks at outward circumstances and attempts to improve them, the believer looks within and surrenders himself to God. It is this total helplessness apart from the grace and mercy of God which enables God to bestow His grace, to impart new life and to make things better from the inside out.

Christians are aware of the need for God to do a mighty work in our world. Moral chaos, ungodly philosophies and blatant evil increase. There is often a desperation evident in the Church's response to such things. While there are actions which can and must be taken by us, there is also the great danger of attempting to thwart these attacks with mere human power and programs.

Often in the individual life of the believer, human resolution and strength are employed against evil. We must be convinced by God that we are, in ourselves, powerless against evil before we can overcome sin and the forces of darkness. This helplessness is a lifelong condition and the Christian is the one who knows this. Therefore, a believer, having seen the depth of his sin and his total lack of power over it, is free from the trap of attempting to thwart evil by his own determination and activity. Yet, it is all too common for us to try to clean up our lives and revive ourselves spiritually through human discipline and effort. The idea seems to be that if we improve this or change that, God will be pleased and therefore obligated to accept us more completely or resolve some difficulty for us. Such futile efforts at personal revival remind me of a boyhood experience. At our country school in Minnesota, we had a big "double pot" oil stove. A friend of mine walked to school and was there early one day, warming himself, when the stove blew up. No injuries resulted, but I had hunted, wrestled in the dirt and waded in the swamp catching frogs with Harold and I'd never seen him that dirty before. He was covered with soot from top to bottom, as was the school-room. The parents cleaned while we had two days off from school. The rest of us were ecstatic, while Harold thought it was an even trade.

Suppose that Harold had been called upon to clean the schoolroom, but was allowed no water, no cleaner and no tools. With only his bare hands and his dirty self, he could have, at best, rearranged the dirt. As sinners, apart from the grace of God, we are in the same situation. How, then, can our life, our world (immediate and distant) be "cleaned up"? How can we and our world around us escape the constant killing power of sin and evil and experience new and deeper life in God?

Isaiah 57:15 reads: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

Young, in the New International Commentary on the O. T., states that God dwells at a "holy height." It is easy to picture God standing above all sin and evil with its deadly power. He is untouched, unmarred and wholly unsusceptible to the lure of evil. He is Master over all of the powers of darkness. He is a holy God. He despises all sin and evil with a holy hatred.

This being true, where could God dwell and accomplish His holy will on this earth? Evil is all about, and worse yet, within. No one knows that better than a Christian. There is a place where God is at home on earth, however: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit..." Again, Young's words help illuminate this: "also with the crushed." Where the old Adam nature is crushed and that soul prostrates itself before God, appealing only to His mercy, He then has a place to dwell and accomplish His will.

continued on p. 10

EDITORIALS

A LOOK FORWARD

his issue of the *Ambassador* contains articles by some of the leaders of our church, giving some of their thoughts about the next decade relative to their particular areas of responsibility. We shall carry the remainder of these articles, by other writers, next time. This sort of thing has been done before in our church paper and there is a value in it. The opinions expressed are personal, but they no doubt often represent well the ideas of others with whom they work closely.

We cannot refrain from sharing some editorial thoughts on the subject at hand, the work God has given us as an Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. Some of what we present is for the coming ten years, some of it may well be more than a decade into the future. We only hope it is all worth taking seriously.

The AFLC — The Association faces a period of time in which the congregations which make it up become better acquainted. If the church has grown by almost a third in ten years it stands to reason that there is some "getting to know you" to be done. Rapid growth is good, but it is important that a church body, especially a small one like ours, be a cohesive group and that takes time. What are ways in which congregations can grow as a family?

Second, the coming years are ones in which the AFLC will need to re-define or better define her mission in our world. There is a need for us to better understand who we are. For instance, there is no danger that the Association will join the World Council of Churches or the National Council of Churches, and yet there is considerable ecumenical spirit in the AFLC on the local level. Some Association people do not like to be on the sidelines too much; they like to join in with people of other churches in various activities and services. There should be more discussion among us as to what is consistent with our doctrinal stand and just where we fit into the scheme of things as over against our fellow Lutherans and other denominations, including the Roman Catholic Church.

Together with all of this, there must be a continual touching of base with our past, our roots. We will hardly know who we are or where we are unless we know from where we have come. Much more could be said, but we must leave the matter for now.

The Seminary — Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary stands on the edge of an exciting development, something that will take place in the 1990s. The building of a new AFLC administration building will free some significant space in the present headquarters building for the seminary. The added room won't solve all problems but will make a difference.

A new faculty member will be named this year. Present members continue to do graduate work in order to better serve.

It is to be hoped that our congregations will send more

men to the seminary for theological training preparatory to becoming pastors and missionaries in the church. We must pray more earnestly that this be so.

The Bible School — Association Free Lutheran Bible School is training around 100 students at any one time. There have been significantly higher enrollments in the school's history, but for some time attendance has been nearer the century mark. The AFLC is so much larger now than it was in the peak years for AFLBS (perhaps 1975-77). There must be more young people from which to draw students. On the other hand, we don't have the information to know whether the pool of AFLC high school graduates is actually any larger or as large as it was a dozen years ago. AFLBS has so much to offer; we only wish more young people, and older, could benefit from attendance there.

The idea of adding a third year of study has been bandied about in the past and never gotten beyond that. The idea is to offer a course of training, and some advanced study, for the vocations of parish worker, youth worker, lay missionary worker, parish education director, church music director, etc. There would be some real merit to this type of program. Whatever happened to the calling of parish worker, which was so common 30 to 40 years ago? Women could work in larger congregations in the areas of visitation, parish education, secretarial work and so on.

Home Missions — Pastor Elden Nelson, our Director of Home Missions, doesn't see the new decade as bringing as many new Home Mission congregations into the AFLC as the 1980s did. And that is likely so. For one thing, there probably won't be a Lutheran merger taking place that will impact on us as did the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1988. "After-shocks" of that will still be felt for some time, however.

The Home Missions Committee needs much wisdom to know where church planting with reasonable prospects for success can take place. In one sense, if through a new start one person becomes a Christian, that mission can be called a success even though it may never get to be larger than a couple dozen members. There is also the school of thought which says that a mission congregation should be expected to grow to a hundred members in five years or ten years, that is, that some numerical standard should be set. We have never heard that the AFLC has any such standards. Maybe there should be; we only raise the point.

To be sure, it is to larger centers that we must look now, for the most part, for church planting. We come offering a low-church, evangelical Lutheran type of work. Let us never be ashamed that it is a Lutheran effort. Not all will be attracted to this type of congregation, but where there is a loving concern for people and an evangelical message preached a congregation will be gathered or the worker will move on to a more receptive place. Jesus told his followers they would sometimes have to do that.

More on other topics next time.

When Calvary fills my heart, humility and contrition come, too, and so does God. In such a heart He can dwell and accomplish His will.

What is it then, which brings the cross to me and me to the cross? It is the Word and Sacraments. What is the function of the Word and Sacraments other than to bring us to the cross of Christ and to keep us there? For here it is that God revives the soul of the humble and contrite "...as though to come to life again" (Young). And what does this life produce but a deeper love, a joyous obedience and grateful service to this holy and merciful God? Here is the foundation for God's work through us to the world around us. It is not accomplished by human resolve and activity. It is rather a work of grace which brings forth a life of devotion to the God who has given that new life. Such is the condition of the soul that dwells at Calvary. God dwells there to continually revive and accomplish His will through that life. What rest and peace the grace of God gives the believer in this.

Vance Havner has said that revival is the normal condition of the Christian; anything else is abnormal. God would have us be normal Christians. As He accomplishes in our inner lives His work of daily repentance for sin and daily renewal of faith in Christ, we are being renewed in His image and

Women pressing on for Jesus

What picture comes to your mind when you hear the words, "Ladies' Aid"? Most of us would truthfully have to admit it's a picture of older women in nice dresses drinking coffee and discussing everything from church curtains to paint. Now, I'm not minimizing the need for tending to such details, but if the women's group of the church has deteriorated to making these things their chief concern, then I would say that they have lost their vision of God's primary calling for them. In light of this, there are several changes which I personally feel are needed so that the Women's Missionary Federation of the AFLC can influence our world for Christ in the last decade of this century.

New Involvement Within

We need to involve the young women of our congregations in WMF. Older women and younger women need each other: the younger need the wisdom, experience and stability of the older, and the older need the freshness, enthusiasm and new ideas of the younger. Young women with their busy schedules want their time to count for meaningful things, not long discussions and endless business meetings. Officers need to make more decisions so meetings aren't so long. Provide a nursery!

Our women need to do extra things together, such as overnight retreats, to build friendships and trust. If a church is large, smaller groups are a necessity to develop closeness and accountability.

New Vision Locally

"We've always done it this way." Those words can kill any group, for the goal is not to preserve tradition but to meet people's needs. What are WMF

your women doing for your neighborhood? Discuss how to most effectively win souls for Christ. Step out in faith! Try something new! Reach out right where you are!

New Awareness Worldwide

What may have been very effective 50 years ago or even 15 years ago may very well be outdated today or in the coming years. Missions have changed a lot since the early days and missionary support must be more than just packing boxes of left-over clothing or sewing quilts. It takes on-going communication to keep current as far as practical needs, and to decide which efforts are most effective and where money is best invested in mission work.

New Commitment Personally

It's easier to write out a check for missions or send our old clothes than it is to care personally for our missionaries. When is the last time you spent half an hour praying over the specific requests in the missionary newsletters? Have you ever written a note of encouragement to our women on the mission field? Put yourself in their shoes: if you were in another country far from home, what would you appreciate from Christian women? We need to see our missionaries as real people, just like us, with real needs, and pray specifically and regularly.

We don't need bake sales but burning hearts! We need less secondhand giving and more firsthand involvement. My prayer for the WMF is to be a moving force of committed women pressing on in loving service for Jesus, meeting needs at home and abroad.

> Mrs. Lyndon Korhonen WMF President

likeness (Col. 3:10, Rom. 6:5).

The best you can do with your life and the new year is to simply heed the call of God to live at the foot of the cross of Christ. At the cross of Christ His will is accomplished in a desperate world. At the cross, He'll give you His best for the new year.

If any of the above are not a part of your Christian walk today, then change each of the above Scriptures into a prayer for yourself...and for others, too.

9. Solomon was a very wise man. What was his conclusion, in Eccles. 12:13?

10. What is necessary in order to understand the meaning of Scripture?

II Cor. 3:14

II Cor. 3:16-18

What will be the result? (v. 18)

Whom have you known who truly reflect the Lord's glory?

"As His glory shines on us and into us, we will be changed into His likeness."

Our Daily Bread

11. Paul prayed for the believers in Ephesus. Paul's prayer should be our prayer, too...for oneself, loved ones, fellow Christians, new believers. Write a prayer based on Eph. 1:15-21. (Remember your notebook.)

Beautiful Savior!

Beautiful Savior!
Lord of the nations!
Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor,
Praise, adoration,
Now and for evermore be Thine!"

Stanza 4
Concordia Hymnal, No. 6
— Lois Oscarson

"O JESUS, LORD AND SAVIOR"

WMF Bible Study February, 1990

In the first lesson, the fundamental truths regarding salvation were studied. The foundation of our faith is the Lord Jesus Christ. Each one must come to the personal realization, the conscious awareness, that He's my Savior and Lord, that I'm His child.

Ponder this statement by Andrew Murray:

"The importance of the assurance of faith lies in the fact that, childlike, I cannot possibly love or serve God if I do not know whether He loves and acknowledges me as His child."

1. Review of something previously studied is a necessary learning tool. What was Isaiah doing, in Is. 28:9-10?

 Review Question: What is involved in living for Jesus? (Check the song or look back to your answer on the first lesson.) 3. Many years ago, in our mid-week Bible study, we were asked the question, "What is the chief end of man or why were we placed on this earth?"

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If you take time to do a word study of the word glory, much will be vealed. What do you find in the following verses about glory? Some arnings are given, too.

Jer. 13:16

Mal. 2:2

Is. 29:13, NIV

Luke 17:18

Luke 17:18_

Col. 1:16 _____

Are we to take lightly the need to give God glory?____

What is said in Ps. 103:11 about one who does fear (reverence, honor)

Him? _____

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we pray, "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory" (Matt. 6:13b).

Read Rev. 4:8-11. Based on this passage, what song comes to mind? _____

Take time to read or sing the hymn.

Does God have goals for us as believers?_____ What are they, according to the following verses:

8. What do the following verses imply about the relation between the believer and the Word of God?

Ps. 1:2

Prov. 3:21

II Tim. 3:15

Northern Michigan District organizes

On Nov. 19, the Northern Michigan District of the AFLC held an organizational meeting at Hope Lutheran Church in Ishpeming. The afternoon began with a service of worship led by host pastor, Harvey Jackson. The other pastors in the district also participated. Pastor Charles Knapp led in Scripture and prayer, Pastor and Mrs. John Mundfrom sang a duet, and Pastor Jerry Holmaas gave the closing remarks and led in prayer.

Following a time of coffee and fellowship, the first district business meeting was held. An election of officers took place with Pastor Jerry Nikunen of Escanaba elected president; Pastor Jackson, vice-president; and Pastor Mundfrom of Eben Junction, secretary. It was decided to try to schedule two district rallies each year, with the pastors given responsibility to organize and plan the dates and activities. Reports were given on Home Missions by Pastor Herbert Franz and World Missions by Mr. Kenneth Williams. Other district business included a report on the recent youth rally and plans for next summer's family Bible camp in Upper Michigan.

The next district rally will be held in the spring at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Ontonagon in conjunction with the district WMF rally. (The date of April 28th was set later.) The possibility of hosting our own Bible conference was discussed, perhaps in connection with a future district-wide rally. About 45 persons attended this first meeting with lay representation from all but one congregation.

> -Pastor John Mundfrom Secretary

Thy thoughts of love are so many that my mind never gets away from them; they surround me at all hours. I go to my bed and God is my last thought, and when I awake. I find my mind still hovering about His palace-gates; God is ever with me, and I am ever with Him. This is life indeed. -C. H. Spurgeon

Illinois District meeting held

The Illinois District of the AFLC met on Sat., Nov. 11 at Helmar Lutheran Church of rural Newark. Rev. Harold Masted was the interim pastor at Helmar. Pastor Robert Lee, formerly of the AFLC Schools in Minneapolis, Minn., became Helmar's pastor on January 1.

Pastor Donald Greven, Dean of AFLBS, led the convention in some thoughts on Luke 15. Rev. Richard Snipstead, the president of the AFLC, closed the convention by giving the sermon. Pastors Greven and Snipstead also brought an "Update" of the AFLC, giving reports on nearly every department.

Pastor Dennis Gray, DeKalb, the president of the Illinois District, led the

business meeting. The district will continue to look for a youth work co-ordinator and will once again ask that each congregation or parish contribute \$250.00 toward the expenses of such a youth worker. Also, the district dues of \$20.00 per 100 members will be continued.

A volunteer "Bible Camp Search Committee" will study the possibility of various camps and make a recommendation to the District officers. The District officers will look into the possibility of a license for music for the district and each congregation. Congregations are urged to report to the district officers information on their insurance programs so a study of the possibility of district-wide insurance can be made.

Pastor Melvin Meyer of Fox River Lutheran Church was elected the district secretary and Bob Christian of Helmar the vice-president. The convention thanked Myrtle Duvick of Bethlehem in Morris for her work as district secretary since formation of the district three years ago. Mervin Mathison of Grace in DeKalb continues to be the treasurer and Pastor Gray, the president of the district.

Dinner was served by the ladies of Helmar congregation. We appreciated the fine hospitality of Helmar. The next annual meeting will be on the second Saturday of November in 1990. A location has not been selected for the yearly event.

Over 100 people attended.

- Pastor Dennis Gray



A Class that Makes a Difference

The 1st and 2nd grade class has been finishing the study of THE TEN COMMANDMENTS that was started last year. Each week we learn new words that are relative to our story. Three of these words are "covet" and "false witness." I believe the class has a good understanding of these words through our stories studied and also experiences shared. Recently we have been discussing the importance of being happy for others who have something very special (even if we

would like this for ourselves) and also that we should be content and thankful for all God has given us. These are not easy lessons for children, as well as adults. There are five children enrolled and all really get along well. So you can see this class is a real blessing for me. I would like to say "Thank you" to Molly, Jay, Stephen, Jessica and Dylon for making Sunday morning so special for me.

> Jeanie Polzin Hope Lutheran, Wyoming, Minn.

Evangelism schedule for Rev. John Abel

January: 7-10 — McIntosh, Minn., Thomas Tuura, pastor; 14-17 — Warroad, Minn., Paul Nash, pastor; 21-24 — Minneapolis, Minn., Pastor's Conference.

February: 4-7 — Tucson, Ariz., Robert Giles, pastor; 11-13 — Nogales, Ariz., Ted Kennedy, pastor; 18-21 — Camarillo, Calif., Keith Quanbeck, pastor; 25-28 — Palmdale, Calif., David Molstre, pastor.

March: 18-21 - Rugby, N. Dak.,

ARC to host annual Pastor's conference

The annual AFLC Pastors' Conference will be held Jan. 23-25 at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis. It will begin with a Communion service on Tuesday evening at 8 and conclude with dinner at noon on Thursday.

The Bible study hours will be led by Rev. Ralph Tjelta of the AFLC Schools faculty. Lectures will be given by Rev. Jerry Holmaas, Mr. James Olson, Rev. John Abel, Mr. Terry Hemsworth and Rev. Martin Haara. Rev. Harold Masted will preach at the Communion service. The banquet speaker will be Rev. Vince Will and the prayer times will be under the direction of Rev. Russel Tessman and Rev. Wesley Johanson.

A session for women will be held Wednesday and Thursday mornings at 11. Mrs. John Abel will speak.

Henry Mohagen, pastor; 25-28 — Kenyon, Minn., Rodney Stueland, pastor.

April: 1-4 — Bemidji, Minn., Patrick Spicer, pastor; 8-11 — DeKalb, Ill., Dennis Gray, pastor; 15 — Easter Sunday; 22-25 — Mankato, Minn., Peter Franz, pastor; 29 - May 3 — Wyoming, Minn., Jay Eberth, pastor. May 5 — Prepare to leave for Brazil.

May - September: Evangelism in Brazil.

No northern area Bible Conference

No Winter Bible Conference will be held in the northern area of the AFLC this year. One will be planned for a year from now in East Grand Forks, Minn.

In lieu of the Bible Conference, people are invited to attend the annual Missions Conference which will be held in Our Saviour's Lutheran, Thief River Falls, Minn., Mar. 8-11, Rev. Del Palmer, pastor.

Guest speakers will be Rev. Paul Nash, Warroad, Minn., Missionary George Knapp and Rev. Eugene Enderlein, Director of AFLC World Missions.

Perhaps the entire program can be printed here in a future issue.

Personalities

Rev. Mauritz Lundeen, who has served Grace Lutheran in Aberdeen, S. Dak., since 1987, has tendered his resignation effective May 1 of this year. He will be retiring, but desires to be available for temporary work, operating from the family farm near Evansville, Minn.

Tour to Scandinavia and Oberammergau

Pastor and Mrs. Laurel Udden will be hosting a trip in May to Scandinavia and ending up with a visit to Oberammergau, Germany, where the group will attend the Passion Play.

The tour leaves May 23 for 16 marvelous days of visiting Norway, Sweden,

Denmark and East and West Germany.

For further information please contact Pastor or Mrs. Udden at 9324 Northwood Parkway, Minneapolis, Minn. 55427 (612-544-9778). Pastor Udden may also be reached at times at his church office, 544-0657.

Conference on missions set

"Compelled By The King's Command" is the theme for the annual Missions Conference of the Schools and Missions Departments of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations which will be held Sunday, Feb. 4, through Wednesday, Feb. 7, at AFLC Headquarters, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, Minn.

Conference speakers are Rev. Donald Richman, Rev. Ted Kennedy, Missionary George Knapp and Mr. Gene Nurka. All sessions are open to the public. For further information call (612) 545-5631.

February 4 - 7
AFLC Headquarters

AFLTS receives funds

Association Free Lutheran Seminary, Minneapolis, Minn., has recently received \$1,600 from Lutheran Brotherhood's IMPACT program, Inviting Member Participation in Aiding Lutheran Colleges and Theological Seminaries. The latest payment covers 16 gifts of Lutheran Brotherhood members made during the third quarter of 1989.

The IMPACT Program matches, on a percentage basis, Lutheran Brotherhood members' gifts of \$25 to \$100 per year to Lutheran institutions of higher education nationwide.

Since the beginning of the IMPACT matching gift program in 1979, \$45,443 in IMPACT funds has been received by AFLTS. During that same period Lutheran Brotherhood has allocated more than \$12.8 million on behalf of the 69 participating Lutheran colleges and seminaries.

Lutheran Brotherhood is a fraternal benefit society with headquarters in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It provides insurance and other financial fraternal benefits to nearly one million members nationwide.

NEWS OF THE CHURCHES

from here and there

Ferndale, Wash. — The WMF of Triumph Lutheran sponsored a family Christmas dinner for congregational members on Dec. 3 at 4 p.m. Ham and baked potatoes were served among other things. Walborg Anderson, 96 years old, was able to attend.

Brodhead, Wis. — Pastor Verle Dean, Spicer, Minn., was the evangelist at meetings at Bethany Lutheran, Brodhead, and Trinity Lutheran, Janesville, Wis., Nov. 12-15.

Mason, Wis. — The video "A Portrait of Christ's Birth" was shown at the Sunday School hour at Our Savior's Lutheran on Dec. 17. That night the Sunday School had a special number in the parish Christmas program, also at Our Savior's.

Bruce, S. Dak. — The Sunday School Christmas program at Grace Lutheran was held on the evening of Dec. 17. The church Christmas tree was decorated by the Luther League the Sunday before.



Zumbrota, Minn. — In October, a special song service was held at Our Saviour's Lutheran, with focus on the Association Retreat Center. Members of the local AAL group sponsored the program and with matching funds the contribution to the ARC totaled \$1045. The program included vocal and violin selections, a hymn sing led by Paul and Jan Strand (shown here) and remarks about the ARC by Pastor Rodney Stueland of Kenyon, Minn.



Beltrami, Minn. — In November, Resurrection Free Lutheran Church performed a pageant telling the story of Thanksgiving.

McIntosh, Minn — Rev. John Abel, AFLC evangelist, was guest speaker at services at Trinity Lutheran, which conclude tomorrow night, Jan.

Grand Forks, N. Dak. — The annual Norwegian Christmas service was held at Trinity Lutheran on Dec. 31 at 2:30 p.m. A lunch of Norwegian baking was served after the service.

Morris, Ill. — The Senior Choir of Bethlehem Lutheran presented the cantata "The Glory of Christmas" at both worship services on Dec. 17.

Minneapolis, Minn — At midweek Advent services at Medicine Lake Lutheran the speakers were Pastors Elden Nelson, Eugene Enderlein and Robert Lee on successive Wednesday nights.

Cokato, Minn. — At the Christmas program for Good Shepherd Lutheran on Dec. 17, the Senior Choir, Lighthouse Children and Sunday School all took part. The title was "A Family Christmas."

Eben Jct., Mich. — "The Long Road to Christmas" was the theme of the four midweek Advent services at Calvary Lutheran. The 45-minute services actually began on Nov. 29.

Minneapolis, Minn. — "Pikku Joulu" (Little Christmas) was observed on Thurs., Dec. 7, 2:30 p.m., at Morgan Avenue Lutheran. It is a Finnish service.

Roseau, Minn. — The Spruce Lutheran Men's Club served a pancake dinner following the church service on

In memoriam

Key: The name of the town was the address of the deceased. Following that is listed the name of the deceased, age, date of death and the church in which he held membership.

MINNESOTA

Roseau

Maynerd Erickson, 75, Dec. 11, Roseau (Mr. Erickson was an uncle of Rev. Bruce Dalager, Grand Forks, N. Dak.).

George Erickson, 91, Dec. 12, Rose (Mr. Erickson was a brother of the late missionary to Taiwan, Lenorah Erickson.)

Dec. 3. The proceeds from the freewill offering went to the parsonage loan fund.

Dalton, Minn. — Open house at the parsonage was held for Zion-Sarpsborg, Kvam and Tordenskjod congregations on Dec. 13, 14 and 15, respectively, at 7:30 p.m.

Tioga, N. Dak. — Mr. and Mrs. Paul (Ruth) Kneeland arrived on Jan. 2 at Zion Lutheran where he will be a lay assistant in Christian education and youth work.

Minnewaukan, N. Dak. — Officers of Antiochia and Trinity Lutheran Churches were installed at services at each church on Dec. 17. That was also Antiochia's last service until April; the congregation will worship with Trinity until then.

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