



# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

July 6, 1993



**AFLC Canada**

# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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## Light on the Way

### Motivation

It might come as a surprise to a lot of people to know that Flip Wilson did not invent the line, "The devil made me do it." Eve should be given credit for that line in the Garden of Eden.

Adam and Eve had eaten from the forbidden tree. After they had eaten we read in Genesis 3:13: "Then the Lord God said to the woman (Eve), 'What is this you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent deceived me.'" The devil made her do it.

Advertising companies spend millions of dollars to determine why people do what they do. Why do we act as we do?

It is not uncommon for us to behave as we do because we are **afraid** or we seek a **reward** or we want to **impress** somebody or we feel an **obligation** or we have a need for **acceptance**. I might run down the street because I am afraid of something. I might work hard at my job because I expect a reward. I might not feel like going to that meeting today, but I go because I feel that I have an obligation to go. I put on my best clothes today because I'm applying for a new position, and I want to impress my potential employer. Those are some of the things that motivate our secular life.

But do they not also, all too often, motivate our spiritual life? How often don't we seek out the good will of the Lord only because of the rewards that He offers His children? How often don't we try to impress the Lord so He will notice our good works? How often don't we obey the Ten Commandments

only because we feel that we have an obligation to do so? There must be better reasons than those, however, to walk with the Lord.

What should motivate us to believe in and serve the Lord is gratitude and appreciation. We love because He first loved us. Our love should be motivated by His love. This is not a duty. Instead, it is a privilege. It is a matter of the heart being right with God.

When our hearts are not right with the Lord we are told by Jesus that "out of men's hearts come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly."

For the right motivation listen to Paul writing to the Colossians: "Set your hearts on things above. Set your minds on things above. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

We love because He first loved us.



— by Rev.  
Walter Johnson

# He Shall Have Dominion From Sea To Sea



Psalm 72:8

"We have declared Him  
as Sovereign — yet we  
deny Him the authority  
that is rightly His!"

In October of 1864, at the Quebec Conference, as the Canadian fathers of Confederation gathered to write the original constitution, the British North American Act, Sir Leonard Tilley came down to the meeting from his morning devotions and said, "Men, if we are forming a nation without God then we fail." He then proposed a motion that would make the phrase of Psalm 72:8 the motto of Canada — "He shall have dominion from sea to sea." That motto is inscribed on the seal of Canada, the coat of arms, and on the stone arch leading into the parliament buildings.<sup>1</sup>

During the month of July both Canada and the United States celebrate the anniversaries of the birth of their respective nations. We are reminded by the above quote and by other historical evidence that these beginnings were beginnings where God was considered to be important and indeed supreme in the lives of the new nations. The question that comes to mind today is: Where is God in the lives of our countries? Does He have dominion from sea to sea? Does He have any dominion at all in Canada or the United States?

God **does** reign! Psalm 93:1 states: "The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty ..." and in Psalm 47:8 we read "God reigns over the nations, God sits on His holy throne." Perhaps the issue at hand then is, do the citizens of our countries acknowledge His rule today? It seems as though with the passage of time there are more and more who are denying the Sovereign rule of God in our nations.

On May 25 of this year, my wife, myself and our two oldest sons enjoyed the privilege of becoming dual citizens: in addition to our American citizenship we are now Canadian citizens as well. In the oath of citizenship we were required to swear allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the Queen of Canada.

One of the things that had often confused us was the Queen's relationship to Canada and to its government. Having prepared for our citizenship hearing we learned more about that relationship. "At Confederation in 1867, the representatives of the four original provinces specifically chose the constitutional monarchy as part

of the political framework of the new nation. The constitution stipulated that 'The Executive Government and authority of and over Canada is hereby declared to continue to be vested in the Queen.'<sup>2</sup> This, however, is a unique type of reign. In a constitutional monarch the Sovereign reigns but does not rule; at the same time the elected government rules but does not reign. "Thus the one institution (the government) does not possess power but exercises it; while the other institution (the Crown) possess power but does not exercise it."<sup>3</sup>

When I first read of this subtle concept it reminded me so much of the way Canada and the United States view the Sovereign King of the universe today — we have declared Him as Sovereign whose "dominion is from sea to sea" — yet we deny Him the authority that is rightly His! On the one hand our nations were founded as Christian nations; but on the other hand our governing bodies continue to pass legislation that denies basic Christian freedoms while granting freedoms to those who despise the Judeo-Christian ethic upon which Canada and the United States were established!

What must be done to bring our nations back under the Sovereign rule of God? I believe that there are two things that are essential:

First and foremost, the **church** must come back under the Sovereignty of God! I hope that we, as God's people, haven't heard II Chronicles 7:14 so much that we have become insensitive to its message. There we read that God's people must humble themselves and pray, turn from their wicked ways and seek the face of God if national revival is to be experienced! The fact that revival is needed in the church in North America is evident. I'm sure that in looking ☩



— by Rev. Les  
Johnson,  
Lake Alma, Sask.

AFLC-Canada Coordinating Committee: Pastor Gene Sundby, Evangelist Olaf Friggstad, Dan Hagen, Art Hanger, Rev. Elden Nelson, AFLC Home Missions Director Rev. Gerald Gettis, and Rev. Les Johnson.



## SEA TO SEA

around we could all find ample evidence of that. Yet we must remember that revival is a personal thing. Revival is **my** getting right with God; it involves **my** humble repentance in turning from sin and seeking the face of God. In order for revival to come to the church it must first come to individual hearts! The question asked in Psalm 85:6 is: "Wilt Thou not revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?" The answer to that question is yes — if God's Word in II Chronicles 7:14 is followed.

Second, the church needs to pray for our nations that they would come back under the Sovereign reign and rule of God. We are exhorted in I Timothy 2:1-2, "First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and for all who are in authority ..." Why? "... in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity." Paul shows us the importance of prayer for our elected officials in these verses when he says "First of all" and "I urge." If we are to see the godly and Christian heritage of our nations preserved, prayer **must** play a vital role!

We have many Christian organizations today that do a good job in making the voice of the church heard by our national leaders. We cannot fall into the trap, though, of thinking that if we support such organizations financially or say a quick prayer for them we have done our part: **we must pray for the leaders of our nations and pray in Jesus' name against all the wicked things that are being done in our countries!** In II Corinthians 10:3-5, Paul speaks of the power we have in prayer as we ask God to overcome the evils of our day, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and

every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."

There are so many things that have been raised up in our countries against the knowledge of God — so many fortresses that have been erected by our governments and others in positions of power and influence in an all out attempt to put an end to the Judeo-Christian ethic in our lands! But through persistent prayer, our divinely powerful weapon of warfare, we **can** move the hand of God to destroy all these evils! The weapon of prayer is powerful and effective, yet it is so often neglected and perhaps ignored altogether by those who have been called to be a people of prayer!

Does God's dominion stretch from sea to sea? Yes it does! Nothing can ever change the fact that He is King of kings and Lord of lords! Yet many view His Sovereign reign to be like that of the Queen of Canada; they will acknowledge His reign — but not His rule! Let's be busy during these days when so many are turning their backs on God to see to it that this trend is reversed. First of all by being sure of our own surrender to God as our absolute Sovereign and, second, by praying for our nations that they will return to their roots in acknowledging God as having dominion from sea to sea. This is not only our God-given responsibility — it is the only solution to the problems of evil in our countries today.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Arneil Motz, *Reclaiming a Nation* (Richmond, B.C.: Church Leadership Library, 1990), p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>D. Michael Jackson, *The Canadian Monarchy in Saskatchewan* (Regina: The Government of Saskatchewan, 1990), p. 10.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 12.



Bethel Lutheran Church, Frontier, Saskatchewan.



Pastor David and Debbie Højsø and family began serving at Frontier on July 1.

# CANADA

## The Mission

Since our move to Canada in 1986 we have been back to Minnesota and to other parts of the upper-midwest on various occasions. It has been interesting to note the various perceptions that people have of Canada as we visit with them. Some seem to think of Canada as a vacation paradise; others see it as a frozen tundra 12 months of the year; still others see it as a place where all there is to do is to hunt and fish.

I would like to share a few brief facts on Canada from a spiritual stand point. Did you know that: something less than eight percent of Canadians profess a personal relationship with God through faith in Christ (in 1900, it was 22%); at least 75% of Canadian children are totally cut off from exposure to the Gospel of Christ; only one percent of Canadians, age 25-42 regularly attend church, (these comprise about 48% of Canada's population today); Mormons are growing at nearly twice the rate of Evangelical Christians.

I have shared these facts just to let the readers of *The Lutheran Ambassador* know that Canada is a mission field! Especially to let them know that it is a mission field of the AFLC. Even though the AFLC in Canada is a completely autonomous church body, we do receive subsidy from AFLC Home Missions. We do thank you, our sister AFLC, for your prayers and your involvement in the work in Canada — a nation that many say is no longer a Christian nation! Please do continue to pray that God would raise up free and living congregations in Canada!

— On behalf of all the brothers and sisters in the Canadian AFLC,  
Pastor Les Johnson



Living Word Lutheran Church, Vernon, British Columbia, served by Rev. Gerald Gettis. Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Salmon Arm, B. C., is also served by Rev. Gettis.



## JESUS ONLY

**W**e count seven AFLC congregations in Canada. When stated that way, it seems a small and weak minority group.

But to the first Canadian AFLC congregation, seven churches means seven times as many as there were ten years ago when one fledgling group of less than 40 men, women and children set out alone with God as their captain, the Bible as their handbook, and faith in Jesus alone as their Savior.

Our prayers were simple: "Guide us; show us the way; have Thine own way."

God answered our prayers, eased our anxiety, and provided us with shepherds.

Canadian representative Gene Sundby drove miles on weekends to lead our worship, chair our meetings and lead us through the red tape necessary to set up a Canadian denomination. Home Missions helped for the first three years.

American neighbors offered us fellowship and pastors to help with our services. The community hall in Lake Alma became our chapel until our own building was completed in 1986.

Soon we heard of another group seeking affiliation with a conservative Lutheran body, looking for pastors with personal testimonies, living for Christ and trusting in the Bible as the inerrant Word of God.

Later others contacted the AFLC and came into the fellowship until seven congregations were represented at the Tenth Annual Conference together with six pastors.

But if we grow in numbers and begin to think of that growth as our strength, we are in danger. If we begin to trust in our denomination, our doctrinal stand, our pietistic emphasis, even our pastors and leaders, we are on quicksand.

Jesus alone is the Head of our church, the strength of our pastors, the salvation of our members.

His Word is our guide. His Spirit is our teacher, God the Father hears our prayers in His Name alone.

He is our security. All power in heaven and on earth has been given to Him and His power hasn't diminished however the nations roar, or religions might line up against us.

The work in Canada was begun by prayer. Today prayer is still our most important work. If the Canadian AFLC rests on His finished work, His ability to sustain us, we are spiritually secure.

— by Ceta Rude  
Lake Alma, Saskatchewan



Faith Free Lutheran, Lake Alma, Saskatchewan, the first Canadian AFLC congregation celebrated its tenth anniversary on February 14, 1993. Pictured are Pastor and Mrs. Gene Sundby and Rev. and Mrs. Phil Rokke and family. Pastor Rokke was the first pastor of Faith Lutheran.



Faith Free Lutheran, Lake Alma, Les Johnson, pastor.



Bethlehem Lutheran, Calgary, Alberta, James Winter, pastor.

# Call Of The North

Canada is a vast country with a population of approximately 28 million. The bulk of the land mass is sparsely populated as most live within reasonable proximity to the 49th parallel. The AFLC of Canada serves less than 800 of the total population. The people who comprise our seven congregations have come, in whole or in part, from other Lutheran persuasions. Thus in our ten year history we have not made any significant impact on those who have never heard or on those we would commonly call the unevangelized.

Our main mission thus far has been providing a haven for a new beginning for the disillusioned and disheartened Lutherans. This is certainly not a waste of time or resources unless it becomes an end in itself. By this I mean, if we simply become a refuge where our membership is only more comfortable with our brand of Lutheranism rather than being freed for more effective witness, then it is doubtful if there ever was any real need for the AFLC. However, if the AFLC provides the spiritual base for a renewed, Spirit-filled outreach to a needy and lost world, then the switch in Lutheran affiliation will have eternal and not just fleeting temporal value.

Our mission and calling must go well beyond a mutual appreciation society. It is good and Scriptural to be of one mind but if the common mind is fixed only on selfish interest then it becomes a bane rather than a blessing to the Kingdom of God.

God has called us to "go and make disciples," but Satan calls us to sit back and be satisfied. God calls us to be watchmen, but the devil lulls us to careless indifference and yes, even to sleep, like the five foolish virgins, (Matthew 25). What a jolt it would be, after taking pains to do all the right things and to make certain we believed the proper doctrines, to find the bridegroom say: "I don't know you." But

this would never happen to the AFLC, or could it?

I am struck by the account in Acts 13:42-48. The passage tells of Paul and Barnabas and their ministry in Pisidia Antioch, (see preceding verses 14-41). It tells of their rather successful ministry among the Jews and the converts to Judaism. However, there were many Jews and proselytes who did not believe, and these became trouble makers and persecutors.

In verse 46, Paul and Barnabas answer them boldly: "We had to speak the Word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles." To me this is saying, can we afford to waste time on those who have heard but will not lay hold of eternal life, nor will they with joy share this wondrous message with others?

Jesus put it plain when He told His disciples: "Behold, Do not say, There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest" (John 4:35).

Is there a message to us when we realize that the bulk of today's min-

istry is spent on those who are supposedly evangelized? Is it possible that we are much too satisfied with what we have done that we cannot see what there is to do?

Could it also be that the trouble makers and disrupters within our midst are not worthy of any more attention (Gospel), or at least not the lions share, while there are so many who have never had the glorious opportunity to hear the Good News.

God has given us ten years as the AFLC of Canada. I hope and pray in the years we have left, that we will accept His grace and power to reach far beyond our present limitations to the immense fields white unto harvest. We invite you, our sister AFLC, to join with us in answering the great "call of the North."

Thank you for your prayers, financial assistance, and the loan of your men these past years. May we together answer the challenge and command from the Lord to disciple this generation. To God be the glory. Amen.

—Gene R. Sundby,  
President AFLC-Canada  
Outlook, Saskatchewan



At the recent 10th Annual Conference, President Sundby welcomed the new pastors serving in Canada — Martin Christensen and David Hesje.



Solid Rock Lutheran, Camrose, Alberta, pastoral vacancy.



Bethel Lutheran, Elbow, Saskatchewan, Martin Christiansen, pastor.

## Forum

### Another View

In the May 25, 1993 *Lutheran Ambassador*, I read an article on page three which suggested there were two Bible-based reasons when divorce was allowed and presumably acceptable. These exceptions were based on Matthew 5:32 and I Corinthians 7:15. I realize some evangelical Christians have accepted this particular interpretation of those Scripture verses. However, I share another view and possible interpretation of those verses.

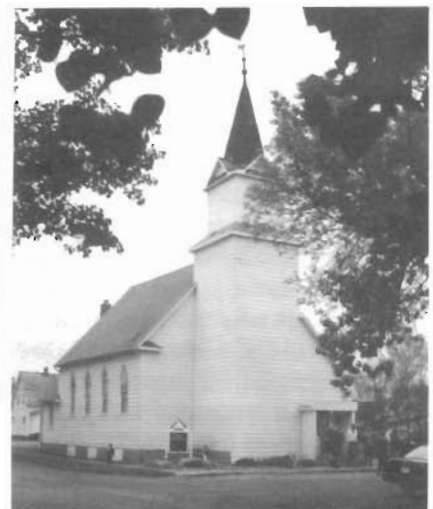
I believe in Matthew 5:32, Jesus was speaking of the act of unfaithfulness that might occur during the time of betrothal. The Jewish time of betrothal would be similar to our engagement period. However, in Jewish culture when a young man and woman were betrothed they were referred to as husband and wife. See Matthew 1:18-19 in reference to Mary and Joseph. The only way this betrothal could be ended or broken was with a letter of divorce. Therefore, Jesus was telling us that the man would not be causing the woman to commit adultery if she had been found to have been unfaithful during this betrothal period before the marriage.

Joseph knew he had a legal right to put Mary away (divorce) when he

found out she was pregnant. He thought she had been unfaithful. Of course God intervened and told Joseph she had not been unfaithful but rather was being used for the supernatural birth of the Messiah.

This verse is misunderstood when it is applied to a husband and wife who are married and have made their vows to God. Once you make a vow to God, He holds you to them (Deuteronomy 23:21-23). God holds people responsible for their actions (Matthew 16:27, Romans 2:6-8 and I Corinthians 3:10-17). Thus I believe that this exception to the rule applies to engaged couples; not married couples.

The other verse referred to in the May 25 article is I Corinthians 7:15. This verse says one is not under "bondage" when a spouse walks away or leaves a marriage. This is in no way an approval for divorce. When two people are married in God's sight they are bound together (Genesis 2:24). They have certain duties or responsibilities towards each other. This verse is simply saying that if your spouse leaves, you are no longer required to fulfill those spouse related duties. These duties are spoken of in I Corinthians 7:3-5 and Ephesians 5:21-22ff. If your spouse leaves you, you are



Bethel Lutheran Church, Elbow, Sask.

no longer under bondage. However, nowhere in this section does it say you are free to divorce. In fact, the whole context of chapter 7 is reconciliation. In verses 10-13, we are clearly told not to divorce. If a separation does occur, we are given clear guidelines in verse 11 to remain single or be reconciled.

The conclusion and driving force for reconciliation is that the marriage remains in force until death (I Corinthians 7:39). I firmly believe that if we could accept I Corinthians 7:39 without any contradiction or exception, we would be better off as a nation and as a church. And the family unit would be restored.

— by Rev. Paul Larson  
Detroit Lakes, Minnesota



## A Celebration of AFLC Roots

—by Anker Harbo

*(The foundations of the free Lutheran movement in America can be traced to the teachings of two young immigrant professors at Augsburg Seminary, Minneapolis, Minnesota, during the late 1800s, associated with a Norwegian Lutheran church body known as "The Conference." The following essay, written by a man whose father, Elias P. Harbo, became one of the leaders of the movement, surveys the background and birth of the first loosely organized fellowship that emerged during the divisions and struggles of those years, committed to the vision for building free and living congregations.)*

The commonly accepted date for the beginning of Norwegian emigration to America is 1825. Two postage stamps were issued by our government in 1925 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the event. Early immigrants from Norway to the U.S. tended to support the establishment of congregations that resembled the state-supported churches in Norway or congregations that resembled the fellowships of those who followed Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771-1824), a lay evangelist. Most of the former eventually united in 1853 to form the Norwegian Synod, and the latter in 1847 to form the Eielson Synod.

Others were uncomfortable in either synod, and they united with some Swedes and Danes in 1860 to form the Scandinavian Augustana Synod (SAS). A school was founded for the training of pastors, called Augustana College and Theological Seminary. By the late 1860s, however, there was talk of dividing the SAS along ethnic lines, and this resulted in the formation of Augsburg Seminary (apparently regarded at first as the Norwegian department of Augustana), which opened its doors in September, 1869, at Marshall, Wisconsin. Professor August Weenaas (1835-1924) was the first president of the new school, afterwards returning to Norway, and one of his main achieve-

ments before he left was relocating the seminary to Minneapolis in 1872.

Another result of the SAS division along nationalistic lines was the formation of two new church bodies in 1870: the Norwegian-Danish Lutheran Conference (usually simply called "The Conference") and the Norwegian-Danish Augustana Synod. During the 20-year life of the Conference, its training school for clergy was Augsburg Seminary. Two young theologians, Georg Sverdrup (1848-1907) who became Augsburg's second president, and his close friend Sven Oftedal (1844-1911), were leading figures in both the seminary and the Conference.

In early June, 1890, the conventions of three church bodies, the Conference, the Norwegian-Danish Augustana Synod, and the Anti-Missourians (a division of the Norwegian Synod) met separately in Minneapolis and adopted proposed articles of union, and by this action the United Norwegian Lutheran Church (UNLC) was born. One of the articles of the constitution provided for Augsburg to be the theological school of the newly formed church body, an agreement that soon proved to be the catalyst for conflict.

The UNLC opened its first annual meeting on June 13, 1890, with a devotional service in Trinity Church marked by joy and gratitude to God for what had happened. The sessions which followed were moved to the nearby Swedish Augustana Church because the Trinity building was too small. A decision was made at this first convention to designate St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, as the official college of the UNLC, in spite of the fact that Augsburg had a college department since its founding days and considered the pre-seminary instruction offered there to be

an integral part of the total vision for theological education.

This decision and related issues, such as the transfer of St. Olaf and Augsburg ownership to the UNLC, caused turmoil and lawsuits that extended over a period of about eight years. Sverdrup, Oftedal, and their supporters almost at once became a "Minority" in the UNLC, which eventually was known as "Augsburg's Vener" — the Friends of Augsburg.

At the 1893 annual meeting of the UNLC, action was taken to rescind the 1890 decision concerning St. Olaf. It was also plain that the church would not provide financial support to any school which it did not own or control. The corporation and board of Augsburg Seminary were given until July 15, 1893, to transfer ownership. This eventually turned out to be unacceptable, and a separate seminary under the control of the UNLC was formed, with classes beginning in rented quarters a short distance from Augsburg the following September.

It was during the afternoon session of the convention on June 14, 1893, that Sverdrup and Oftedal resigned as professors of the UNLC ... but not from Augsburg. Then, on the evening of the same day, an informal meeting of the Minority was held on the Augsburg campus. Rev. Ole Paulson (often called Augsburg's "grandfather"), the pastor of Trinity Church, was elected chairman, and Rev. M. Saeterlie, Osakis, Minnesota, as secretary. Those present were pastors and laymen attending the annual meeting of the UNLC, and their main concern was the welfare of Augsburg, especially as it related to providing sufficient financial support for the coming school year.

A second meeting of the new fel- ⤵

## The Friends of Augsburg 1893-1993

### A Centennial Essay

## FRIENDS OF AUGSBURG —

lowship, attended by about 150 people, was held in November, at which time the organization was more formally established, with officers, committees, projects and so forth. This was their first annual meeting, and yet they continued to maintain an active membership in the UNLC and to attend its annual meetings.

The second annual meeting of the Friends was held in Minneapolis on October 9-12, 1894, at which time the 25th anniversary of Augsburg was observed. Sverdrup presented an address on "Augsburg's Principles," and expression was again given to the main purpose of the Friends, which was to support the school as well as home and foreign missions, lay activity, and efforts to settle the strife and unrest in the UNLC.

The third annual meeting was held in Willmar, Minnesota, on June 26-30, 1895, with about 415 people in attendance, and is remembered for a decision to expand the responsibilities of the missions committee to include foreign missions. Two missionaries in Madagascar, who served there before the 1890 Union, were Augsburg graduates who had decided to stand with the Friends of their former school.

It should be noted, at this point, that Sverdrup and Oftedal were not recognized as delegates at the 1895 annual meeting of the UNLC, and 13 congregations affiliated with the Friends were warned that ties with the UNLC would be severed after one year if the resolutions of support for Augsburg that they had adopted earlier were not rescinded. Eight of these congregations were located in Minnesota (including three in Minneapolis: Trinity, St. Luke's, and St. Petri), four in Wisconsin, and one in Michigan. Two of these original congregations are currently members of the AFLC: Bethany, Abercrombie, North Dakota, and Section Ten (East Cumberland), Cumberland, Wisconsin.

The fourth annual meeting of the Friends was held in Fargo, North Dakota, on June 17-21, 1896, about one week after the annual meeting of the UNLC, with about 390 people present. Decisions had been made at the UNLC

meeting to sever ties with the congregations mentioned above and to elect a board of trustees for Augsburg to test the question of ownership in the court system. These actions had the effect of convincing the Friends that congregational freedom was greatly endangered in the UNLC, and they took the step of creating a five-man committee to draw up a set of rules for a Lutheran Free Church, to be ready for consideration at the next annual meeting. Members of the committee were Sverdrup (president of the Friends 1894-97), Oftedal, Rev. Paul Wither, Rev. Endre Gynild, and Mr. Olaf Hoff.

The fifth and final meeting of the Friends of Augsburg took place at Trinity on June 9-13, 1897. The report of the five-man committee was presented in two sections: Fundamental Principles and Rules for Work. Discussion of the first section was delayed for one year; the second section was adopted. By these actions, the Friends of Augsburg ceased to exist and the Lutheran Free Church, immediate predecessor of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, was born.

Mention should also be made of the spiritual awakening that occurred in the middle and late 1890s in the midst of the turmoil outlined above. Andreas Helland, a long-time Augsburg professor and author of *Georg Sverdrup, The Man and His Message*, wrote (p. 172):

*There was a general hunger and thirst to hear the Word of God and a wide-spread yearning in the souls for light and life. This movement was by no means limited to the congregations of the Friends of Augsburg; it was also noticed in some of the "majority" congregations in the United Church as well as in the Hauge's and Norwegian Synods, although not to an equal degree ... There was, as a rule, nothing demonstrative about it, but rather a deep sense of sin and guilt and an equally intense yearning for peace with the Lord.*

The names of two persons should be mentioned in connection with spiritual awakening: Peter Nilsen, pastor of St. Luke's congregation, Minneapolis, and Lars O. Skrefsrud, missionary to the Santals in India. Nilsen had been

called to organize work for the financial support of Augsburg, but after accepting the call soon discovering that he was more interested in the spiritual phase of his work than the financial. Helland wrote (p. 175):

*Pastor Nilsen was a revivalist by the grace of God, but not of the ordinary type. To him was the gift of grace given to wake up the dormant Christians, rather than the spiritually dead worldlings. His main theme was the Christian congregation, such as God would have it to be, a city built on a hill which cannot be hidden, a light in the darkness of a sinful world.*

Skrefsrud visited America from June 1894, to September, 1895, to develop interest in the Santal Mission of India. He soon became aware of the strife among the Lutheran churches. According to Helland, "... most of his intensive and unusually eloquent preaching had as its theme: 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!' There can be no doubt that the visit of Missionary Skrefsrud had a great deal to do with this awakening, and as he tried to take a neutral attitude to the difficulties which he found between the congregations and church bodies here, the doors were open to him so that he had many more invitations than he was able to fill."

The reader may desire to do further reading. sources for this article and other recommended books are:

Carlsen, Clarence J. *The Years of Our Church*, LFC, 1942.

Chrislock, Carl H. *From Fjord to Freeway*, North Central, 1969.

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*Note: The author, a graduate of Augsburg College and currently a resident of Minneapolis, was a school administrator when he was recruited by the FBI. After his retirement from government service, he attended the AFLC Seminary and served on the Bible School faculty and staff from 1975 to 1981.*

22. What are two prayers we should always pray for ourselves? Psalm 119:88 and Luke 17:5.

"Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen"

— Ephesians 3:20, 21

What would you like to ask God for? Write your own prayer using Scripture.

"Give me a faithful heart, likeness to Thee,  
That each departing day henceforth may see  
Some work of love begun, some deed of kindness done,  
Some wanderer sought and won, something for Thee.

All that I am and have — Thy gifts so free  
In joy, in grief, through life, Dear Lord for Thee!  
And when Thy face I see, my ransomed soul shall be,  
Through all eternity, something for Thee."  
— Sylvanus D. Phelps

## Lord, Teach Us To Pray



Prayer:

### Asking for Myself

Key Verses:

"And it came about in due time, after Hannah had conceived, that she gave birth to a son; and she named him Samuel, saying, 'Because I have asked him of the Lord,'" (1 Samuel 1:20).

"Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full," (John 16:24).

"Can I have ... ? Give me ... I want ..." — sounds familiar to people who are around children, doesn't it? In one of our first lessons we saw how God encourages us to ask of Him as children ask of their father. "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!" (Matthew 7:11). Perhaps because asking for ourselves is easy and natural, this becomes the content of so much of our conversation with God. Our challenge is to balance this aspect with the other elements which are needed in our prayers.

1. Look up James 4:2. Copy the last sentence of that verse here:

2. Read also James 4:3. Is there a wrong way to ask?

3. Read Matthew 6:25-34. What is God's instruction concerning "anxiety asking"? (Note especially verses 31, 32).

4. John, in writing his first letter, gives us help in understanding some right ways to ask. What do the following two passages tell us?

a. 1 John 3:22

b. 1 John 5:14, 15

5. What does Matthew 21:22 say about how we ask?

6. What do John 14:13, 14 and John 15:16 also tell us is important in our asking?

The story surrounding our first key verse in 1 Samuel finds Hannah at the temple praying in “great distress” and “oppression of spirit” over her barrenness. In explaining the attitude of her prayer to Eli, the priest, she said, “I have poured out my soul before the Lord,” (1 Samuel 1:15). Is this not a beautiful picture of prayer? Psalm 62:8 says, “Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.” The child who was born in answer to her prayers was also named by them. “Samuel” means — “asked of God.”

Let’s turn to some other records in the Old Testament to see what kinds of things people asked from God for themselves. What was the request of the following individuals?

7. II Chronicles 14:11 — King Asa

8. Judges 6:36-40 — Gideon

9. Daniel 2:16-18 — Daniel

10. II Samuel 7:25-29 — David

11. I Kings 18:36-38 — Elijah

12. I Kings 3:9 — Solomon

13. Exodus 15:24, 25 — Moses

14. II Kings 20:5, 6 — King Hezekiah

15. Jonah 2:1, 2 — Jonah

16. Judges 16:28 — Samson

The record of God’s abundant provision continues in the New Testament.

17. Who was born in answer to prayer? Luke 1:13

18. What did the leper ask of Jesus? Matthew 8:2, 3

19. What did a criminal ask for? Luke 23:42

20. What did the disciples ask for? Acts 4:29

When we see the scope of things we could ask for, certainly we are made aware of our need for wisdom in asking.

21. What does James 1:5, 7 promise those who ask?

# One Incredible Night!

YOUTH

One of the key areas of youth ministry is outreach. It is our vision to see youth and adults both personally and corporately involved in winning their peers for Jesus Christ. One tool we use to accomplish this is to hold what we call RIOT (Reaching In and Out Together) nights. These nights are planned with the purpose of our youth bringing their friends who might be seeking a relationship with Jesus Christ. A RIOT night consists of three components: 1) an activity time where the youth hopefully have a "riot;" 2) a meeting time where youth will hear the Word of God and be given an opportunity to respond to it; and 3) an interaction time where we follow the example of all great adult meetings — we give them food (usually pizza).

On April 2 we (along with Faith Free Lutheran of Shakopee) held a huge RIOT night at Emmaus, Bloomington, Minnesota, called "One Incredible Night." Over 180 youth attended this outreach and we witnessed God moving in a mighty way. Between 30 and 40 youth sought counseling after the message by Mark Gold. Of those there were at least ten who accepted Jesus Christ for the first time. Follow-up was a major concern of ours when we began planning this event. Each youth who sought counseling received a letter from their counselor that was mailed out the night of the event. The following week the counselors were to call each one they counseled with to see how things were going. We also wrote to the respective churches of each youth to have their youth pastor or pastor follow-up with these youth.

How did we get 180 youth to attend? Well, first we prayed! It also helped to provide them with an all-nighter! We started at 8:30 p.m. Friday night and continued until 7 a.m. Saturday morning. The night included: a slam-dunk contest, a message from Mark Gold, pizza, three hours at Chaska Community Center, and three hours at Grand Slam with an early morning donuts and juice wrap-up at Emmaus.

Kevin Olson, co-ordinator of the event and I are very grateful to those who had a part in the event. There were somewhere between 50 and 60 volunteers from prayer warriors to pizza servers and everything was done with excellence. Volunteer workers at the event were impressed with how smoothly everything went with that number of youth involved, the power of prayer was evident. Most important, we give thanks to Jesus for making this truly "one incredible night," especially for the youth who made commitments or recommitments to the Lord.

— Bob Halvorson Bloomington, Minnesota

This article comes from Mr. Bob Halvorson, our AFLC Associate Youth Worker. A big event such as One Incredible Night may very well be worth your investment of time and energy.

Big events must be 1) well planned; 2) executed with few pauses, if any; and 3) evangelistic. If your church is small, invite friends from neighboring churches.

— Rev. Dennis Gray, AFLC Youth Director



## AFLC Wilderness Family Bible Camp

July 13-18, 1993  
Lake Park, Minnesota

Theme: "Complete in Christ"  
Colossians 2:6-10

Speakers: Rev. Phil Haugen  
Rev. Steven Mundfrom

For more information: call  
(218) 532-7604 or (701) 845-2753.

(This announcement was omitted in the  
previous Bible camp issue.)

## Apply Now!

**Association Free Lutheran  
Bible School's Fall Quarter**  
begins Monday, September 13, 1993  
For information call (612) 544-9501

Call now, limited space available.

## Fox Valley School of Ministry

rural Norway, Illinois begins on  
September 2, 1993, with Rev. Nel  
Meyer teaching "Ministry of  
Teaching."

For more information call (815)  
792-8244.

**Cornerstone** (Luther League Team) —  
Jeremy Holm, Rockford, Minnesota;  
Stacey Thorson, Farmington, New Mexi-  
co; Stacey McCarlson, Webster, South  
Dakota; and Todd Rice, Tioga, North  
Dakota.



## PEOPLE and PLACES

**Rev. John Allstaedt**, Wausau, Wisconsin, has accepted a call from Calvary Free Lutheran Church, Eben Junction, Michigan, and will begin his new ministry there in mid-July. Pastor Allstaedt, who previously served parishes in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, was approved for call to an AFLC congregation after colloquy with the Co-ordinating Committee, and will be included on the Fellowship Roster.

The new address for **Rev. Steve Olinger**, formerly of Camrose, Alberta, is 2990 Thornton Road, Ferndale, WA 98248.

**Rev. Paul and Becky Abel** and family arrived early last month in the U.S. from Brazil, where they serve as AFLC missionaries near the city of Curitiba. Their brief furlough includes attending the annual conference and the Luther League convention, as well as visits to many congregations, and they plan to return to the field later in the fall. **Rev. John and Ruby Abel**, retired AFLC missionaries, returned to Brazil in late May for the summer months.

**Shakopee, Minnesota** — Interim service during the pastoral vacancy at Faith Lutheran Church is being provided by **Rev. James Asp**, Brooklyn Center, on Sundays, and **Rev. Les Galland**, Eden Prairie, on four mornings a week in the church office and for visitation. A call committee has been appointed to consider recommendations for a new pastor to serve the congregation.

**Beulah, North Dakota** — **Rev. Elden Nelson**, AFLC Home Missions Director, conducted an informational meeting on June 11, in this west central North Dakota community, and people from other towns were also present to hear about the possibility of organizing an AFLC congregation in the area. The meeting was preceded by announcements in the local newspaper, to which an encouraging response was received by mail.

**John Dryburgh**, Fordville, North Dakota, a 1993 graduate of AFLBS, accepted the position of youth worker

**Nelene Hiepler Fox**, passed away on April 22, 1993. She was the 40 year-old daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Orville

Hiepler, Oceanside, California. Nelene is survived by her husband Jim and three daughters ages 4-11.



**Coon Rapids, Minnesota** — Maranatha Free Lutheran accepted 16 new members so far this year. The Home Mission congregation currently rents a temporary facility.



**Brandon, Minnesota** — Chippewa Lutheran choir performs twice monthly throughout the year. Mary Rolf is the director.

for Grace Free Lutheran Church, Valley City, North Dakota, beginning June 1. He will also enroll at the local college for the next school year while continuing his ministry in the parish.

**Pleasanton, Texas** — Good Shepherd Lutheran Church approved a resolution on June 13 that finalized the affiliation of the congregation with the AFLC. Formerly associated with the WCLA, Good Shepherd is served by **Rev. Don Voorhees**, who is on the AFLC Fellowship Roster.



Three-generation choir members at Brandon: Diann Thompson, Irene Larson and Robyn Olson.

## WHERE BOTH WORLD AND HOME MISSIONS BECOME ONE

**T**he AFLC has always considered both the United States and Canada to be our two homelands. Even though it was several years before we actually had a Canadian congregation affiliate with us, there have been Canadian pastors on our roster since the beginning, Canadian subscribers to *The Lutheran Ambassador*, and hopeful signs that someday our fellowship would extend northward to the provinces with which we have so many strong ties.

It is a pleasure to introduce our readers to the congregations of the AFLC-Canada in this issue, which is prepared with the goal of getting better acquainted as well as strengthening the bonds that bind us together in a common commitment to building free and living Lutheran congregations.

Most of the predecessor church bodies from which our congregations came had Canada districts, and the fact that we were located in two different countries was only formally acknowledged. Today, however, international relations are more complicated, and legal requirements make it necessary that the Canadian congregations of the AFLC have a completely separate organization, together with officers, a Co-ordinating Committee, and an annual conference. Although AFLC Home Missions provides an annual subsidy for Canadian outreach, our neighbor church to the north is totally autonomous.

*The Lutheran Ambassador* has attempted over the years, especially under the leadership of the previous editor who had personal roots in the country, to recognize and honor the fact that our readers are primarily from two distinct nations, with different national loyalties, holidays, and political allegiances. We are still an "American" publication, however, and there are undoubtedly many articles included that contain little that would interest our Canadian readers.

The focus of this issue on Canada, therefore, could be called a word of thanks to our northern neighbors for their patient support of our church magazine. But it is also intended to be an instrument that God might use to open the eyes of the rest of our readers to the land where both world and home missions become one and to an opportunity for outreach that is worthy of our prayerful support.

## GRATITUDE

**T**here are many ways in which *The Lutheran Ambassador* is a volunteer venture, and our fellowship continues to owe a debt of gratitude to the many fine writers who contribute their work. Two of our regular columnists for the past six months have concluded their labors, and now we have already begun to appreciate their replacements.

The "Light on the Way" series by Rev. Lloyd Bjornlie came at a busy time in his ministry, as he concludes several years of service in the Winger, Minnesota, parish (Dovre and Union Lake) and prepares for retirement. His Bible study approach was a unique one for this feature, and many readers were edified by the insights from the Book of Romans.

Our writer for the "Last Word" series, Rev. Craig Johnson, Eugene, Oregon, lived up to the expectations created by earlier articles with his memorable and readable evangelistic messages. The original intention for this series was to provide material of the back page that might capture the attention of the idle reader who sees the magazine lying on a coffee table, and none of our writers have done a finer job of translating this goal into reality.

Thank you, brothers! Only eternity will know the impact of your ministry through these pages.

*The Lutheran Ambassador* family is also grateful to Pastor Walter Johnson, Camarillo, California, our current "Light on the Way" writer, and Pastor Gene Sundby, Outlook, Saskatchewan, who accepted the task of preparing the new "Last Word" series. Welcome, and may the Lord be your guide and strength for this special task!

## The Key To Evangelism

Evangelism has been the key to the spread of Christianity since Adam and Eve. Whoa! Were there Christians back then? Of course there were, although they were not called such until much later in the Book of Acts. Believers have all had one thing in common since shortly after the Fall when God made it very plain to Adam and Eve that "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin," (Hebrews 9:22b). This was revealed to Adam and Eve in Genesis, Chapter 3.

Paul put it this way in I Corinthians 2:2: "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Yes, it is the blood of Jesus which opens the way back to God, but it is faith in this complete atonement that bridges the chasm and brings us back into fellowship with our heavenly Father.

Abraham has been called the Father of faith, but this is not strictly true as it has always been that, "without faith it is impossible to please God," (Hebrews 11:6a). Hebrews, Chapter 11 makes it clear that all mankind, even pre-flood, were and are saved by faith. The Apostle Paul in Romans 5:1, states it emphatically: "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

To keep faith in the proper perspective let us also remember that the Scriptures tell us: "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ." Certainly it is true that since the Fall all who have their names in the Lamb's Book of Life have walked by faith and not by sight.

The word "evangelist" or "evangelism" apparently does not occur until the New Testament, but there have always been messengers of the Word. Abel and Cain obviously had been given the message, but Cain chose to ignore or not believe, and that led to the dreadful consequences in his life. Throughout time "evangelists" (mes-

sengers of the Word) have been as diverse as Adam and Eve, Enoch, Noah, the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, all obedient believers, angels, and of most significance, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was truly the only "personal evangelist" as He introduced Himself to all as the Savior of the world. He is "the Word made flesh." He is the person in the message, in fact, one would have to say He is the message (John 3:16).

We, as believers, can only be witnesses to what we know and have heard. We are effective as we become an Andrew as he tells Peter: "We have found the Messiah" (that is the Christ). "Then he brought Simon to Jesus," (John 1:41b and 42a). We are useful as a Philip who simply told Nathanael, "Come and see." As a result of this simple invitation we are told in John 1:47-51, that Nathanael became an instant believer. Later, in Acts, Chapter 8, we are told of Philip explaining the Scriptures to the Ethiopian eunuch and enabling him to

see Jesus in what he read.

Perhaps the most effective way to evangelize is to emulate John the Baptist whose message was direct and simple: "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29b). He also gave us the secret of fruitful evangelism when he said in John 3:30: "He must become greater; I must become less." John knew well that even the most eloquent witness of Jesus Christ could have his or her message nullified by the "I" problem.

Who is to be an evangelist? Paul told Timothy in II Timothy 4:5: "Do the work of an evangelist." Jesus said: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations," (Matthew 28:19a). Paul wrote in Romans 10:10: "For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." If we have Jesus as our Savior we must also be evangelists because the content of our hearts will be confirmed in word and in deed. Amen.

— by Pastor Gene Sundby