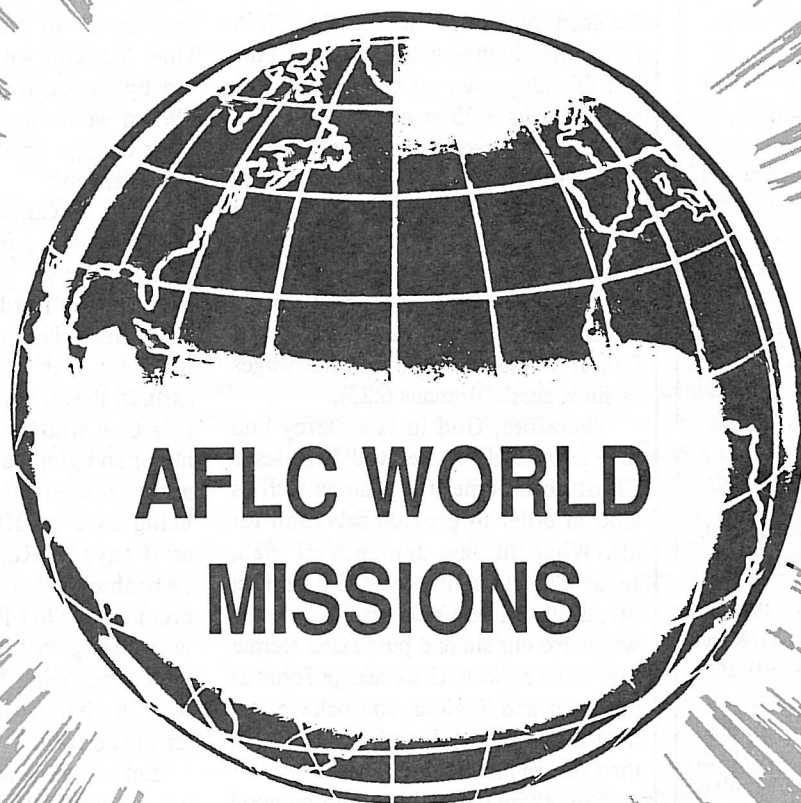


THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

March 5, 1991



**AFLC WORLD
MISSIONS**

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Justified by Faith

All through the Old Testament, God's people were saved by faith and not of works, and Abraham was one of the great examples. Romans 4:3 makes this very plain: "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." If it was by works that he obtained salvation, then it says in verse two, "he hath whereof to glory; but not before God."

It is a very serious and dangerous matter for man to try to earn part of his salvation, for a better standing before God. If it were possible, that in the strength of our own flesh we could be justified before God, then God would have demanded it of each one of us. But Romans 3:20 states, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight ..." Through the fall of Adam, we all became sinners and Romans 3:23 says: "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." In Ezekiel 18:4 we read, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Now the law demands that we fulfill that which it demands, and yet it provides neither the means or the strength to do so. When we strive to keep the law and fail, as we surely will, then the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

Therefore, God in His mercy and love sacrificed His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to become true man as well as God in order to provide salvation for all. What the law demands of man, Jesus Christ fulfilled by His perfect life, death and resurrection. He paid the wages for our sin and purchased eternal life for us as well. If we accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, and believe and trust in His finished work on the cross, then we are justified by faith!

Now there certainly should be good works for a Christian and they should be very evident. But, as Christians, we can take no credit for them. I Corinthians 4:7 states: "For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

We see then by the Word that the entire plan and work is all of God. It is God's Word that reveals to us our sin.

Light on the Way

It is His Spirit who convicts of sin and creates a longing for peace with God. And it is God who provides the faith we need to believe. When God's Spirit enters our hearts, He brings the gift of faith into our hearts so that we can believe and trust in the finished work of Christ. It is all of grace.

Our flesh is our greatest enemy. It hinders us from accepting salvation as a free gift, for we feel we must improve our lifestyle before God will accept us. We get busy trying to give up this sin or that sin. But God gives us no comfort in our good works, and we finally realize that our flesh is weak and unable to please God by works. How thankful we should be that it is not by works, for as it has been said: "When would we know when we have done enough good works by which to enter heaven?"

If we, as Christians, are tempted to boast about all our good works, or how many souls we have witnessed to or won for the Lord, perhaps we better check ourselves to see how much of the flesh was involved. We can rest assured that it was not done right. For it is God who should be given all the honor and glory, and we need to praise and thank Him for the privilege of being used by Him. Then we can do as it says in Romans 4:20-21, "He (Abraham) staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."

Let us constantly praise God that we are justified by faith.



— by Rev.
Alvin Larson



Our Worldwide Ministry

World Missions Director Reports

Pictured are the current World Missions Committee members. (Seated L. to R.) Mr. Ken Williams, Ishpeming, Michigan; Rev. Eugene Enderlein, Director; Rev. Einar Unseth, Glenville, Minnesota. (Standing): Mr. Randy Sommer, Sparland, Illinois; Rev. Ted Kennedy, Nogales, Arizona; Mr. Vernon Russum, Grafton, North Dakota; Rev. Ted Berkas, Wallace, South Dakota. (Not pictured: Mr. Arley Hartsoch, Ray, North Dakota.)

The recent Annual Conference of the Brazil Association of Free Lutheran Congregations was outstanding because it was the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the formation of our sister association. The conference was very well attended by representatives of all of the congregations within the Brazil AFLC, who gathered to conduct the business of the church and to praise the Lord for twenty-five years of blessed ministry.

A few years ago the World Missions Committee directed the following questions to our missionaries in Brazil: "What would happen to our work in Brazil if political circumstances necessitated the rapid removal of our missionary family from the country? Would the church, the Brazil AFLC, survive?"

At that time, there were questions in the minds of many of us as to whether or not the work could continue without severe setbacks. What a great joy it was this year to be present for the Annual Conference and to witness the excellent national leadership with which God has blessed our Brazil AFLC! Having observed and listened during these conference sessions, I am convinced that if such an unfortunate situation developed that forced our missionaries to return to the USA, **the work would continue.**

I was impressed with the capable lay leadership and the quality of pastors whom God has raised up within the church in Brazil. The

church is fully nationalized with a missionary representative on the national council. Collectively, the churches and their leadership desire that the Brazil AFLC grow spiritually and numerically.

The work in Mexico has also experienced numerical blessing. In a recent report from Missionary Daniel Giles, he stated that the congregation at Aguascalientes has outgrown its small chapel and now meets on the outside patio for its services. Pastors Milton Flores in Celaya and Raul Ramirez in Irapuato, as well as Pastor Samuel Flores in Leon, continue faithfully in the ministry in central Mexico, in spite of the difficult economic situation in their country.

The new work in the northern part of Mexico near the city of Obregon, parented by our AFLC congregation at Nogales, Arizona, has recently erected a building as a place of worship. We are thankful for the bus load of adults from our Stillwater and Kalispell, Montana, congregations, who traveled to Obregon during the last two weeks of February to work side by side with our Mexican brothers and sisters to complete this house of worship.

Recent written reports from India have communicated to us that the congregations and Gospel workers, which we are supporting, continue to faithfully proclaim the Gospel message. Two new congregations have recently united with our fellowship.

"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?" (Romans 10:14-15a)

— Rev. Eugene Enderlein
AFLC World Missions Director

A Historical Survey

Memories of the Birth and Growth of our Brazil Mission

Did you ever wonder how the AFLC Mission field in Brazil came about? Most of you know that Ruby and I brought our family of seven children to Brazil under the new Association of Free Lutheran Congregations in August of 1964. But how did we first hear of the AFLC? We had spent the previous four years as missionaries in Brazil, first under the Evangelical Lutheran Church that commissioned us and sent us out, and then under the American Lutheran Church, which was the name of the new merged church after 1960.

I would like Ruby to tell this part: "We returned to the United States by way of Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador, visiting missionary friends in the WMPL (World Mission Prayer League), with whom we had also served for four years. When we arrived in Ecuador, we met a group of young people having an evangelistic campaign with "Youth for Christ." The leader of this American group was David Anderson, a Lutheran. David was the son of Evangelist Clifford Anderson, who had visited us in Brazil on an around-the-world evangelism trip. He told us of a group of pastors and lay people who had met that past fall in Thief River Falls, Minnesota, with the desire to stay out of the coming merger of the Lutheran Free Church and ALC and to continue as an Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. This movement interested my husband very much, for we had witnessed the coming of liberalism in both Brazil and the USA, and were concerned for the future of our Lutheran church."

In January of 1963, I took time to go to the mid-winter LEM Conference in Minneapolis and as I visited with people I was introduced to Rev. John Strand, President of the AFLC, and



The John Abel family, 1969.



Campo Mourao, 1989.

Rev. Raynard Huglen, editor of the new Association's paper, the first issue of which was to come out in the following month. These men invited me to come to Fargo and sit in on their monthly board meeting (there was only one common board at this time). This I did, and shared our observations on the inroads of liberalism and our desire to be part of a group that stood solidly on Lutheran theology and pietism. I met at other times with this board and in April of 1963, they sent me a call to serve as Mission Director and help organize a church in Fargo, plus encourage churches that were thinking about coming into our Association. The understanding was that we would be sent back to Brazil to begin a foreign mission field for the AFLC as soon as conditions permitted.

The outcome of this was that the second Annual Conference of the

AFLC was held in Fargo. Pastor Snipstead and I were on a commission to incorporate the Missions Committee, which was done through a lawyer in Fargo. The first property of the AFLC then became the St. Paul's Free Lutheran Church also known as the Mission Headquarters. The 1964 Annual Conference was held there and at that conference Brazil was chosen as a future field for the AFLC. Pastor and Mrs. Alvin Grothe and Pastor and Mrs. John Abel were chosen as missionaries. By August of 1964, we were scheduled to leave for Brazil. However, Mrs. Frances Grothe became ill in July and it was thought best for them to remain behind a year and use the time for Bible School study in Fergus Falls.

In August, with only Ruby's sister standing on the pier in New York, John and Ruby Abel and their seven



"Ebenezer, . . . até aqui nos ajudou o Senhor."
I Samuel 7:12

Missões

Evangelismo

Escola Bíblica

Retiros

Seminário

Acampamentos

Lar Infantil

Igrejas



The George Knapp family, 1969.



The faculty, staff and students at the Bible School and Seminary during the early days. (row 2, L. to R.) Rev. George Knapp, Rev. Yeddo Gottel. Fourth from Left; Rev. John Abel, Rev. Connely Dyrud. (Row 1, far right) Missionary Priscilla Wold.



On the way to interior churches.

children were once again off for Brazil. We did not know where we would live or work, but we had contacted leaders of the Missionary Language School in Sao Paulo, who subsequently met us at the port of Santos and brought us to a home of a missionary that was vacant for a time, thus giving us time to look around for a place to rent.

Our plan at this time was to put the

children in the school for missionary children, while we would take some classes in the language school to review the language we had already used for several years, and also take time to visit various cities in the interior looking for God's leading as to where we should begin the field for our AFLC.

After four months in Sao Paulo, I felt led to recommend to our home Board that we begin in a new city in the center of the state of Parana, called "Campo Mourao." Almost geographically in the center of this fast growing frontier state, this city was planned as a hub to receive roads from all parts of the state. This was approved and we moved to Campo Mourao in January of 1965. In the summer of 1965, the

Grothe family arrived in Brazil and took up their studies at the language school in Sao Paulo. They joined us in the interior work a year later in 1966.

God provided a new little home for us to rent in Campo Mourao, which was no small blessing, as houses were almost impossible to find in this fast growing city. The house had only two bedrooms; one served for mom and dad, one for the three girls, and dad had a little wooden bunk house built out back on the lot which served as the boys' room and storage room. This home served our mission for about eight years. When we went home on furlough four years later, the Knapp family had arrived to serve in our place and they lived in this house also. Ruby writes about this time:

BRAZIL MISSION

"The house proved to be a fine place for the family. It had a vacant lot next door with some good shade trees, which provided a place for the children to play and ride bike. I had forgotten how red the interior soil was, and how the dust blew, making clothes washing and cleaning a constant chore. At this time, the city had only three blocks of asphalt, just around the cathedral in the center, and when the wind would blow, one could hardly see the lights of the city at night."

In the month of February, 1965, we were able to rent store space on the main avenue in which we could begin our Gospel outreach. Also, before long, we began a radio program on the local station three times a week. The store front building was long and narrow; in the front part we started a small Bible bookstore, and benches were made for the long interior which served as our church. David, who was now 13 years old, studied like the other children in the Brazilian school and worked in our bookstore in the afternoon. I was asked to give some English classes in the state high school, and did this for a few hours each week. It was an opportunity to meet many of the families of our city, and also the payments went into building our first Free Lutheran church, now called the Central Free Lutheran Church of Campo Mourao. Progress was slow, but soon our morning Sunday School and our evening church service were drawing between 25 and 40.

Because of the radio program, invitations to come and speak in towns around the area began coming in. Evangelism campaigns were held in Iretama, Santo Rei, Herveira and Lar Parana, a suburb of Campo Mourao. We finally started Sunday Schools in each of these places and, through the efforts of local believers, churches were built in each one. Pastor Alvin and Frances Grothe and family joined us in 1966 and Alvin, being a good carpenter and a great lover of people — a soul winner, was a real help in getting the churches up in Lar Parana and Santo Rei. Sadly, after only one year in the interior with us, Frances

became very ill and it was necessary to go back to the USA for treatment in September 1967.

In 1966, land was obtained for a future Bible School and Seminary on a hill overlooking the city about one mile out, on a planned future federal highway. Most of this land of about three acres was donated to us by a Brazilian of Italian ancestry, who at one time owned most of the suburb called "Lar Parana." Pastor Alvin Grothe was able to be in charge of putting up the first building in 1967, and the cornerstone laying was in June. Classes began with eight students in the Bible School in February of 1968. In the September 18 issue of the *Ambassador*, you saw an aerial view of the Bible School/Seminary Campus. What a long way we have come from a hill covered with jungle, and a clearing for one building (which was later used only for a boys' dorm and torn down with the coming of the new boys' dorm in 1988.)



The new boy's dorm at Campo Mourao, 1990. Buildings are now being built with brick, replacing the early wooden structures.

I believe it was in February of 1969 that the George Knapp family came from our Seminary in Minneapolis and joined us in Campo Mourao. We had held classes in our Bible School through 1968 with the help of three Brazilian teachers who had been contracted in Sao Paulo. They stayed on to help Pastor George and we got ready to go on furlough in May of 1969. Pastor Knapp had stepped into a big job, caring for four churches, a book store and Bible School! But he and Helen had previous experience in Brazil, and together with our Brazilian teachers (one was a pastor), they carried on and expanded the work while we were in the USA. At this time, Connely Dyrud was graduating from Seminary and had received a call to Brazil. He and Carolyn and family came to the field in September of 1969 and spent their first year in language school at Sao Paulo. When we returned as a family in October of 1971, they had just moved to Campo Mourao. For a couple of years



Rev. George Knapp and Rev. Alvin Grothe at the dedication of the new Lar Parana Church in 1989.



The Connelly Dyrud family, 1976.



Rev. Charles Knapp and some of the members of the Foz do Iguassu congregation, 1984.

we three missionaries were able to work together taking care of six churches and the Bible School, which soon grew to include a Seminary.

In 1971, Pastor George Knapp was in charge of building our second building at the Bible School, the girls' dorm. A few years later Pastor Connelly Dyrud was in charge of building the present classroom building and dining hall and kitchen; since then he has built the new boys' dorm and is in charge of the two constructions now underway, the new girls' dorm and the orphanage building. These men have been great co-workers through the years.

Pastor George Knapp and family returned to the U.S. on furlough in 1973, and in 1974 Pastor Connelly Dyrud and family took their furlough, too, returning to the field early in 1975. At this time, a single woman

missionary, Priscilla Wold, was added to our staff, serving in the Bible School and as a teacher for the Dyrud children. Priscilla labored faithfully until she returned to the U.S. in 1986, in order to care for her parents.

Shortly after Priscilla's departure, Miss Carol Knapp came to the field, returning as a teacher, school secretary and dean of women. Carol was also active in the churches with her music. In December, 1989, she returned with her parents back to the U.S.

The decade of the eighties saw new missionaries commissioned for service in Brazil ... yet in a sense they were not new at all.. Three missionary sons returned to Brazil with their families. Rev. Charles Knapp and family spent one term on the Brazil-Paraguay border beginning in 1981. The Foz do Iguassu congregation continues to thrive.

Rev. David and Janet Abel actually arrived in February, 1979, beginning their work at the Central Church in Campo Mourao, plus teaching in the Bible School and Seminary.

After a short furlough in 1983, they were asked by the Field Conference to begin a new work in Vitoria, Espirito Santo, in response to a request for a pastor which came from a group of six families of German Lutheran background. They arrived in this large city of over a million population in October, 1983.

Vitoria is located near the ocean about 350 miles north of Rio de Janeiro, and is one of the oldest cities in Brazil. The congregation met in

homes at first, later moving to a school building. In 1986, they purchased property and started to build. The church is planned for three levels, two of which have been completed, and the top floor sanctuary will eventually seat about 400 people. There are now 115 members in the congregation, with a Sunday School of 150. An active home-evangelism and Bible study program has made this our fastest growing church in Brazil, and already fourteen youth have attended Bible School and two men are enrolled in the Seminary.

Rev. Paula and Becky Abel were sent directly to Curitiba in March, 1985, and expanded the house church that the senior Abels had organized five years earlier.

Soon after their arrival, Paul and Becky rented a store building, and two years later they were able to purchase land for a church building. Today there are two congregations in the city, each with its own church building.

As we look back over the past 25 years, words are inadequate to express our thanks to God for His marvelous grace, for by the power of the Holy Spirit He has transformed lives and created congregations. Jesus said, "I will build my church ..." (Matthew 16:18). He is still doing it, and so we say, "Soli Deo Gloria."

The theme of our 25th Anniversary was "Ebenezer" or "until now the Lord has helped us." It is true, and so we can justly thank Him and by faith press on, for He is faithful.

— Rev. John H. Abel
Missionary-Evangelist



Missionary Priscilla Wold, 1983.

AFLC March Promotion-World Missions

Brazil

5 American missionary families
8 National pastors
14 Churches
Seminary and Bible School
Miriam Infant Home

Mexico

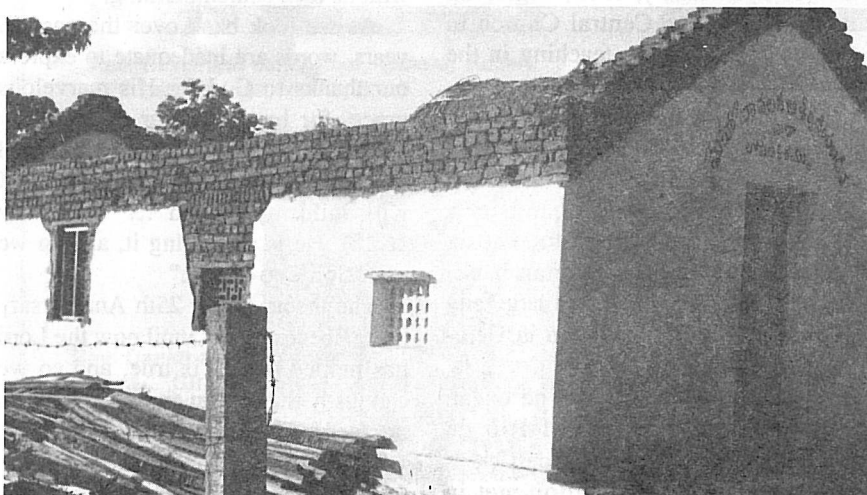
1 American missionary family
3 National pastors
5 Churches

India

National Gospel workers and congregations
Chaplaincy in the U. S. military
Chaplains Tim Skramstad, Mark Antal, Michael Crowell.



Blankets were distributed to those in need as a result of the cyclone in southern India. The AFLC provided this relief help which included the reconstruction of the church pictured below.



India's

Please come and visit us. This is the invitation that our AFLC had received several times from Christian leaders in India over a period of many months. After praying much about this urgent invitation, our World Missions Committee decided to send two representatives to India to study the mission needs there. Pastor Eugene Enderlein, our World Missions Director, and I were delegated to go.

Thus, a year ago, on October 6, we arrived in New Delhi at 2 a.m. There, a helpful taxi driver took us to a hotel where we obtained several hours of rest prior to boarding a plane for Hyderabad. At this airport, we were warmly greeted by three Christian men who placed a garland around the neck of each of us. Then they unashamedly prayed in the airport for our travel and our stay in their country. From Hyderabad we traveled at night on a bus, reaching our destination of Guntur early the next morning.

At Guntur we were hospitably cared for during the next nine days. On that Saturday afternoon we had the joyful experience of meeting 25 Christian workers who assembled there to welcome us. For four hours (as they sat on the floor) they prayed, sang hymns, shared God's Word, and told us what God is doing through their work. The India invitation was re-emphasized as they personally invited us to visit their churches. Pastor Enderlein and I happily accepted their invitation.

Therefore, we left that home early the next morning to devote the Lord's Day to visiting four churches. Stepping out of our taxi at the first church, we were graciously welcomed by many of

"From those ox carts, I preached the Gospel under the full moon to many empty souls. About 200 listeners sat on the ground surrounded by water buffalo ..."

Invitation

the members. The service commenced with prayer and beautiful singing. Pastor Enderlein preached and I brought a greeting, using a dedicated Christian teacher as our interpreter. At the close of the service, six adult converts came forward for baptism. The people asked us to choose Christian names for them. My choice included names like Rachel and Ruth, names which my wife and I would have used for our children, if the Lord had given us girls. Then many people came to us and requested prayer for specific needs. After being much inspired at that church, we experienced the same spirit in the other three churches. We retired at 1:30 a.m. for the night, having had a busy but blessed day.

All of that week was spent in visiting 30 churches. There was much diversity in the church buildings. Some are of brick construction, but many are of poles covered with banana leaves. One church was roofless while others had holes in the roof caused by storms. Most of them are extremely small by our standards. One church is only 150 square feet. In most of them there was wall to wall attendance even though the temperature hovered in the 90s. In some places the service was held outside because the building was so small.

Perhaps the most memorable service for me was one that started one night at 10:30 p.m. Since there is yet no building there, we held the service outdoors. Our platform consisted of two-high ox carts set side by side. From those ox carts, I preached the Gospel under the full moon to many empty souls. About 200 listeners sat on the ground surrounded by water buffalo that had reclined for the night. Most of those people were spiritually empty, for I was informed that there were only four Christians there. A spiritual hunger exists. They pleaded for a church building. I asked an elderly Christian lady what Christ had done for her. Immediately she replied, "He healed my rheumatism and I know I'm going to Heaven."

However, among India's vast population that is approaching one billion

The Report Card Is In

The books have now closed on the 1990-91 fiscal year. We reached only 75% of the conference-approved budget for the year. Certain areas of our work now face real concerns about being able to maintain the present level of ministry.

The percentage of the budget raised does not tell the whole story. The giving last year set an all-time record of \$1,079,255. It is only a little more than \$6,000 over the giving the previous year, but it does set a new record. Why then was the percentage of the budget reached last year so much lower than for the previous year when we reached 82% of the budget? The reason for that is that the budget goals have continued to increase. Last year's budget goal was ten percent higher than the year before. With our giving at just about the same level, the percentage for the budget reached had to go down.

What can we do about it? The first thing that has to happen is that the various boards have to tighten their belts. Some examples of what may take place is that some new Home Mission work will have to be curtailed, and even some new work in progress may have to be discontinued. We may not be able to send out the next missionary candidates for work in Brazil. I do not believe that any of us want to see this happen.

In my two previous articles I have addressed the matter of our stewardship and commitment. All we have really belongs to God, and we are only stewards or trustees of our possessions for a little while. We will one day give an account to God of how we have used or misused that which He has entrusted to us. We need to reconsider our stewardship commitment to God.

That congregations might be free and living was a major goal for the establishment of the Lutheran Free Church back in 1897. The vision of this goal was rekindled in 1962 when the AFLC came into being. It has been said many times that the AFLC is a spiritual movement. A spiritual movement is kept alive only as long as there continues to be revival and renewal. Our present financial woes are ample testimony to how much we need revival in our church.

Has the vision of what God desires to do through our AFLC dimmed? Are we so busy with a multitude of secondary tasks that we have lost sight of the main goal? It is only the time, talents and treasures invested for Christ that will bear fruit for eternity.

God continues to bless our AFLC. May we permit Him to renew and revive our relationships to Him so that He can fill us with burning hearts and burning vision of lost souls that need to be redeemed, and the Kingdom work that must be done while it is day. The coming of our Lord draws nigh.

—Richard Snipstead

people, there are still so many millions of precious souls who do not have this blessed assurance. Only three and one-half percent of the people claim to be Christian. Yet the door for evangelism stands open now. There are no restrictions to preaching the Gospel. The India invitation is extended to us to help proclaim the Gospel there. Christ's command to go and make disciples of all nations surely includes the great nation of India. May our

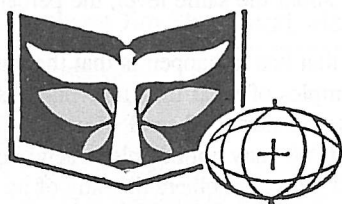
response to this invitation and command be a positive one.



—Rev. Einar Unseth, Chairman
World Missions Committee
Glenville, Minnesota



Rev. John and Ruby Abel, Campo Mourao, Brazil.



AFLC Missionaries

Finally my brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you, and that we may be delivered from perverse and evil men: for not all have the faith.

II Thessalonians 3:1, 2



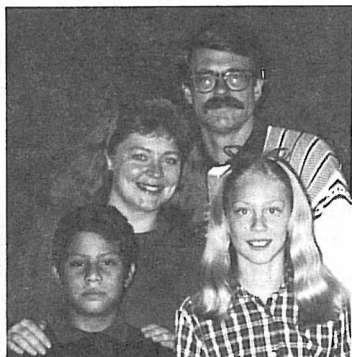
Rev. Connely and Carolyn Dyrud, Chester, Christina, Shannon, Victoria, Campo Mourao, Brazil.



Rev. David and Janet Abel, Tamera, Robert, Jonathan, Melissa, Vitoria, Brazil.



Rev. Paul and Rebecca Abel, Joanna, Christina, Andrew, Matthew, Curitiba, Brazil.



Rev. Daniel and Debra Giles, Ingrid, Daniel, Aguascalientes, Mexico.



Rev. Thomas and Patti Baker, Andrew, Hannah, Campo Mourao, Brazil.

22. The parable teaches that evil is an inescapable reality that we must contend with all our days. We find it at work, in all levels of society, all forms of government; yes, even in our churches and our homes. Does this mean we can become complacent, and grow tolerant of the evil we see within us, and all around us? What are the clear warnings of scripture?

Ephesians 5:11

Ephesians 6:11

I Thessalonians 5:21, 22

I Peter 5: 8, 9

TWO HARVESTS

23. Not forever will the wheat and the weeds be mingled. When will the separation take place?

24. Who are the harvesters?

25. What harsh words from our gentle Lord describe the harvest of the unrighteous? vs 40-42

26. What beautiful words describe the harvest of the righteous? v 43a

How can anyone be termed righteous? Isaiah 45:24, 25; Philippians 3:9

The righteousness of Christ is available to everyone, for we are living in the day of grace. "Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

II Corinthians 6:2

Next month we will study "THE MUSTARD SEED"

HYMN SUGGESTION: "I WALK IN DANGER ALL THE WAY"
(Concordia #313)

The Wheat and the Weeds

Seedtime and harvest are once again the familiar setting of our parable study. Our previous lessons have dealt with only good seed, symbolic of God's Word. Now Jesus introduces us to a different kind of seed, an evil seed.

Sowing weeds in the field of another was an act of revenge which occasionally occurred in Palestine. The Roman government actually passed laws forbidding it. The weed referred to was probably darnel, a toxic plant. Its seed is scarcely distinguishable from wheat, and the growing plants look very much alike. Only when the grain starts to head out is the difference noticed; at harvest the darnel must be separated out or the resulting cereal flour will be poisonous.

Jesus' Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds is recorded in Matthew 13:24-30, and the interpretation to His disciples is found in verses 36-43.

TWO SOWERS

1. Who is the sower of the good seed?

2. What words describe the sower of the weeds? vs. 25, 28, 38, 39

3. What does the field symbolize?

Who owns this field? vs. 24, 27

Psalms 24:1

4. Then what might we say that the second sower is doing?

5. The enemy planted his seed at night. What does this indicate concerning his character and intent? John 3:20

6. How could the weeds become so well established before being discovered?

7. What tactic does Satan often use to gain a foothold in hearts and lives? II Corinthians 11:14

TWO KINDS OF SEED

8. In this parable, the seed does not represent the Word, but rather the product of the working of that Word. Who (not what) does the good seed represent?

9. Who do the weeds represent?

10. How are these people characterized in v. 41?

11. In what way do some people also imitate or masquerade? II Corinthians 11:13-15

Matthew 24:24

12. What power does Satan possess that causes his followers to be deceived? II Corinthians 4:4

13. Knowingly, or unknowingly, who do all unbelievers obey? John 8:44a

14. Sometimes "culs and isms" have success in leading even Christian people astray. What methods does Paul renounce in II Corinthians 4:2?

15. What must we really know in order to detect false teachings? II Timothy 3:15

16. Scripture admonishes us to be on the alert:

Luke 21:8

Acts 20:30, 31

I John 4:1-3

"LET BOTH GROW TOGETHER"

17. What do the servants suggest that they might do about the weeds they have discovered in the field?

18. What was the owner's answer? Yes No

What was his reason?

He reaffirms his wishes in v. 30a

19. What is Jesus teaching us concerning the relationship of Christians with unbelievers? v. 29, 30a

20. In what ways might we "pull up the weeds", contrary to our Lord's command?

21. Why is it not our business to "pull weeds"? List your reasons, using scripture as your guide. The following references may help you; add others of your own choosing. Begin with Matthew 13:29

Matthew 7:15; I Corinthians 10:12

Luke 15:1, 2; 5:32; I Timothy 2:4

Ephesians 6:12

Romans 10:14, 17

Acts 17:31a; I Corinthians 4:5

"Have we ever in our life met a person, no matter how depraved, unbelieving, or vicious he or she may have been, even some malicious, quarrelling, clacking neighbor or slippery, scheming fellow-worker. — I ask you, have we ever met a person of whom we dared to say, 'This person is really a weed and nothing but a weed'? — Or were we not at the same time brought up short and challenged to see that Jesus died for him too, and that none of us can know whether some altogether different seed may yet spring up in him?"

— Helmut Thielicke

MINISTRY TO THE MILITARY

Our Lord Jesus said: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). We have perhaps all met individuals who have carried tremendous burdens and had no hope for rest. Fear, shame, and guilt drive them to despair. No one has ministered to them or encouraged them with the message of hope.

The message of reconciliation must be preached to all the world and as an Army Chaplain and pastor in the AFLC, it has long been my burden to share this good news to those in the military and to their families.

Today, as the nations wage war in the Middle East, we are called upon to counsel, pray, and minister in intensely personal ways. Many are now open to Christ who previously refused to hear any word of testimony.

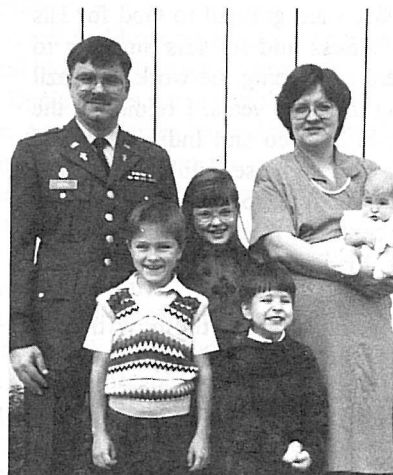
We have heard from different members of our AFLC who have loved ones in the Middle East. As we share our greetings to our beloved AFLC, we especially remind those who are praying for loved ones in dangerous places that no place is safer than to be in the center of His will. The dark land of war, which recognizes only a religion hostile to Christianity, has witnessed the conversion of hundreds, if not thousands, to Jesus Christ.

We plead for your prayers that Christ might be exalted and accepted into the hearts of our soldiers and their families.

— *Chaplain Timothy K. Skramstad*
Fort Carson, Colorado



Chaplain Timothy and Evonne Skramstad, Rachel, Nathan, Katie.



Chaplain Mark and Ruth Antal, Kristen, Daniel, Benjamin, Gretchen.

Home Missions Pastor Activated by Army



Rev. Michael Crowell, Wichita Falls, Texas, left on February 11, for Fort Knox, Kentucky. The newly activated chaplain will serve personnel arriving to that Army base also having just been activated. Chaplain Crowell's additional duties will be to serve the permanent staff at Fort Knox, as well as Lutherans who have not had a chaplain for some time. His wife, Lori, and their children, Jeremy, ten; Melissa, eight; and Adrian, 17-months, plan to live in their home at Wichita Falls for the present. Chaplain Crowell's current orders are for 12 months of service at Fort Knox. His address is: CH Michael Crowell, Box 802, Fort Knox, Kentucky 40121, and his phone is (502) 624-8193.

As a Chaplain's family in Europe, we are called to minister to other Americans and share our faith and hope in Jesus Christ. Sometimes we need to be ministered to, and that is why you people are so meaningful to us! Your love, concern, letters and prayers encourage us greatly.

For many military families, life has become more difficult in these last months. Many have a family member deployed to the Gulf Region. If they do not, the threat of terrorism is a way of life. Our bases and schools are heavily guarded. Our children ride on school buses with an armed guard present. Each night we thank God for another day of safety and entrust the coming one to His care.

"The Lord also will be a stronghold for the oppressed; A stronghold in times of trouble. And those who know Thy Name will put their trust in Thee. For thou, O Lord, hast not forsaken those who seek thee" (Psalm 9:9-10).

— *Chaplain Mark Antal*

Greetings from Former Missionaries

To all of our friends and co-laborers in the Kingdom at home and abroad, greetings in Jesus' name. His grace and peace be yours.

God called me, Frances (my first wife) and our family to serve in world missions during those early formative years of the AFLC. We followed the John Abel family to Brazil one year after their arrival in June, 1964. Due to my wife's illness, we returned in October, 1967. Frances went home to be with the Lord in January, 1968.

Eighteen months later, God gave me another wonderful wife when I married Loretta Larson, Roseau, Minnesota. Since then, we served congregations in Minnesota and Oregon.

I had the privilege of visiting our Brazil mission field in 1976 and again in 1989. I am grateful to God for His faithfulness and for His answers to prayers concerning the work in Brazil during these 25 years. I rejoice in the work in Mexico and India as well. I thank God for those faithful missionaries and national pastors and workers who continue to serve. God is doing great things through them. Souls are being saved.

Let us support them with our prayers and our pocketbooks. May we "pray the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth workers into the harvest." May God continue to richly bless this work and supply every need until He comes again.

—Rev. Alvin J. Grothe
Astoria, Oregon

Matthew 28:18-20 has three parts: Call, Command, and Connection.

We sensed the call to be a part of Christ's work. The command was to go to Brazil.

We first went as "faith missionaries." We were involved in various aspects of mission work: construction, teaching, preaching and serving as house parents to missionary children.

Our involvement with the AFLC began in 1968. We went to teach in the Bible School and Seminary established in Campo Mourao, Parana.

It has been a joy to witness the enthusiasm of the young people as they prepare to work in the church, as well as seeing young Brazilian pastors becoming vitally involved.

We have seen much change and growth. In the first years, there was a low education level. One student learned to read and write while in Bible School. Today the AFLC secretary types the minutes of the annual meeting as they occur.

There has also been physical growth at the school. Now we have six separate units.

This is all because of the "Connection." Christ said: "Lo I am with you always." Congratulations to the Brazil AFLC on 25 years of work for and with Christ! May it continue.

We want to thank the AFLC constituency for their loyal support during our work on the foreign field.

—Rev. George Knapp
Willmar, Minnesota

The 22 years spent with our AFLC mission work in Brazil are years of great memories for me. I have many dear friends there whom I shall meet in heaven if not again in this earthly walk. I labored there in love and in God's strength while it was yet day, knowing that at any time Satan's power could close the doors. I always sensed the urgency to witness while it was yet day because the fields were so white unto harvest.

I'm proud to have been a part of the AFLC work from its headquarters in Campo Mourao, Parana. At the Bible School, it was a joy to be a teacher for several years. I traveled many miles to work in the several churches. I had meetings with the women; clubs for the girls using puppets, flannel graph, flash cards and chalk talks for teaching the Good News. Crafts were usually a part of the program, also. VBS's were a very important activity each year. This included sleeping in a tent or on church benches for a week. Sometimes we were invited into a home for meal. In all of this there was always the thick red dust in dry weather and the heavy red mud in wet weather. I walked many miles distributing tracts to every home in a town and visiting homes and families in the valleys.

Every step was taken with prayer for guidance, each word was spoken in loving counsel, each year was lived with the purpose of His Will.

Congratulations to our sister churches in Brazil and their 25th anniversary celebration!

—Helen Knapp
Willmar, Minnesota



A church choir sang at the 25th Anniversary Service on January 20, 1991, at the chapel in Campo Mourao.



Rev. George and Helen Knapp with their daughter Carol, at a recent AFLC Annual Conference.

A WORLDWIDE VISION

One of the arguments against the organization of the AFLC in 1962 was the lack of any world missionary outreach. The only possible response at the time was to point out the possibility of continuing to support former missionaries or channeling funds to independent Lutheran missions and others. It was almost impossible for the struggling new fellowship to imagine sending forth its own missionaries so soon.

But God had other plans. Some of our leaders dared to dream, and the impossible happened. In a matter of months, we welcomed Rev. John H. Abel, our first mission director, with his vision for an evangelistic Lutheran outreach to Brazil, and our first annual conference authorized the mission board to send missionaries to the South American nation by next year.

Our worldwide vision continued to expand with the acceptance of Rev. Lawrence Dynneson and his ministry to Mexico from Nogales, Arizona. Our Mexican missionary outreach today, as well as the work of the World Mission Prayer League in northern Mexico, can be directly or indirectly traced to the patient and prayerful labors of the Dynnesons, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Swanson, and others.

We were challenged with a "tri-nation" vision for South America, including Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay, where a brief attempt was made to begin mission work several years ago. Doors have opened, closed, and opened again to India.

Our worldwide vision is yet incomplete. We have never reached our goal for the number of missionary families to serve in Brazil, and the national church still has steps to take in order to truly become a fellowship of self-supporting and self-governing congregations. Paraguay is once again under consideration as a mission field, but this time by the Brazilian believers themselves. The future of our mission work in India is unclear, seemingly waiting for the courts to untangle the conflicting claims. New doors open, new needs develop, and new nations beckon.

This issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* celebrates the silver anniversary of our sister church in Brazil, as well as the vision of the whole AFLC world mission program. Perhaps the words of a hymn by Anne Ortlund might serve as our prayer:

*The vision of a dying world is vast before our eyes;
We feel the heartbeat of its need,
We hear its feeble cries ...
O Lord, constrain and move Thy church,
The glad news to impart!
And Lord, as Thou dost stir Thy church,
Begin within my heart.
Amen.*

BUDGET GOALS AND GRACE

The final figures have not yet been published, but preliminary reports for the 1990 fiscal year reveal that an average of only 75% of our budget goals were reached.

The good news is that the annual income increased. But much of the increase may have been channeled to the administration building program, in spite of the committee's clear concern that gifts to this project should be over and above our regular offerings. It seems that there is only so much money to give.

It is difficult for our officers and boards not to become discouraged at the lack of funds to finance the goals set by our annual conferences. The temptation is to resort to law instead of grace so that these goals might be reached. But the problem is that we soon become hardened to the lash of the law, making it necessary that more law be applied. Only the grace of God can set us free from this unending and unrelenting slavery to the need for more legalistic fund-raising methods.

A stewardship appeal based on need can be an attractive counterfeit of grace-motivated giving. An appeal to need can create competition between various Christian endeavors, and even between our AFLC departments ... "Send your money to us! We need it more than they do!" Then the most successful endeavor in terms of budget receipts will be the one that can compose the most heart-rending letters to its contributors. There is no end to this cruel cycle, either, when grace does not motivate and dominate our stewardship programs.

Can it be that the explanation for the fact that so large a percentage of our budget receipts is received during the final two months of the fiscal year is found in our acceptance of only need-motivated appeals? Are we waiting to give to the Lord's work until someone moves us to "feel" like it?

The solution, of course, is a commitment to faithful and consistent personal stewardship, with the tithe as a guide and grace as the motivating force. One of the ways that we can free ourselves from the tyranny of emotional appeals is to bring the whole tithe into the storehouse (Malachi 3:10), or to our local congregations, and allow the Body to provide for the local and national needs that we share together. Many of our congregations have also chosen to tithe their offerings to our common endeavors ... some exceed the tithe ... so that regular contributions will be received by our AFLC each month, rather than waiting for appeals at the end of the year.

So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, have an abundance for every good work (II Corinthians 9:7-8).

GREETINGS

We are thankful for the opportunity of having served God under AFLC missions in Paraguay, South America, from 1981-1985.

We failed in man's program of officially establishing an AFLC mission work in Paraguay. However, through our ministry and witness, a living congregation was established in Foz do Iguassu, Brazil.

Built on the sure foundation of Jesus Christ, His Word and the Sacraments, this congregation has grown, matured, and is in the process of establishing an outreach back into Paraguay where it actually began. We planted, others watered, and God gives the increase.

We express a heartfelt thank you to all who supported us during that time. God bless you.

—Rev. Charles and Joyce Knapp
Karlstad, Minnesota

As an MK growing up in Brazil, I always felt the call to return as a missionary. God answered this desire and on March 1, 1984, I returned to Brazil and spent six wonderful years there as a "short-term" missionary. I worked at the AFLC-Brazil Bible School in Campo Mourao, Parana, as Dean of Women, secretary and teacher. I count it a great privilege to have been a part of the mission in Brazil and to have seen firsthand the growth of the AFLC there.

Working in the school office provided me with ample opportunity to see this growth, as I not only was involved with working with the Bible School, but also the various churches, and the Association in Brazil as a whole.

Especially exciting was to work with the young people in the Bible School and in the local churches. How good to see young people coming to the Lord, growing in Him, studying a year at the Bible School, and going back to their own churches better prepared to serve Him and others.

A dream come true for the young people was the establishment of the Youth Federation, and last year their first congress was held outside Campo Mourao. The Youth Federation theme verse is I Timothy 4:12 "Let no one

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Second-Class

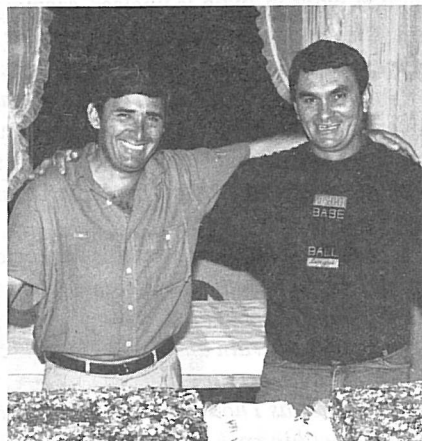


Rev. Oseias Camara, president of Brazil AFLC, officiated at the Ordination of three men during the festive Anniversary Service on Sunday, January 20.

despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love in faith, in purity," and with this in mind, over 100 young people gathered together for a weekend of blessing and spiritual renewal. I've received many letters from friends in Brazil expressing how the congress was a blessing to them. In two years they plan to hold their next congress. Thank you for your prayers on behalf of the Youth Federation. They covet your prayers as they continue growing and serving.

I can say from firsthand experience, that God is working in the AFLC-Brazil. The church is growing and maturing. Praise the Lord!

—Carol Knapp
Willmar, Minnesota



Pictured are two men from Central Church and the anniversary cake served on Friday evening, January 18. Saturday was reserved for conference business sessions. The 25th Anniversary weekend concluded with a three hour Sunday service.