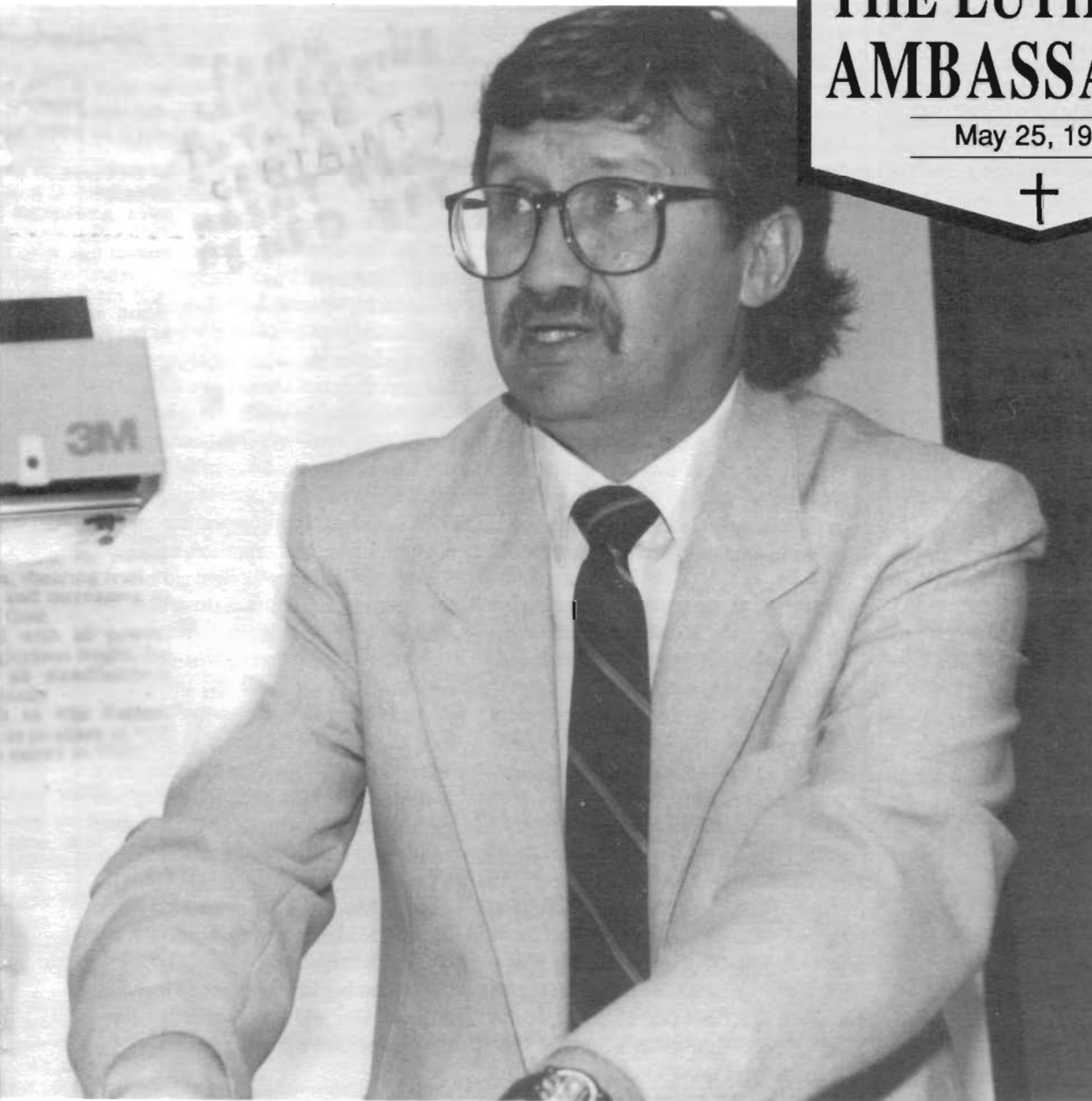




# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

May 25, 1993



Farewell to a Special Teacher

# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

May 25, 1993 • Vol. 31, No. 11

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

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Subscriptions: \$15.00 year, U. S.  
\$18.00 year, International

Write to:

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

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

USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413

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

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

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## Pulpit Podiatrists

Romans 10

**T**oday as we careen our way across the plateau of chapter 9, to the other side of the mountain, we begin the descent in chapter 10. It overlooks miles and miles of strange foreign lands! It's beautiful, scenic, but without God.

In our previous columns, we have climbed higher and higher in our pursuit of salvation. The higher we got, the farther we could see and the greater the realization and appreciation of the salvation God prepared for us. Romans teaches us that this salvation was prepared before the foundation of the world. It was prepared outside of ourselves and any merit, works or worthiness that we might try to offer.

But now in chapter 10, our basking in pure, plateau air is abruptly interrupted by a sudden cliff. On this side of the mountain our eyes gaze downward to the fields that are "white unto harvest" with no visible reapers; no one to claim the land for the Lord!

In the opening verse of chapter 10, Paul is specific in what he sees: "Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites, (that's what he saw on the other side of his mountain) is that they may be saved."

After having viewed the riches of His grace on your trip up this ecclesiastical mountainside, what are you going to do? Stay on the Bear Tooth Pass of Yellowstone and enjoy the scenery of life? Or are you going to begin heading down the "mountain of ministry" to bring the good tidings of the Good News of what you have learned and experienced on the mountaintop with your Lord?

Paul describes (vs. 15) the feet that bring good tidings as beautiful feet. Why do you think God gave you this mountain of blessing to climb? He has given you these scenic views of grace, love, acceptance and forgiveness so that you may be liberated or set free to find salvation full and free. But that is not the end! It is also that you might bring that Good News to those yet in the valley, that they too may be saved (vs. 13).

## Light on the Way

Remember, "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

But Paul says: "How can they call on the one they have not believed in? How can they believe in one of whom they have never heard? How can they hear without someone preaching to them?"

Your feet, dear friend, are beautiful every time they bring you in contact with someone in need of a Savior! When Paul looked ahead to the other side of his mountain, he saw an unrepentant Jewish people. Who do you see on the other side of your mountain? You and I are the privileged preachers. We who have been on this mountaintop of grace, are we going to stay there as we look down upon the harvest fields? Or are we going to wind our way down to the needy people below? How beautiful are the feet of them who go to witness by love, by word and by life.

Witnessing is not standing on the cliff shouting the salvation message. Rather it's letting your feet go among the needy ones; those with whom we walk, love and make a difference in our lives. That is our Jerusalem. We begin there.

To be "sent" in Greek is "Apostello." It appears 123 times in the New Testament. To be sent means that there is someone behind you, equipping you and empowering you. It is the same word that Jesus used in the Great Commission and in His High Priestly prayer: "As you (Father) sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. So send I you!"

Remember, it is not you who saves anyone. You and I are but living illustrations of God's power.



— by Rev.  
Lloyd Bjornlie

*But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15).*

Traveling home from visiting family in Idaho last summer, we stopped for a break at Trinidad, Colorado. While my wife and son went out on the playground, I sat with a cup of coffee and a Denver newspaper. In the "want ad" section it shocked me to read the following:

"Guys seeking meaningful relationships with gals ... Guys seeking meaningful relationships with guys ... Gals seeking meaningful relationships with gals."

I thought about what I had just read. We have fallen so far in our nation! It would not surprise me if one day we read: "Guys or gals looking for meaningful relationships with beasts." Such is the moral depravity prevalent around us.

Readers, it is time we "circled the wagons" and get back to the teaching of biblical moral absolutes in our homes. We have a generation now without this foundation and look where it is leading us. Think of the untold tragedies that have happened in the lives of millions; many being played out right in our own families.

Directing blame for our moral dilemma takes many avenues. The liberal media keeps pumping out its debased agenda. The rock and roll philosophy continues to grip the youth. The mainline denominational seminaries and churches, as well, have bought into the higher criticism of the Bible which has worked in many minds and hearts to change the truth of God into a lie. Yet some of the blame must be placed squarely upon ourselves.

Somehow many Christian families have been beguiled to not pass on the time-honored morals that have guided this nation until recent years. We have turned this responsibility to pastor's confirmation class or to the Sunday School classroom. Both have probably done a fine job, yet moral teachings must come from parents and be modeled by them.

Fathers, as heads of families, it is up to you to be the spiritual priest of your home. It is up to the single parent, as well, to pass on "this is what the Bible says" to your offspring, (Deuteronomy 11:18-21). Dr. Luther wrote in the Small Catechism: "The head of the family should teach them in a simple way to his household."

Yes, we as leaders of the family need to spend time teaching our children the moral truths of Scripture. Then by the grace of God, as we teach and model these truths before them, when they get old "they shall not depart from it."



*Here are a few biblical listings that a parent can use to help a child gain a moral foundation:*

1. God created us as male and female — Genesis 1:27.

2. God made woman from man for man and performed the first marriage — Genesis 2:22-24.

3. The only wholesome sexual relationships blessed by the Lord are found in marriage — I Corinthians 7:28; Hebrews 13:4.

4. Sexual union of husband and wife has the two-fold purpose of consummating the marriage in love and bringing children into the world — Genesis 1:28, 2:24.

5. God desires marriage for a stable society and especially desires that Christians marry Christians — Genesis 2:25, 28:1-3; II Corinthians 6:14.

6. God is against divorce — Malachi 4:16; Mark 10:9; I Corinthians 7:10-11. (Only allowing it when the spouse is unfaithful or when the unbelieving spouse departs — Matthew 5:32; I Corinthians 7:15).

7. Any type of sexual contact outside of marriage is a perversion and is sinful and brings God's judgment. Scripture categorizes these perversions as adultery, incest, homosexuality, bestiality — Leviticus 20, fornication, orgies — Galatians 5:19-21. (In the Old Covenant, Israelites who committed these acts were to be stoned. In the New Covenant those who commit these acts in God's estimation deserve death and will die eternally, lest they truly repent and acknowledge Christ as Savior and Lord wherein they are completely cleansed, justified and forgiven — I Corinthians 6:9-11.) ◇



— by Rev.  
Joseph E. Schultz  
Tulsa, Texas

# Single Saints

## A Challenge to the Church



**M**any churches have spent much time and effort developing total church programs centered around the family unit. Unfortunately, the ever increasing numbers of singles have often been left out in the cold.

Society in general, and the church in particular, has often neglected and ignored a large portion of their adult population — singles.

In 1970 there were 48 million singles in the United States — one out of every three American adults!

Singles fall into three basic categories. First, there is the single who is unmarried by choice, by design or because “Mr. or Miss Right” hasn’t appeared; second, there is the widow or widower; and third, the divorced man or woman.

Of these 48 million single adults, 14 million were single parents. Ministering to single parents and their children is likewise mostly ignored in most churches. It is a vitally important ministry which should be included in the

total church program since single people are found in every church and are often a congregation’s greatest untapped resource.

The church has customarily been composed primarily of married adults. In the past few years, however, the church has been forced to accept the fact that the numbers of singles in our society are increasing with startling speed.

As a result, the church must now enlarge its vision to include the single adult in its total program.

A local church may find it difficult to minister to singles for several reasons. One reason is that singles usually feel out of place because adequate programming has not been developed to meet their specific needs. Another reason is that singles often feel that many married people reflect a superior attitude toward them. Finally, some married people appear to be threatened by the presence of singles.

### A change in attitude

Those and other attitudes, however, can be changed with a little effort on the part of both the church and the singles involved.

As we review the Scriptures we recognize that singles can minister to other believers as well as be ministered to. Jesus came to the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus in Bethany. Since these sisters and brother were singles, as the Scriptures seem to indicate, we find a good example of singles being ministered to. The

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## MY HOUSE

8. Both those who marry and those who abstain from marriage do not sin, yet both should live in purity — Matthew 19:10-12; I Corinthians 7:8, 25-28, 36-39.

9. Scripture testifies that marriage is designed to be for life, only to be broken when one spouse lays the other in the grave — Romans 7:2; I Corinthians 7:39-40.

These are but a few of the passages that deal with morality. We, as individuals and families, need the other teachings of the whole council of God and of our Risen Savior. The Small Catechism would be a good place to start. May I also suggest a good book, if it still is in print, by Clyde M. Narramore, “Life and Love, A Christian View of Sex,” (Zondervan). This book can

be used by parents with their children. There are other good, Christ-centered books available.

Let us be different from the world! Yet, we are in this world but we are not to be of it, so let’s not live as the pagans do. May each of us take our stand with Joshua and say: “As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

*The author graduated from the College of Southern Idaho, in Twin Falls, and the Lutheran Bible Institute, Seattle, Washington. In 1984, he graduated from Faith Seminary, Tacoma, Washington. He has served Christ Lutheran Church, Tulia, Texas, since 1985, and is on the AFLC Clergy Fellowship Roster. He and his wife, Dorothy, have one son.*

Bible also seems to indicate that John Mark, Lydia, Dorcas and Timothy were singles, at least during a part of their adult lives. Each of these men and women of God ministered effectively to others.

There are also more than 100 references to single parents and their children in the Bible. An example is found in James 1:27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

If God is interested in every person regardless of race, age, sex or status, the church must recognize not only its responsibility but also its opportunity as it ministers to, and with, singles.

The church must also begin to see the single as an unique individual for whom Christ died. The single adult has the same basic needs, wants, drives and desires as any other human being.

God wants the single person to develop mentally, physically, spiritually, socially and emotionally. Jesus Christ is the best known single who ever lived, and it was said of Him in Luke 2:52 that He "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

Many churches are discovering a variety of ways to minister to singles. Some churches, for example, have single Sunday school classes or Bible study groups. Singles don't want to be completely segregated but should rather be offered specialized activities to encourage fellowship and growth. Some churches have found it helpful to divide their singles groups by age categories.

Singles need to become an integral part of the church family. This can be accomplished by a congregation's acceptance of them in the circle of concern and by giving them an opportunity to become active in its various ministries.

Singles can also take meaningful leadership roles. A church can help a single express his creativity and through this creativity institute new areas of service within the church.

Single adults often have pressing social needs. Planning, promoting and offering meaningful social activities for singles will be beneficial to the single as well as to the entire church. For example, singles will not only enjoy being invited to dinner but will want to reciprocate by entertaining in return.

#### **What singles need**

Everyone needs to be accepted for who they are — no strings attached. As Christians, we need to study the Scriptures to gain insight into

how God totally accepts individuals as they are. God created me to be uniquely me and you to be uniquely you. We often squelch the individuality of others by trying to make them fit our mold rather than God's mold. Each individual is to become more like Christ, and the more like Christ he becomes, in his own unique way, the more individualistic he becomes.

Second, everyone needs approval. Our eyes are often blinded by the negative traits in others. Surprisingly enough, the more we seek the positive aspects of another person, the more positive traits we will find in him.

A third basic need of the singles is commitment. As a relationship of openness develops, both the church and the single will become committed to the other, and growth is bound to occur.

A fourth important need is friendship. The Bible tells us in Proverbs 18:24, "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly."

Loneliness is a terrible feeling. The church may say, "He or she is not friendly" and the single may retaliate by saying, "The church is not friendly." Both need to step out in a friendly spirit to bridge the gap.

Finally, singles need a sense of accomplishment. Everyone needs to be needed and to find satisfaction and gratification in the process.

As the church extends its arm to include singles, it will discover a group of active, growing and contented unmarried adults. They will also discover that by helping others they will find fulfillment for themselves.

Britton Wood, addressing the Continental Congress on the Family last year, said "The church is the only institution that is styled to include all persons regardless of where they are at any point in their lives."

Michael Tucker, pastor of Temple Baptist Church, Colorado Springs, Colorado, said in his book, "The Church That Dared to Change," "When I see what God has done in giving our church the largest singles ministry of any church in our city, I tremble to think that this opportunity was almost bypassed because we weren't seriously looking for people in the community who really want help and are searching for a ministry."

What can you do as an individual, and what can your church do, to bridge the gap that has existed between its members and singles?

— by Virginia Watts  
Glen Ellyn, Illinois

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# A Single Parent Speaks

The loss of a spouse, either through death or divorce, radically changes the family. As a single father myself, one of the things I learned early on was the value of 1 Corinthians 10:13, where God promises: "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." I do not always remember where this verse is found nor do I quote it perfectly, but I count on this promise daily.

Nothing prepares one to become a single parent. We are trained to marry, have children and then raise the children in a loving Christian home that also contains both the mother and the father. When a marriage ends in divorce or death, the emotional, spiritual, physical and economic changes that occur are serious challenges to the single parent.

When I became a single parent I experienced some of these changes and challenges. The first painful hurdle is coping with the loss of one's spouse. Few people, if any, get married expecting to become a single parent. We do not plan on death nor do we expect divorce. The fact that God hates divorce often causes those of us who have gone through it to be even less prepared to deal with the loss. This tends to increase the initial trauma of becoming a single parent.

Understanding these facts, then picture someone forced to give up the marriage he or she dreamed of, prayed for and believed in. The emotions of grief, denial, anger, fear and loneliness brought on by the death of a mate can be coupled with the shame, self-doubt, bitterness

and other emotions that occur due to divorce. This causes an extremely difficult time for the Christian to experience. I cannot imagine how anyone could get through it without strength from the Lord.

Compounding the adjustment to being single again is dealing with the other changes within the family. The children's emotions have run the gamete as well. They need a calm, loving and stable parent now more than ever. The trouble is, things are still going to get tougher.

Many families are two-income families. The loss of a spouse often causes severe financial problems. The single parent tries to juggle one or more jobs, stay active in church, cook, clean, shop and everything else that providing a good home requires. This challenges most two-parent families. The need to spend time with the children is always present. The typical single parent wrestles with guilt at times. It is a rare day that ends with all duties done and commitments met.

The physical changes in the household are felt. It is hard for a father to provide all the special qualities of a mother that a child needs. Fathers have God-given qualities that a single mother equally finds difficult to provide, plus there is a lot to be said for parents helping each other, counseling one another and encouraging each other through life.

Many a night I have laid awake debating and second guessing myself and praying for wisdom as I strive, by God's grace, to raise my son to be a godly man. I want my son to grow to be a happy, honest and successful servant of the Lord. Mark 9:42 states: "And if anyone cause one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck." I realize that, as a parent, my son learns from me whether I am right or wrong. God forbid that, as my son's best teacher, I cause him to stumble.

God has blessed me with a very supportive family and wonderful Christian friends. My son is everything a father ever wanted in his son. Not every single parent is as fortunate. Contrary to popular secular media opinion, single parent families are always going to face unique challenges. Children need both parents! That is how God ordained it. Anything else is only a substitute.

If you know any single parents in your church or neighborhood, please keep them in prayer. Given prayer and support, the bitterness, pain, guilt, anger and fear can pass away in time.

— by Dave Jameson  
Earlville, Illinois

"... single parent families are always going to face unique challenges."





## From the Mojave Desert to Kuwait

Dear Friends:

"... it was good of you to share in my troubles," (Philippians 4:14). I wish to thank each and every one of our friends and fellow servants in the AFLC, for your prayers and concern expressed during this recent time in our lives. The month of September was spent out at the National Training Center in the Mojave Desert of California, followed by October through December, and then again January and February in Kuwait. It was a long time of separation! But the ministry was tremendous with many opportunities to share with soldiers from the Word of Life.

We especially appreciate, as a family, all of the cards and letters which surrounded the children's and Lori's birthdays. They, along with the many letters I received in Kuwait, served as a reminder of the prayer support that sustains us. Without your prayers, one shudders to think of how we might have fared! But we have a God who hears and honors those prayers!

We are all doing well and getting back into a routine of sorts, though the unit is already preparing for a return in June to the Mojave Desert, followed by another cycle of being a "deployment ready" force. In the interim, the counseling load is high, due to the many soldiers facing personal and marital problems that have been "fanned" by the lengthy and frequent deployments. God alone knows what the future holds, but ultimately He is in control and will meet our needs!

Again, we thank you for your cards and prayers. Because of our "disruptions," we have not been able to respond personally to them all ... but each has been greatly appreciated. We remain your partners in "ministry to the military." May the Lord bless and keep you!

In Christ,  
The Crowell family  
Michael, Lori, Jeremy,  
Melissa and Adrian  
Ft. Hood, Texas

## Partners in Planting

The 1992 Annual Conference of the AFLC resolved to encourage the **Partners in Planting** program as proposed by the Home Missions Committee.

The purpose of this new program is to raise funding for calling pastors to new Home Mission projects. The question may be asked, "Isn't such funding provided for in our regular budgeting?" The answer is "no." This year's budget is \$141,000 less than last year's budget, and doesn't include anything for new work. **Partners in Planting** provides the opportunity for individuals and congregations to contribute above and beyond their regular giving so that new starts can become a reality even though funds have not been budgeted.

The Home Missions Committee, at their last meeting, approved the new congregations for **Partners in Planting**. They are Redeemer Lutheran Church at Cambridge, Minnesota, and Lamb of God Lutheran Church at Topeka, Kansas. Both congregations began this past fall with weekend pulpit supply from our Bible School and Seminary. Pastor Don Greven has served the Topeka group and Pastor Phil Haugen has been serving at Cambridge. These congregations have not yet received help from the Home Missions Department. Both congregations feel it is now time to call a full-time pastor and, in order to do that, the money needed for the first year of a call must be raised in gifts and pledges before the calling process can begin. Thus, the members at Redeemer and Lamb of God, together with the Home Missions Committee, invite individuals and congregations to become **Partners in Planting** by either giving a one-time gift or making a monthly pledge for the first year of a call. Each congregation will need commitments totalling \$1,700 per month. Gifts and pledges of any size will be gladly received.

In addition to sharing in this work with monetary gifts and pledges, you are invited and encouraged to make a commitment to pray for these congregations as they prepare to call their first-time pastor. Please clip and use the form below.

### Partners in Planting

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ My one-time gift. \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ My monthly pledge for a 12-month period beginning when a pastor arrives. \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ My prayer support.

For:

☐ Lamb of God Lutheran Church, Topeka, Kansas  
and/or  
☐ Redeemer Lutheran Church, Cambridge, Minnesota

Return to: AFLC Home Missions  
3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd.  
Minneapolis, MN 55441

# Our Family Adventure to Agragrista

Does anyone want to go to Mexico? In January? Twenty-two AFLC people answered "yes." We departed from the cold northern states by bus to work for two weeks in Agragrista, a small village in Sonora, the western coast of Mexico, near the city of Ciudad, Obregon.

This was a family adventure. Reuben and I left our western South Dakota ranch in the able hands of our two oldest sons. The two youngest of our six children, SandyDan, age 13, and Sage, age 11, accompanied us. We were joined by another member of Slim Buttes Lutheran, Dennis Brown and his nine-year-old son, Joshua.

The six of us left home at 2:30 a.m. on January 8. We drove east to Watertown, South Dakota, where we met the tour leader, Clark Berg, and the rest of our group. Our three boys were thrilled

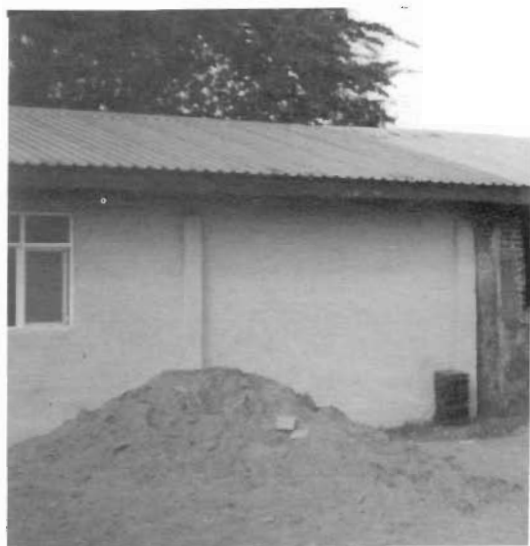


The January 1993 Partners in Mission Outreach team.

that Daniel Rugroden and his sons, Paul, age 12 and Peter, age 10, had boarded the bus in Fargo, North Dakota. The five boys immediately joined forces and monopolized the game table in the back of the bus for the remainder of the trip. The people from northern Minnesota reported -36 degree temperatures when they left home. Winter weather continued beyond Denver, Colorado. We were indeed delighted to arrive in Obregon with its palm trees and 80 degree temperatures!

We were met by Pastor Gabriel and

Virginia Mercado and immediately knew this was going to be an exciting two weeks. Gabriel is the local pastor of the church in Agragrista, along with several congregations in neighboring villages. He and Virginia drive 300 miles from their home in Nogales to



Construction of the parsonage.

## World Missions Corner

### Catch It!

Are you catching it? "Catching what?" you might ask. "Catching the flu? Catching spring fever?"

No! Are you catching the VISION 2000?

All over the world, Christians are catching the vision to reach every people group with the saving message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by the year 2000. Can it be done? Can the AFLC have a vital part in this great plan?

The answer is a resounding "Yes!" Ever since the church was born at Pentecost, God has been moving His faithful believers toward the culmination of history. What propels us to push forward with the Gospel of Christ? It is the great command of our Savior, "Go

ye ..." along with the theme woven all through Scripture that every person is a lost sinner who has strayed away from God (Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23), and that Jesus Christ is the Light to all people (Luke 2:29-32), and salvation can come only through the Name of Jesus (Acts 4:12).

God called faithful Abraham to be a blessing (Genesis 12:3), God calls you and me to be a blessing. Please consider Psalm 67:1-2, 7. "May God be gracious to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us that Thy way may be known on the earth, Thy salvation among all nations." The reason that God blesses us is that all the people of the earth may come to know Him and love Him.

This is a shocking truth to many modern Christians! In the western world we have become accustomed to asking God for blessings and often secretly feeling that we certainly deserve them! We excuse ourselves for keeping these blessings to ourselves. But God calls us to focus upon the nations of the earth. He wants to bless them, and He is willing to allow each of us to share in His exciting plan. What about you, dear friend? Are you keeping God's blessings to yourself or are you channeling them to others



## Update

### The Village of Campo Treinta —

After the January Team canvassed the village and showed the film, the February Team held a three night evangelistic program. After the program the third night, the team stayed for over an hour and visited with the people. Pastor Gabriel was surrounded by people who were seeking and asking. The team members, mostly from Montana, distributed Bibles and tracts. By the time the bus left, Gabriel had more names that included nearly a dozen families who wanted to learn more about Jesus Christ. Gabriel is currently leading a home Bible study in Campo Treinta.

### The Agragrista parsonage —

After the February Team left the village, the parsonage was far enough along that the Mercados are now living in the structure. It is estimated that another year will be required to complete the church and parsonage project. The parsonage needs an electric refrigerator, a gas stove, a 7-10 gallon electric hot water heater and a wringer style washing machine.

**Vacation Bible School** — Last summer 40-50 children attended VBS in Agragrista. Funds are needed to purchase more VBS material for this summer.

**Going to Bible School** — Thanks to a few generous gifts, a young lady from Agragrista will attend the World Mission Prayer League Bible College in Mazatlan this year. National workers are crucial to effectively proclaim the Gospel. To attend this two-year Bible college costs about \$1,500 per year. More of our Mexican brothers and sisters need to study in Mazatlan, but they need financial help.

**Gabriel's car** — An account has been established to purchase a reliable vehicle for the Mercados. It is estimated that less than \$5,000 will be needed. At last report, \$1,300 is in the fund.

For more information, contact Partners in Mission Outreach, AFLC World Missions Dept., 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441; phone 612-545-5631.



Fellowship time before a service at the Agragrista church.

stay several days a month at the Agragrista church, ministering to that community. Previous Partners in Mission Outreach groups had begun building a parsonage addition onto

the church so the Mercados would no longer have to sleep in their car while working in the village.

It did not take long for everybody to begin working. The men threw stucco and built a cistern. The ladies painted the church to repair flood damage from last year and the boys worked at clearing brush and filling holes in the church yard. The boys enjoyed a short workday because when the village school dismissed at lunch time, they joined the Mexican children in playing soccer, baseball and table games. If there was a language barrier, you would never know it!

Each workday began with praise and worship led by Pastor Gabriel and our AFLTS student, Mike Hogan. One day we canvassed the neighboring village of Campo Trienta, inviting people to see the Spanish version of the "Cross and the Switchblade." That evening we showed the film in the village square. Mike even dressed as a clown as an attraction for the young children. To us midwesterners it seemed chaotic, but Pastor Gabriel added about eight families to his list of contacts.

When we left home on January 8, we were a group of strangers going to help strangers in a foreign land. Two weeks later, we left Mexico as a closely knit family tearfully saying goodbye to our brothers and sisters in Christ who gave us so much more than we gave them.

— by Betty Olson

Prairie City, South Dakota



back of the church.

through His Word and missions outreach programs and personnel?

If each one of us was completely convinced in our heart that mankind is rushing toward the culmination of history and that we need to urgently get out the Gospel message, we would see an immediate change in missions! Imagine for a moment what some of the effects might be in our AFLC: We would be celebrating the sending out of the Todd Schierkolk family and the David Nelson family! We would be

(continued on page 10)

## CATCH IT

delighted as news would reach us of the renewed joy to the hearts of our established missionaries, such as the Connely Dyruds, David Abels, Dan Giles, Paul Abels, Jonathan Abels, as salaries exceeded rapid inflation and provided for all their needs, and prayer supporters rallied behind them! More missionaries and more volunteer short-term workers would cause ministries through our national churches to expand! The 26 workers in India would have sufficient Bibles, supplies and provisions, furnishings for our Bible school and seminary would be provided. Prayer support would surge on behalf of our national pastors and the ministry of church planting, Bible camps at the ARCA, Miriam Infant Home and Home for Homeless Boys in Brazil. Our national pastors in Brazil and students at our Bible schools and seminary would benefit. We would build churches in our five mission sites in Mexico and train more national pastors there.

Our AFLC does indeed have a vital role in God's great plan. The list is endless because the possibilities are endless. Our only limits are the ones we impose upon ourselves because we have not yet caught the vision to sacrifice in order to get out the Gospel message by the year 2000.

I hope you "catch the vision!"

### **Practical Applications for Catching the Vision 2000**

1. I commend to your reading some excellent mission materials: "Catch the Vision 2000," by Bill and Amy Stearns, gives today's astonishing breakthroughs in reaching every people group by the year 2000, along with practical ways to be involved.

"Our Globe and How To Reach It: Seeing the World Evangelized by AD 2000 and Beyond," by David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, contains all the facts, diagrams, common sense and the most comprehensive missions data base regarding the push for world evangelization.

"Touch the World Through Prayer," by Wesley Duewel, is an excellent book which guides Christians to pray for countries, missionaries and leaders

around the world.

"Operation World: A Day-to-Day Guide to Praying for the World," by Patrick Johnson, is absolutely essential to every serious believer. See what God is doing in every country in the world.

2. I urge you to personally get involved in some way with missions. Have you considered going to one of our mission fields to help for a short time in a practical way? What skills can you offer: carpentry, handyman projects, writing, tract distribution, etc., are needed. Write to our mission office or talk to your pastor about going on a trip to assist with the work in Mexico. Contact Clark Berg or Al Brazil for help in organizing a trip.

3. Let's each encourage our young people to volunteer for a short evangelism/working/helping experience in Brazil or Mexico. For several years we have been equipping summer ministry FLY Teams of young adults from our AFLC who have given help to our missionaries, and then have returned home with enthusiasm for missions. Last summer 13 young people traveled to Brazil. This year a small team will travel to Mexico to work under the direction of missionaries Dan and Debbie Giles, and will also assist national Pastors Samuel Flores, Milton Flores and Raul Hernandez. Join me in prayer that even more young people will present themselves for this summer's service after the Luther League Convention in Colorado. We have seen revival in our young people through our conventions in years past. May God be gracious and raise up many enthusiastic, willing workers in our ranks!

4. Volunteer to be our Missions Contact Person in your congregation. Each church will benefit from fresh pictures and posters about missions, displays of missionary letters and prayer needs, etc. Encourage your people to write to our missionaries. Organize small prayer cells in your congregation on behalf of people groups around the world who are without the saving Gospel of Christ.

— by Rev. Eugene Enderlein  
AFLC World Missions Director

## **16-year veteran teacher returns to parish ministry**

May 22, 1993, was a memorable day for the graduating seniors of the Association of Free Lutheran Seminary and Bible School. It was their graduation day! However, perhaps for every faculty, staff and student body member the day's excitement was overshadowed by saying "good-bye" to a truly special teacher and friend. For 16 graduation services, Rev. Phil Haugen has sat in that distinguished front pew of AFLC Schools' faculty; and now this was his last time as he is leaving to return to the parish ministry.

The most accurate way to describe this 44-year-old professor of New Testament Studies and the Greek and Hebrew languages is to read what his colleague and students wrote about him.

*"It has been my great privilege to know and work with him ... Pastor Haugen has combined a deep commitment to excellence as an expositor of God's Word with the blessed fruit of humility. His love for our Savior, Jesus Christ, as revealed in God's inerrant Word, has shone brightly on the campus. His students have been richly blessed and enriched under his faithful teaching over the years. All of us will remember him for his earnest concern to exalt the 'God of all grace' in his ministry and in his life."*

— Dr. Francis Monseth

*"Pastor Haugen is one of the greatest inspirations to us as students."*

— Kim Huffman

*"His love for the Lord shows in everything he does."*

— Stacey Thorson

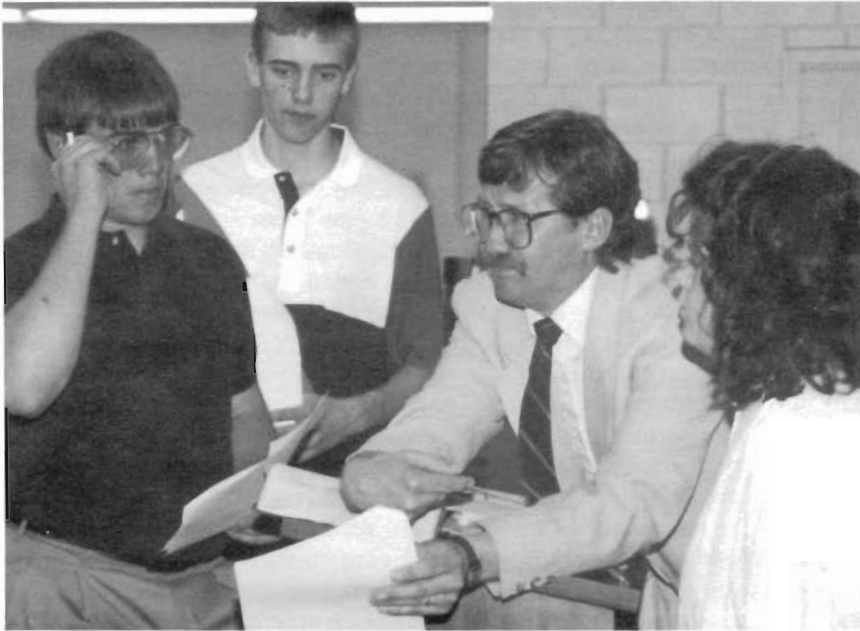
*"Pastor Haugen teaches in such a way that you forget he is the instructor rather than a good friend trying to make a point."*

— a junior student

*"The Lord is truly using him to accomplish His work."*

— Heather Champeaux

# Pastor Haugen Leaves Teaching Position at Schools



Rev. Phil Haugen (second from right) reviewed test papers with junior students.

*"He has such a love for the Word of God and his earnest desire is to teach it in its truth and purity."*

—Angi Jacobson

Students themselves have been the source of Haugen's greatest delight and disappointment. He chuckled when he said the most rewarding aspect of teaching was in seeing the Lord cause massive changes in the lives of students. On the other hand, he sadly admitted to watching young people, on occasion, totally reject the Lord and develop an apparent disdain for the Word of God.

In Pastor Haugen's seminary classes, he said his "constant desire was that men develop appreciation for the Word as reflected in their desire to get into the original languages of Scripture — to have a passionate love to dig into the Word." In fact, his personal high standards in his study habits have been the source of struggle as a faculty member. He often felt forced to walk into his classes without adequate preparation. Haugen is disappointed

that the financial condition of the schools has not permitted a lighter work load to allow faculty to give greater diligence to thorough study.

A casual observation of this unassuming, Portland, North Dakota, native over these last 16 years might cause one to think he was content to simply be in his classroom and with his books. And he indeed considered his ministry of teaching at the schools as ideal. Underneath, however, the desire to return to the parish ministry kept increasing over the last decade. He missed the joy of visitation and getting to know people individually. Throughout the years, conducting special meetings in AFLC congregations provided a taste of that life.

Last year, when the call from the Culbertson and Brockton, Montana, congregations came, Pastor Haugen and his wife, Gwen, and their four children prayerfully considered it. "We are delighted that God has allowed us to accept that call," Haugen added, "If we had not sensed that freedom from the Lord to move, we would have been very satisfied to remain at the schools. I

will always carry with me the appreciation of our wonderful fellowship with colleagues here on campus. I consider it a privilege to have served under Deans Monseth, Moland and Greven."

His contributions to the AFLC Schools can only be measured in heaven. Rev. Haugen will be remembered, as Dr. Steve Lombardo said: "For his careful work with the New Testament exegesis and his concern to rightly divide the Word of God." Dr. Monseth expressed the feelings of all. "He will truly be missed by all of us! Thank you dear brother, for these wonderful years of fellowship in the Gospel."

— Solveig Hjermstad

## AFLC Schools Receive Money

**A**ssociation of Free Lutheran Bible School, Minneapolis has recently received \$4,926 from Lutheran Brotherhood's IMPACT/IMPACT PLUS PROGRAMS, Inviting Member Participation in Aiding Lutheran Colleges and Theological Seminaries. The latest payment covers 50 gifts of Lutheran Brotherhood members made during the first quarter of 1993.

Also, during the first quarter, the Association of Free Lutheran Theological Seminary received \$2,675 from Lutheran Brotherhood's IMPACT/IMPACT PLUS PROGRAMS. The latest payment covers 28 gifts of Lutheran Brotherhood members.

The IMPACT/IMPACT PLUS Programs match Lutheran Brotherhood members' gifts of \$25 to \$100 per year to Lutheran institutions of higher education nationwide.

Since the beginning of the IMPACT matching gift program in 1979, \$151,658 in IMPACT/IMPACT PLUS funds has been received by Association of Free Lutheran Bible School and \$72,598 has been received by AFLTS.

# AFLBS Basketball 1992-93

**B**asketball at AFLBS is a sport and a gospel team. When we play, we do so to honor God whether we win or lose, though winning seems at the time to be more fun. There are many people who are present at the games who are not Christians. This includes players, fans and referees. People are watching, so our witness is just as important on the basketball court as any other time. People notice one's attitude, and they see the difference between players playing for God's glory and those who are playing for their glory and to win! Winning isn't everything, but giving your best for the Lord is!

As a basketball team, we just didn't dribble a ball and shoot baskets. One weekend trip to Iowa for a game also included a friendly scrimmage game with the youth and others at the Wheatland congregation on Saturday night. The following morning special music, skits and testimonies were given at the Sunday morning service. Another basketball game in North Dakota gave us an opportunity to fellowship with the Trinity Bible College students for a night. That Sunday the basketball teams had special music and testimonies at the two-point parish at Valley City. Basketball wasn't just a game. It was a ministry and what we did and hoped to accomplish as team members was to give God praise and glory.

The basketball teams played various schools, both Christian and secular, from Minnesota, North Dakota and Iowa. This wide area allowed for many hours in the van and fellowship time as a team. Conversation varied from casual joking to serious discussion, the Lord's return and the prophecy of Daniel.

The women's team, coached by Wanda Jacobson and assisted by Wendy Qualley, ended the season with eight wins and nine losses, and with a fourth place finish at the National Bible College Athletic Association National Tournament held in Midwest City (Oklahoma City) Oklahoma.

The team was made up of very diversified members. The main scorer, Kristin Schierkolk, averaged 22 points and ended the season with 278 points. Chrystal Albrecht was the team's leading rebounder, averaging 11 a game and had a season total of 186 rebounds. Katrina Schierkolk, Lisa McClenahan, Jennifer Onnen, Stephanie Johanson, Ruth Gunderson and Mialee Selen completed this year's Conqueror women's team. Beth Jackson, the point guard, was the leader in steals, averaging four per game with 60 total throughout the season. The NBCCA awarded Katrina Schierkolk and Beth Jackson with the Academic All-American award which takes into consideration statistics and grades. Chrystal Albrecht was awarded the second team

All-American award which goes by season statistics. She also was named to the National All-Tournament first team. Kristin Schierkolk was awarded All-American first team and also was named to the National All-Tournament second team.

The men's basketball team, coached by Joel Unverzagt and assisted by John Greven, ended the season with three wins and eight losses. The team was a fairly young team with nine juniors and only three seniors.

Kerm Nash was the lead scorer averaging 18 points a game and ended the season with 193 total points. Jon Dryburgh was the team's leading rebounder, ending the season with a total of 109 rebounds, averaging ten a game. Jon Dryburgh was awarded by the NBCCA the Academic All-American award, and also was named to the NBCCA All-American second team. Ryan Behne, Jeremy Larson, Nathaniel Olson, Nathan Holmquist, Shawn Adrain, Alan Twedt, Mark Edwards, Mike Hernberg, Brent Hartsoch and Daniel Strelow added strength to the team. It was truly a 12-member team effort throughout the season.

We praise the Lord for the good season He gave each team, and the way He helped each member of the team grow in the Lord. We would like to extend a special thank you to the King of Glory congregation for again allowing us to use their gym for practice and games this season.

— by Jennifer Mohagen and  
Jon Dryburgh



## letter to the editor

Dear Editor:

The April 13 issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* contained a book review by Pastor Dennis Gray entitled, "The Christian Music Battle." I was glad to see some issues such as doctrinal purity in music as well as a need for increased investment in music programs. These seem to be issues that are often overlooked in churches today.

But there were two areas that need to be addressed here. Rev. Gray says: "There should be no mixture of worldly elements and the spiritual." In its context this statement is condemning specific styles of music that are 'worldly' or 'unspiritual.' I John 2:15 says: "Do not love the world or the things in the world." The world is defined in the next verse as "lust of the flesh," "lust of the eyes," and "pride of life," practices that are specifically prohibited by God as sin. Worldliness is being involved in an activity or attitude that God has specifically labeled as sin. Musical style cannot be labeled

as worldly because the same style can be used to glorify God or glorify Satan. Style is neutral but the lyrics make music worldly or worshipful.

Martin Luther himself used popular tunes and styles of his day but added lyrics that glorified God instead of man. Much contemporary Christian music is rejected today merely on the basis of a heavy beat or an electric guitar without any consideration of the lyrics themselves.

Pastor Gray also made the statement: "Trying to revive the church and reach people for Christ, young or older, by the use of music is wrong, I feel." It is true that the Holy Spirit through the Word draws people to Him but why can He not use music to convey the message? This limits God greatly. By cutting this area off we surrender a whole sphere of ministry to Satan's use alone. God has given us the gift of music yet we reject creative ways to use music to reach out to the unsaved world.

Ronald Allen and Gordon Borrer say this: "Music is one of the very beset ways to spread the message of the Gospel to an unbelieving society. While we cannot find 'music in evangelism' specifically mentioned in the Bible, it has proven to be effective in outreach." ("Worship — Rediscovering the Missing Jewel," Multnomah Press: Portland, 1982) Over and over again we see in history revivals spring up with new music at the front. Such a revival may begin today if only we will be open to different ways of reaching the lost. A book defending contemporary Christian music written by Steve Miller says it best: "Rather than being open to new methods and forms, we assume that the way to revival in the present is to recreate the way it occurred in the past. Traditions can be beneficial, but we must consistently evaluate them as to their Biblical base and their ability to function in a new generation." ("The Contemporary Christian Music Debate," Tyndale, Wheaton, 1993) We need to use the music that God has given to us to reach a new generation of young people instead of stifling the winds of revival with condemnation.

Tim Hinrichs  
Deshler, Nebraska

### Do you still need Annual Conference motel reservations in DeKalb?

A new Super 8 motel has just opened. For reservations call 1-800-8000.  
1 person - \$35.88, 2 people - \$44.88, 3 people - \$45.88, 4 people - \$53.88

### Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

#### AFLC Benevolences - February 1 - April 30, 1993

FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	REC'D IN APRIL	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund . . . . .	\$261,657.00	\$20,519.01	\$60,308.31	23
Schools - (AFLTS) . .	148,620.00	7,499.37	19,621.24	13
(AFLBS) . . . . .	214,230.00	11,293.76	36,806.80	17
Home Missions. . . . .	292,593.00	21,237.40	64,917.89	22
World Missions. . . . .	310,000.00	29,195.08	85,685.47	28
Capital Investment . .	50,300.00	6,276.38	10,044.88	20
Parish Education . . .	53,147.00	6,057.96	14,494.91	27
ARC . . . . .	13,200.00	114.39	1,207.84	9
Chrism. Acad. Bd. . . .	4,000.00	114.37	366.20	9
<b>TOTALS . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,347,747.00</b>	<b>\$201,307.72</b>	<b>\$293,453.54</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>1992 - 1993 . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,631,326.00</b>	<b>\$101,339.37</b>	<b>\$245,459.17</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Goal 25%</b>				

Dear Editor:

I have never written an article and received such response as the one on single adults. There have been many singles who have shared their loneliness and pain.

The church is a family-oriented group, and single adults have some real concerns in relating to it. And not all are young! Some are older, some retired, and some have had a spouse die.

Then, too, we have others who are single and raising a family for one reason or another. They need the ministry of the church as well.

I welcome anyone who wishes to correspond with me on the subject of ministering to single adults.

Pastor Dennis Gray  
AFLC Youth Resources Director  
P.O. Box M  
Greenbush, MN 56726



## PEOPLE and PLACES

**Fosston, Minnesota** — Calvary Free Lutheran hosted special meetings on April 25-28, with Dr. Craig Jennings, AFLC Schools, as the guest speaker. On May 2, a new AFLC radio broadcast began on KKCQ at 4:30 p.m. Sundays. The weekly program called "Vine and Branches" is also sponsored by neighboring congregations in Bagley and in Maple Bay.

**Eugene, Oregon** — Spencer Creek Lutheran Church, an 81-year-old landmark, is in the process of raising money to replace the roof.

**Missionary Dan Giles**, Aguascalientes, Mexico, has changed phone number to 011-52-49-173861.

**Rev. Mark Antal**, Leeds, North Dakota, has a new home phone number — (701) 466-2010.

### Attention All Counselors at the Estes Park Convention!

Please be present at Reusch Auditorium at 4 p.m. on June 28th. This is an important meeting for all counselors for the Luther League Convention.

**Hanna Vaagenes celebrates 100** — The oldest living graduate of the nursing program at Lutheran Deaconess Hospital and the only living person to complete the deaconess program there was honored recently on the occasion of her 100th birthday. Hanna (Bovre) Vaagenes went on to serve for 38 years in Madagascar in the Lutheran Free Church. At her birthday celebration, she mentioned that the great privilege of her life was the Lord's call to service as a missionary.

She was born in Biri, Norway, on April 8, 1893. At the age of 14, she came to America and did domestic



**Lutheran Brotherhood Grant to the AFLC Home Missions** — For the past 16 years, the AFLC Home Missions Department has received financial assistance from Lutheran Brotherhood that has been used towards paying pastors' salaries.

During 1992, Home Missions received \$40,000 from Lutheran Brotherhood and divided the funds evenly between the following four congregations:

- Faith Free Lutheran Church, Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.
- Shepherd's Church of the Valley, Murrieta, California.
- Abiding Savior Free Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, South Dakota.
- Shepherd of the Valley Free Lutheran Church, Palmdale, California.

work on various farms in North Dakota and Wisconsin for six years. She was awakened to a living faith through a revival in North Dakota and sensed the call to missionary service. After completing her nurses and deaconess training, she left for Madagascar in 1923. Three years later she married Rev. Morris G.C. Vaagenes who was then a missionary in Madagascar. During World War II, the Vaagenes family served for a year at Satersdal Lutheran parish, rural Thief River Falls, Minnesota. Mrs. Vaagenes resides in Minneapolis.

**Rev. Gaylord E. Gartman**, San Francisco, California, has accepted a home mission call to the Warroad Free Lutheran Church, Warroad, Minnesota. Pastor Gartman, who served as a staff member of "Jews for Jesus" for several years, was previously on the roster of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

**Rev. Maynard Halverson**, Sandwich, Illinois, is the new part-time visitation pastor for West Lisbon Lutheran Church, rural Newark, Illinois. Earlier in his retirement, Pastor Halverson served the Fox River Lutheran Church, Norway, Illinois, until 1989.

**Rev. Norman Hoffeld**, Shakopee, Minnesota, resigned as the pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, where he has served since 1992. His future plans are not definite at this time.

**McLeod, North Dakota** — United Free Lutheran Church hosted their special meetings on April 4-6 with Rev. Bruce Dalager, Grand Forks, North Dakota, as the guest speaker.



**Cloquet, Minnesota** — The first and second grade class of St. Paul's Academy has been busy reading for mission! They were given one dollar for every 1,000 pages read collectively. These students raised \$44 and sent the money to the Miriam Infant Home in Brazil.

## AN ENDANGERED SPECIES

From whales to seals to owls to fish, people are eager to offer their commitment and service to the cause of preserving any endangered species. Perhaps the time has come to describe the family as an endangered species, and see if it would result in a renewed dedication to strengthening this unit that is central to our society.

The purpose of the family focus in this issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* is not only to honor our mothers and fathers, but to offer instruction and encouragement to them as they dedicate their families to the Lord. You will notice articles, also, that speak especially to single parents (and other single adults), published with the recognition that the church has not always been ready to minister to them and their unique needs.

But the problems of single parents do not lessen our commitment to the place of the family — father, mother, and children — in God's plan for the home as well as for society. Rather, we should be awakened to a new awareness of the completeness that He intended for us to experience, that is accentuated by the incompleteness with which single parents struggle.

The world's agenda focuses on the diversity of family types and arrangements, and we dare not deny their reality. God's agenda, however, focuses on the Scriptural plan for our homes, which must be affirmed loudly and clearly ... and lovingly ... in a day when the family looks like an endangered species.

"Save the Family!" is a more important call to action than any crusade for a spotted owl. The way to preserve our families is to return to God's Word and the simple pattern that is found there. It will not be easy to go against the flow, but our committed efforts in the Lord can count for time and eternity.

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

It was my privilege earlier this month to participate in the 100th anniversary of the AFLC congregation near Centerville, South Dakota. The weekend celebration began with a musical program on Saturday night and a full program on Sunday morning and afternoon, and the events were well planned and well attended.

One of the highlights of any anniversary gathering is the return of former pastors and members, and the Cen-

terville observance was no exception. Although my wife and I were not well acquainted with the congregation, we found it fascinating to listen to the memories of past years and to learn how the Lord had used so many special people to help shape the personality and ministry of this special fellowship.

Other AFLC congregations will be celebrating their anniversaries during these summer months, and so this experience of a church reunion will be repeated many times. It occurs to me, however, that some will miss the blessing of such an observance because of their failure to remember these milestone years. Some of our congregations trace their origin to the early years of the AFLC, and it would seem that many 25th anniversaries ought to be scheduled in the near future.

But what about tenth anniversaries? Why not plan for an anniversary celebration every five years? Scripture commands us to "look to the rock from which you were hewn," (Isaiah 51:1). Our more frequent observances do not have to be as elaborate as the ones scheduled for centennial occasions, nor do we have to produce souvenir plates or publish historical booklets, for these are not the heart of anniversary weekends anyway.

Let's plan for a church homecoming, during which old friends and family can gather and share their memories with one another, and be sure to include opportunities to recall the spiritual roots of the congregation. Why was your church organized? Why is it a part of the AFLC?

Anniversaries are for rejoicing in the Lord as we recall His goodness. Anniversaries are for remembering people and events that are a part of our past. Anniversaries are for relating a living heritage to the present and passing it on to future generations.

The term of *The Lutheran Ambassador* editor expires this year, and the Co-ordinating Committee will receive nominations during the annual conference. Names may also be submitted to the Committee prior to the conference for the position, which is presently filled by AFLC President Robert Lee.

## FLY TEAM

## OPPORTUNITY

High Schoolers and college-age students, consider spending the first half of August, 1993, in Mexico! Work with Missionary Dan Giles.

Cost will be less than \$1,000. For more information contact the AFLC World Missions Office or the AFLC Youth Director.

**St. Paul, Minnesota (EP)** — A federal district court has affirmed the ruling of a bankruptcy court that Crystal Evangelical Free Church in suburban Minneapolis must refund \$13,450 in donations given by members who declared bankruptcy.

"The decision is wrong, completely wrong," said the church's senior pastor, the Rev. Stephen Goold. "There can hardly be a greater violation of the Constitution's protection of freedom of religion than for the State to reach into the church's collection platter."

The case arose when a church member's electrical contracting business failed. During the period preceding the bankruptcy filing, the family depleted personal assets to pay business creditors, but continued a long-standing practice of tithing, or giving ten percent of personal income to their church.

Federal District Judge Harry McLaughlin ruled that the money had to be returned because it was a "fraudulent transfer," a donation for which no value was received. He held that requiring the return of the funds would not interfere with the constitutional rights of the family to practice their faith, nor was it an unconstitutional entanglement of the State with the church to demand that the money be returned.

"Even though it is expensive, we will appeal the decision," said the Rev. Bill Sisterson, executive pastor of the church. "We view it as a dangerous precedent if the court sees no value in obedience to the biblical teaching of tithing, and the entanglement of the court with a religious transaction."

He continued, "This decision affects every church and charitable organization. It gives the court the ability to demand that any donations made the entire year before a bankruptcy be returned by church or charity. No evidence of fraud is required for the court to demand that contributions be returned. No tax exempt organization will be protected from this arbitrary government intrusion."

**Minneapolis, Minnesota (EP)** — St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Minneapolis has won the right to describe the Bible as "inerrant" and "infallible," despite a warning from Minneapolis-area Bishop David W. Olson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) that insisting on such wording could place the church "on the margin or outside the ELCA Lutheran family."

Last year the Minneapolis-Area Synod Constitution Review Committee notified Olson that St. Paul's had retained in its constitution language from a confession of faith predating the 1988 merger that formed the ELCA.

Olson notified congregation president Harold Biel that while the ELCA allows some variation in congregational constitutions, it "has determined that certain sections be identical so that we are one church." The model for ELCA constitutions describes the Bible as "the inspired Word of God and the authoritative source and norm of its proclamation, faith and life."

Eric Madson, who chaired the Congregational Constitution Committee, said that the dispute was over more than wording. "My understanding of the choice not to use those words is that to a lay person they convey a very specific, rigid meaning, which I think is one that would take a very literal reading of the Bible, and in this part of the Lutheran church that literal reading has not been the prevailing understanding of how Scriptures are interpreted. There are some people in the ELCA who really do hold to a much more lit-

eral meaning (of Scripture), and with some of the current issues in the Lutheran church that can be a source of real friction." But, he added, "There ought to be room for a variety of views within the denomination."

The Rev. Roland Wells, pastor of the church, says that he likes the ELCA statement of faith, and "the fact that it says the Bible is the Word of God." But he said the new phrasing did not provide the assurance his congregation sought. "It can be interpreted a lot of different ways. It's a more broader statement whose words aren't tried and true. Our founders put 'inerrant' and 'infallible' in and made those parts of our constitution unalterable. We know what the words mean, and it's a strong statement. We didn't want to have something pushed down our throats which we didn't approve of."

Biel wrote back to Olson, saying he found it hard to believe that a statement which was the "official position of the church on December 1987 can a few days or years later become evidence of deviant and unorthodox theology." Biel said the congregation had been upset by calls for a change in the constitution, and concluded, "We feel sad that you have concluded that St. Paul's is now 'outside the ELCA Lutheran family.' We have not moved."

In response to the congregation, Olson acknowledged that his reference to "margin" was "perhaps an unwise choice of words" and said, "You will not be forced to change the ... Confession of Faith."