

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

May 28, 1991



Bible Camps and the AFLC

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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True and False Shepherds

Let us look into God's Word which gives us the description of false shepherds. Far too many of the shepherds in our pulpits today are false and not called of God, which is very sad indeed. Jeremiah 23:21 reads: "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied."

What are some of the characteristics of these false shepherds? The Word says they are blind concerning the truths of the Word and ignorant, as dumb dogs cannot bark to give warning to those in darkness or need of help. They are sleeping, loving to slumber. The Bible continues to describe false shepherds as greedy dogs, never getting enough with everyone seeking his own gain. They scatter the flock, drive them away, give them no spiritual food and counsel and the people go astray. They say peace, peace, where there is no peace, and they say peace to those who are walking after the imagination of their own hearts. What a horrible description of these prophets. Look up Isaiah 56:10-12; Jeremiah 23:2, 21; 50:6; Ezekiel 34:2-3; and John 10:12 and read what God says of false shepherds. If they are not scattering the flock, they are feeding them unhealthy food, which weakens the sheep. They become more and more vulnerable to the enemy. The flock becomes sick, and many die. These shepherds are to be feared and shunned, for they lead down the path of destruction.

Praise God! There is a Great Shepherd, our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given Himself for us. He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them and the sheep follow Him ..."

Jesus continues: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it **more abundantly**. I am the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."

How we do thank God for the good and true shepherds of our day, men

who have been called of God to serve and feed the flock. They are just the opposite of the false shepherds. Their eyes and ears are open to the Word of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit. They give warning to those that are walking on the broad way to destruction. They have compassion, love, and a burden for the lost as well as for those in the flock. True shepherds are on call day and night. They follow the example of the Great Shepherd to do what is pleasing in His sight. We, the flock, should hold our spiritual leaders in prayer daily before the throne. The enemy of our souls is seeking to discourage and hinder the work of the Kingdom constantly.

There are those of the flock sitting under so-called shepherds who are not feeding them good spiritual food. Sin is not called sin anymore in this day and age. People are asked to overlook and ignore the sins that God does not overlook or ignore. There is a great danger in becoming weaker and weaker in our spiritual walk as we quench the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

Let us seek first the good and great Shepherd of our soul. He will never leave us nor forsake us. We can trust Him at all times. Let us seek out His good shepherds who will feed and strengthen our spiritual lives so that we too can go forth, being of service in the Kingdom of God.

I am looking forward to meeting the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, in eternity. This is the Blessed Hope the entire flock has as they walk in fellowship with Him.



— by Rev.
Alvin Larson

I have had the privilege of being raised in the AFLC since its beginning. I attended our Bible School and Seminary. Next to my Christian training at home, the most significant influence in my life has been the family and youth Bible camps. I missed the very first year of AFLC Family Camp at Lake Geneva, Alexandria, Minnesota. Ever since that first summer at Lake Geneva I have attended some Bible camp each year. Those weeks at camp have been one of the most positive and encouraging experiences in my Christian walk.

Galilee Lutheran Bible Camp, Lake Bronson, Minnesota, includes five purposes of camp on its registration form.

1. To study the Bible so that it is meaningful, not only at camp, but also in daily life at home.

2. To meet the Lord Jesus wherever we may be spiritually and to hear His call and commit ourselves to Him.

3. To abide in Christ, come to Christ, or to return to Christ and to live for Christ henceforth.

4. To make new friends and to greet only friends.

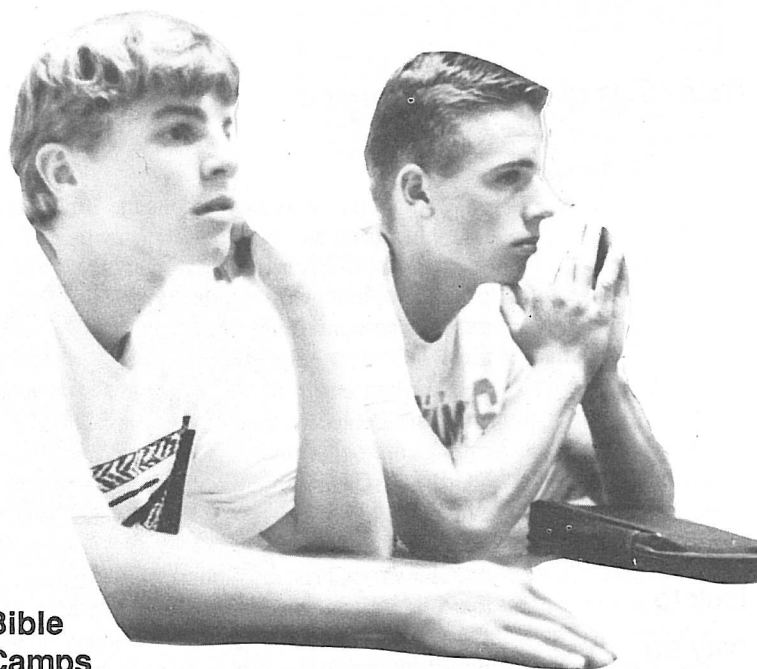
5. To have recreation in God's great creation.

These purposes have been experienced anew each year in my life, whether camp was in North Dakota, Michigan, Minnesota, or Wisconsin. Some of my first camp friends as a child are now serving the Lord in full-time ministry in the States or on the mission field. I don't know where I would be today if my parents had not insisted that we go to camp every summer.

The first three of the purposes are so vital. Genesis 3:8 tells us of the first experience man had with God. Adam would walk with God in the cool of the day. Then sin came and the intimate fellowship was destroyed. Adam and Eve tried to hide from God. Ever since then, we humans have been trying to hide from God. Often that week at Bible camp provides us with a fresh opportunity to renew and even restore our relationship with God.

Moses was called up to the mountain where God spoke to him as a man would to his friend. In Exodus 34:30, we are told of the result of being with God. Moses' face was radiant. As a pastor, I have seen many young people and even families return from camp truly changed as a result of being with God and allowing the Holy Spirit to work in their lives.

David experienced many days alone with God. Many of the Psalms reflect those times and strengthen believers today. Galatians 1:17 indicates the Apostle Paul spent three years in Arabia. Paul allowed the Holy Spirit to work in his life. Paul was to impact the world as no man has



Bible Camps

Keep On Keeping On

II Timothy 3:14-17

"God's precious Word, taught and upheld in a camp setting, is the desperate need of people today."

since and become the greatest missionary in history. John the Baptist had his time of separation where he was prepared for a special ministry in God's kingdom.

In II Timothy 1:5, 6, Paul remembered Timothy's mother and grandmother and encouraged Timothy to fan into a flame the gift of God. Paul saw the sincere faith that Timothy had and it was because of the family training he had as a child. There is no evidence of Timothy going to Bible camp, but he definitely was exposed to the Word. God's precious Word, taught and upheld in a camp setting is the desperate need of people today. May we heed the practical counsel Paul gave to Timothy in II Timothy 3:14-17: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned ... That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

I am thankful for those who had the vision of Bible camping in the AFLC. May we continue to pass the torch to future generations by providing Bible camps for our youth and families. We need places where we can come apart and find regeneration and renewal that God so graciously gives as we study His Word, the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us. I thank Him for the Spirit which makes that Word alive. Praise Him for the times we have seen the Lord do a mighty work in a camp. Let us pray for more genuine awakenings in our Bible camps. Encourage one another to consider making Bible camp a priority.

— Name withheld by request

"Camps...
look to
play an
even more
significant
role in
the future."

For a number of generations the Bible camp has been an important ministry tool of the local church. At camp, as at no other place, people leave their customary lifestyles to experience something completely different. It allows God to help us grow in an essentially undisturbed environment, without the stresses and distractions we face in everyday life. Camp settings are opportunities to be focused on God's Word and Christian fellowship. One itinerate evangelist tells of meeting hundreds of Christian leaders throughout the world who had made decisions for Christ at Bible camp and continued that commitment into full-time Christian work. Camps have played a vital role in many church ministries and looks to play an even more significant role in the future.

Family Camp

Families often rediscover each other at camp where they can relax, away from the daily pressures of family life. Comments made by family camp participants include: "It was nice being with people who enjoy one another ... We not only had fun on our vacation, but we felt like we had accomplished something ... We invested five days into our relationships and still had vacation time."

More and more families are seeing the unique opportunity family camp affords. With the many pulls our society plays on the family, it is increasingly important to consider the family dynamics. Many camps today are creating programs to especially enhance family life with emphasis on family devotions, communication,

role modeling, finances, and the like.

With the increased use of family camp as vacation, many camps are adding to the amenities of the facilities. Pools, gyms, saunas, and tennis courts are common sights at Bible camps. These are not gimmicks to lure campers, but rather intended to enhance the week away from home.

Youth Camp

If family camp is a tool for the local church ministry, youth camp is a vehicle. Youth camp is not just a diversion to the normal youth program, it has become an intricate part of youth ministry. One youth pastor has said that the importance of camp, especially for junior high youth, is that it is an uninterrupted and intense time to accomplish many things during that week (or weekend). It is perhaps notably more important for the youth to be away from the pressures and peers of their everyday life to concentrate on spiritual matters.

One AFLC pastor uses two, week-long confirmation camps during the two years of confirmation instruction to virtually double the time with the youth from the one-hour weekly class. The purpose being that the intense instruction together with the intimate time away from the inhibiting factors at home makes these weeks invaluable to the overall confirmation instruction.

The Big Event

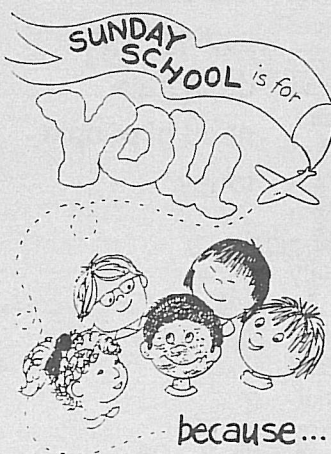
One very effective use of Bible camps or retreats, especially with youth and young adults, is called the Big Event of "Mega-Event." These events are much larger in scale than the typical camp. Some of the more widely known events include Urbana and D.C. 1991, where between

May We Help You?









Order a supply of Sunday School invitation cards (Sample shown). Pass them out during VBS.

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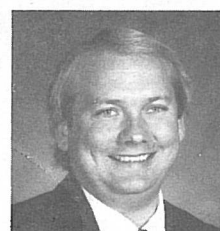
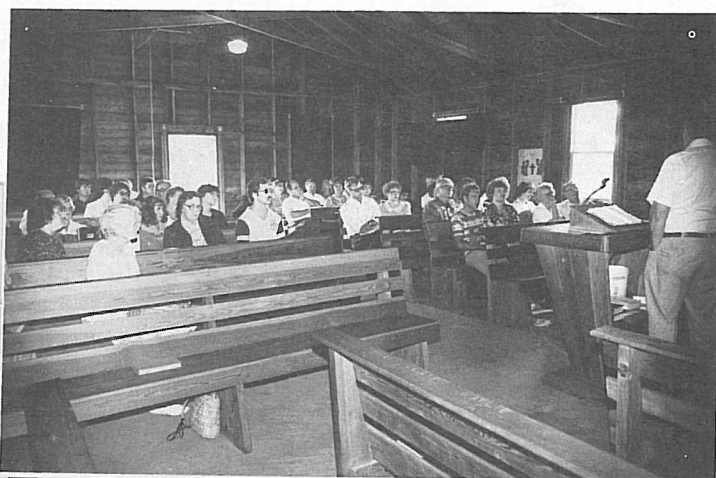
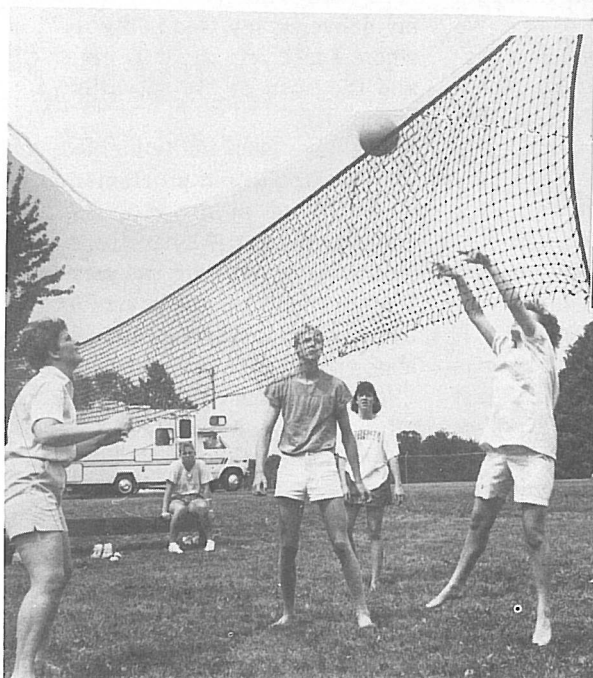


You will learn about...

-  **THE BIBLE:** The message of salvation from Almighty God to you.
-  **JESUS:** Your Heavenly Father's only Son who came to be your Savior.
-  **PRAYER:** You can talk to Jesus anytime, anywhere, about anything. He will listen and talk to you.
-  **MUSIC:** That will help you worship and praise God—and comfort you.
-  **LIVING A LIFE:** For God and others that is obedient, useful and happy.
-  **GROWING:** Pure and strong in your character.
-  **TELLING:** Others about Jesus.
-  **FRIENDS:** Teachers, other grown-ups and kids who will love you and help you with your problems.

John 3:16

Ministry for the Nineties



—by Rev. Keith Quanbeck
Brooklyn Park, Minnesota

15,000 to 20,000 young people are involved for each event. Most denominations have Mega-Events scheduled every second or third year. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod drew over 15,000 people at their last Synodical Youth Gathering.

Our AFLC has such an event, not on the scale of these, but certainly its objectives are the same, with the National Luther League Convention. Planners for these events realize that youth many times feel that their struggles, fears and beliefs are particular to them. It inspires them when they come to a major event and hundreds, even thousands, of other young people have the same fears and beliefs. Major events have the capacity to bring youth out of their shell so that they do not feel alone and isolated as Christians, but they realize that they are part of something and growing.

Specialized Camps/Retreats

Another growing trend in Bible camps and retreats is to program the camps to a very particular target ministry. Some of the more common have been, of course, a variety of youth, women and men's retreats. Because of the diverse society we live in, a number of

camps have designed programs for a distinct ministry group, such as Father/Daughter, Mother/Son retreats, (and vice-versa) as well as Mothers of Preschoolers. There are camp programs for businessmen and women, pastors (and spouses), law enforcement personnel, and senior adults. The purpose of these special camps is to meet the particular spiritual needs of the individuals who are in those roles. The camps that have programmed to these needs have found a great response.

Bible camps and retreats are playing an increased role in the total ministry of the local church. They generate renewal and encouragement in the individuals as well as the entire family. In a time where daily stresses encumber the Christian, Bible camps and retreats create a refreshing respite. Jesus admonished His disciples to "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while" (Mark 6:31, KJV). Or as one person has said: "A Christian had better plan to come apart or he will come apart."

(Rev. Quanbeck, a member of the AFLC Youth Board, is the pastor of Solid Rock Lutheran Church, a Home Mission congregation.)

"Another growing trend... is to program the camps to a very particular target ministry."



from North Dakota

CAMP ECHOES

We felt honored when we were asked to share our testimony for *The Lutheran Ambassador* about family Bible camps. We have attended the Mon-Dak-Ada District Camp east of Williston, North Dakota, on Lake Sakakawea and the ARC (Association Retreat Center) near Osceola, Wisconsin.

Family Bible camps are a time for spiritual growth and regeneration. It is a time of studying God's Word, having fellowship with new Christian friends and re-establishing old friendships. It provides opportunity to share blessings and trials experienced over the last year. Evening devotions and prayer tighten the bonds between friends.

The past two years have seen Stew's mother pass away and then Stew's diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis. The prayers of our local congregations and of our many friends from Bible camp were the pillars that held us up

during these times of trials. We thank you all for reminding us of Psalm 18:2: "The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."

We have been richly blessed as a family through the proclamation of God's Word in the morning and evening sessions. We have been challenged by the teaching and preaching. The morning Bible studies are followed by activities, discussion time, mission hour, choir practice and variety hour.

Afternoons are filled with recreation, such as baseball, volleyball, swimming, boating, water fights and, of course, rest and relaxation. After the evening service, there is an afterglow with a bonfire for the young people and a time of sharing what God has been doing in their lives. All around camp, either night or day, you will hear

AFLC BIBLE CAMPS



Cooperstown Bible Camp, North Dakota

Date: June 23-28

Theme: "The Unchanging Christ for Changing Time"

Theme Verse: Hebrews 13:8

Speaker: Rev. Phil Haugen

Galilee Family Camp, Lake Bronson, Minnesota

Date: July 7-13

Theme: "Rejoice in the Lord"

Theme Verse: Philippians 3:1

Speaker: Rev. Dale Mellgren

Galilee Teen Camp, Lake Bronson, Minnesota

Date: June 23-28

Theme: "Soldiers For Christ"

Theme Verse: II Timothy 2:3-4

Speaker: Rev. Steve Snipstead

Galilee Pre-Teen Camp, Lake Bronson, Minnesota

Date: June 19-23

Theme: "Walking In the Light"

Theme Verse: I John 1:7

Speaker: Rev. Terry Wold

Orcas Island Camp, Orcas Island, Washington

Date: July 30-August 4

Theme: "It's Time to Know God"

Theme Verse: Exodus 34:6, 7

Speaker: District Pastors

ple talking about the Lord and how He has blessed their lives. It is a refreshing escape from the "worldly" conversations we so often hear.

We would like to thank all that are involved in getting these camps organized. We would also like to thank the Bible School for the teams they have sent out to help at these camps. They make a good impression on young and old alike and are an inspiration to us all.

We have enjoyed these camps and look forward to them every year. If you have never gone, now is a good time to start going. They are inexpensive and a great way to spend vacations together. They are like a "Family Reunion."

The only sad part about camp is when it is time to go home. But we leave with the idea that, with the Lord willing, we will meet again next year and the knowledge that we will meet in His Kingdom someday.

— *The Vachal family*

*Stew, Carol, Holly, Tanya, Peter
Williston, North Dakota*

from Washington

It is refreshing to be able to take a family vacation where it does not cost a lot of money and each one gets the opportunity to meet new friends, play, eat good food, learn and enjoy nature. Normally to vacation or go camping, a lot of preparation and planning are needed. Not so with Bible camp. It's an extra special treat for mothers because the meals are planned and prepared by others!

The atmosphere is warm, friendly and cooperative. We appreciate the sharing of the responsibilities of the churches in our district. Each church is assigned a responsibility which rotates each year. Camp clean-up and kitchen patrol are shared among all the campers. This cooperation makes it fun and enjoyable.

Our children have been in their teens the four times we have gone. They have enjoyed staying in the dorms with their peers while we enjoyed a cabin for eight. One year, in particular, we enjoyed sharing a cabin

with another family with younger children. We came prepared with our tacks and sheets, so we sectioned off our part of the cabin and also a dressing area. We had fun sharing and playing as we became an extension of their family for the week. It is so valuable to become friends with the children of other families and very enriching. It is another one of the learning experiences to see another family in action.

Many of the lessons taught over the years have made their mark. The camp has a theme and the lessons of the week continue to build. During the adult studies we have enjoyed many good discussions.

Bible camp gives opportunities to acquaint and befriend other members of the Association. It is encouraging to get to know the other pastors and fellow believers. It has been a place of freedom and faith-building as the day, experiences and studies are shared. We highly recommend Bible camp for all.

— *Tom and Connie Olson
Kirkland, Washington*

AFLC Family Camp at the ARC

Date: June 30-July 6

Speaker: Rev. Michael Brandt

Date: August 4-10

Speaker: Rev. Al Monson

Theme: "In Times Like These"

Big Sky Bible Camp, Stillwater, Montana

Date: August 23-25

Speaker: Rev. Douglas Reitsch

Minneapolis District Youth Camp, ARC

Date: June 23-29

Theme: "Follow the Leader"

Theme Verse: Isaiah 55:10-12

Family and Youth Camp, (Inter-Lutheran)

Northern Illinois

Lake Geneva Conference Grounds

Lake Geneva, Wisconsin

Date: August 4-8

Speaker: Lay Pastor Roger Krueger

Bethany Youth Camps, Grace Lake, Bemidji, Minnesota

Date: June 19-23 — Junior High Camp

Dean: Rev. William Goodman

Date: June 23-28 — Senior High Camp

Dean: Lay Pastor Lyle Twite

Vernon Youth Festival, Silver Star Mountain, Vernon,

British Columbia

Date: August 22-25

Musician: Teena Gowdy

Cost: \$85

Speakers: Guy and Carla Scholz, Alberta

Further information: Heather Lyseng, (604) 542-0497

Wilderness Family Bible Camp, Lake Park, Minnesota

Phone: (218) 532-7604

Date: July 17-21

Theme: "The Word of Our God Shall Stand Forever"

Theme Verse: Isaiah 40:8

Speakers: Eula Mae Swenson, Children's Hour; Rev. Raynard Huglen, Bible Hour; Rev. John Strand, Evening Service

***Note:** This is a wilderness camp facility — bring your own tents, campers. The new shower and bath facility is completed. There is no registration or cost. Free will offerings will be taken.

Pickerel Lake Youth Camp, South Dakota (Inter-Lutheran)

Date: June 24-30

Speaker: Rev. Walter Johnson

Camp Cherith Family Camp, Williston, North Dakota

Date: June 24-30

Speaker: Rev. Dale Mellgren

So You are a Camp Counselor

Congratulations, Camp Counselors! You have a wonderful opportunity ahead of you! May the Lord Jesus Christ bless you as you prepare yourself for this important position. Whether you are going to be a counselor at a pre-teen camp or at a youth camp, you will be meeting a critical need.

Here are some ideas to help you be an effective camp counselor:

1. Pray for your campers before camp starts, during camp and after camp ends. You may not know your campers by name right now; but the Lord does. Pray that the Lord will prepare their hearts and yours. Pray that the Word of God will penetrate into their hearts to call them to Jesus and to give growth to their spiritual lives. Also, that any needs campers may have may be met by the Lord Jesus Christ, foremost being the need for assurance of salvation.

2. Know your campers. Names are important. Memorize names by writing them down. Get to know the abilities of the campers. Encourage them in what they are doing. Try to speak to each one individually, encouraging them to receive Christ and to walk with Him.

3. Don't preach or judge the campers! We are instructed in God's Word not to judge. We are also instructed that a meek and gentle spirit is of much value. Many youth are self-critical and judge themselves quite unmercifully. Camp counselors should not hammer any more nails into these feelings of insecurity and guilt. Of course, we should use God's Word to convict of sin. We need always to use God's Word in love.

4. Be with your campers. Win your campers to Christ by showing love. Being with them, showing interest in them, sitting with them in worship and Bible study, while eating and being with them during the recreation time is very important. You'll get your rest as the Lord leads. Campers must come first!

5. Don't embarrass your campers. It is very devastating to be embarrassed. Teasing is out. We must not trample on feelings.

6. Joining with the youth is not profitable. Especially is this true if they are rebellious, go against the camp rules or are conducting themselves in an inappropriate way. Counselors must not act like the campers.

7. Pray with your campers. Camping is serious business. Campers have different needs. You can listen to their problems, but what value is this listening unless it is brought to the Lord in prayer. **Pray for the youth audibly and by name.** And, tell them you will continue to pray for them every day, even after camp is over.

8. Encourage them to memorize Scripture. Scripture is what will keep your campers strong in the Lord Jesus Christ. Challenge them to memorize Scripture and recite it to their pastor or another friend.

9. Refer serious concerns to the camper's pastor. The camper's pastor can do the most effective follow up. Write to the pastor, if he is not at camp, advising him of those concerns. If he is at camp, make an appointment to discuss matters with him. In fact, you could go with the camper and meet together with the pastor.

10. Be an encourager. Encourage your campers in every way possible. Certainly, this means to encourage them in their walk with the Lord Jesus Christ. It also means to encourage them to participate fully in every aspect of the camp program. **Look for the shy and those who are left out.** These youth may very well be a tremendous ministry for you.

11. Remember, "Kids will be Kids." Discipline, when needed, must be done calmly and with love. Youth have a capacity to listen and talk at the same time. We don't recommend this, of course, but the wiggly one who seems more out of things than you or I think!

Show a genuine liking for each camper. Be fair, sympathetic and democratic, and have a sense of humor. You will see youth won for the Lord. And, you will have friendships, which will last to your old age! Friendships which will last for eternity.

If you want more on camping, write me at Box 6B, Greenbush, MN 56288. I'd be glad to do what I can to be of help. Have a great summer at camp!

— Rev. Dennis Gray
Youth Resources Director



AFLC Boards Confront Budget Cutbacks

At a recent Co-ordinating Committee and Department Heads meeting, it was decided to give an update as to the budget needs and cutbacks that need to be made for the various departments.

Each department was asked to share what cutbacks will have to be made as we look to the future.

General Fund

The Co-ordinating Committee has frozen the salaries of the staff for the 1992-93 budget. The office of the Business Administrator has been cut to one-fourth time. It is our desire that the first priority be budget needs and not Building Fund needs as we have stressed in all correspondence concerning the Administration Building. The overhead expenses for all departments have also been frozen.

Schools

The AFLC Schools Board of Trustees sees that the failure to meet minimum budget goals set at the AFLC Annual Conference will cause two things to happen: (1) The raising of tuition fees for students and/or (2) The cutting of operating expenses (i.e. faculty and staff) which has been as efficient as possible. The most likely avenue that will be pursued will be a tuition increase to meet operating costs.

Home Missions

The Home Missions Committee at a meeting on March 21 took action to borrow \$17,000 for March and April. The action was necessary as receipts for the months of March and April were not sufficient to cover expenses. For the month of May, Home Missions needs \$36,000 in order to cover on-going expenses.

World Missions

I am an optimist. In my heart I really believe that World Missions is going to experience a turnaround. But I look at the hard facts. Here we are, going into the summer of 1991, with four dedicated Christian couples offering themselves to be our new AFLC missionaries. Tragically we have no funds to send them, and we even lack suffi-

What is the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations?

Apamphlet by the same name as this article has clearly defined the AFLC, with its unique emphasis on the autonomy of the local congregation. It is not our purpose to continue along those lines as we share our thoughts in this article.

I want to challenge the individual believers in our AFLC concerning the role they play in an organization such as ours. We define the AFLC as a fellowship of free and living congregations. Congregations are made up of individuals. We really could define the AFLC as the individual Christians making up the congregations of our fellowship. Does that make a difference to you and to me personally?

The Great Commission — "Go and make disciples of all the nations" was given to the eleven disciples by Jesus. In Acts 1, Jesus again challenges the individual believers as He said "and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." The Church has a vision and a desire to respond to the needs about it when individual believers have a vision and a desire to respond. Is it not because of the lack of such a vision that after almost 2,000 years we have not fulfilled the command of Christ to reach out to the ends of the earth.

The AFLC is involved in a number of ministries. We support a seminary, a Bible school, world and home mission efforts, parish education projects, youth ministries and our Association Retreat Center. We also subsidize the printing of *The Lutheran Ambassador*, our health insurance program for church workers and our evangelism effort. That can become very impersonal. The AFLC is not some great entity standing behind the scenes with unlimited resources to make the above ministries possible. The AFLC is people. It is people, the people who sit in the pews of our churches on Sunday morning that make it possible for the seminary to operate and for new home mission congregations to be started.

Every area of the work is a faith ministry. We can only go as far as the support from our people enables it to go. I was recently told of one of our congregations that gave a mission offering to another "faith ministry" rather than to AFLC missions, because our mission work was supported by the AFLC. I fear there is a lack of vision among many of us when it comes to seeing the challenge of what God has given us to do as a Church.

God is counting on you. He is counting on me to do His work through our AFLC.

—Richard Snipstead

cient funds to maintain everyone who currently is serving with World Missions. We have no choice but to make substantial cutbacks in World Missions.

Unless ...

I am not only an optimist. I believe God's promises.

Parish Education

The Parish Education Board continues to praise and thank God for continually providing the means this past year so that we were able to add new materials as well as maintain an ade-

quate inventory of Sunday School and confirmation materials. As we look to the summer months, our attention goes to reprinting the necessary quarterlies, etc., for fall quarter. To provide adequate inventory to meet the needs of our congregations for fall quarter we will need approximately \$17,500 above operating costs. We continue to operate according to our policy of no deficit spending and, therefore, ask that you would join us in prayer and

continued on page 11

This disease is most peculiar, not because it is so dangerous, but because its course is partly a product of powerful, political forces. That these forces are immoral is obvious to a Christian, but apparently ignored by the secular world. The result is a greater spread of a deadly disease. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is caused by the HIV Virus, which destroys the "T-4" cells. These cells control the immune system. Most of the time the spread and the original cause of this disease was an infected male engaging in sodomy. This injures the delicate rectal mucosa, introducing the HIV Virus directly into the blood stream. Multiplying 1,000 times faster than ordinary viruses, soon the patient's ability to fight infection and prevent tumors is destroyed. We don't know how the first patient became infected. Now more than ten percent are women.

Public health officials are very strict about the activities and contacts of those with known venereal diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhea. Although we report HIV positive patients, they have no symptoms at first and don't come in for treatment. Because of the pressure for confidentiality, even the known carriers, however dangerous they may be, are pretty free to go where they please. For example, just one year ago, I did not have the right to demand a blood test for the AIDS virus before performing surgery on a high risk patient! The often repeated reassurance that casual contact was not dangerous was also strange, since new research seems to produce a different conclusion.

Once the syndrome appears, it is progressive, very painful, and 100% fatal. As of March, 1991, there still is no cure and no vaccine. It is as if God says that we have gone too far in our wicked ways. The innocent victims are newborns from infected mothers, recipients of contaminated blood products, spouses of HIV positive carriers, health workers and drug addicts. Disturbing results show that the virus can survive in room air. The lungs of dying victims are loaded with the virus, and aerosols (inhalors) can be contaminat-

AIDS

A Christian Perspective

— Rudy Skogerboe, M.D.
Grand Forks, North Dakota

ed. The virus can penetrate intact skin, gloves have normal holes in them large enough to allow the virus to pass through, and condoms are only 40% safe. Tears and saliva carry the virus also.

What does Christ expect of us as Christians who may want to deal with these victims? To keep the sin of homosexuality in perspective, look at the list of sins in I Corinthians 6:9-11. All sin is spiritually fatal, but His promise of complete forgiveness is beautifully described in verse 11. All of us need to repent and be forgiven and we must learn to love all sinners as God does even if we think we cannot do so.

A group called OUTPOST works successfully with repentant homosexuals.¹ They stress tough love, prayer and psychotherapy. I recommend them from reading their literature and hearing personal reports from their work. From my background and training, I believe the overt or active homosexuals are basically normal people with normal physical findings and normal endocrine function. They simply make choices. They are also normal mentally except for the nervous strain of dealing with such a problem.

I found that psychotherapy alone did not work because since these people were normal, they gave normal answers. Leanne Payne, in her book,

Fact Sheet on Homosexuality Available

The Minnesota-based Berean League has published a "Backgrounder" to inform readers about aspects of homosexuality not generally covered in press accounts. The fact sheet discusses the stated political goals of the "gay rights" movement and their political strategies. It also summarizes research on homosexual origins, numbers, lifestyle, and health.

A "Gay Rights Platform" adopted by the "National Coalition of Gay Organizations" in 1972 lists numerous homosexual political goals. These include repealing all laws against prostitution or other "private sexual acts" among consenting persons of any age. The platform calls for "Federal encour-

agement and support for sex education courses, prepared and taught by gay women and men, presenting homosexuality as a valid, healthy preference and ... as a viable alternative to heterosexuality." Another goal is repeal of all laws restricting the gender or number of persons in a marriage, or restricting homosexuals from adopting children or being foster parents.

The fact sheet also presents evidence that homosexuality is a matter of choice, not genetics. Thus arguments that civil rights protections should be extended to homosexuals because "they did not choose" their condition are flawed. Several studies are cited

"The Broken Image" stresses prayer along with the psychiatric help she gives.

She says, "Now, however, since many seek to justify homosexual activity, we need to stress the fact that it is sinful, and that obedience to God's revealed will is indeed a happy thing. ... For pastors and counselors within Christendom to accept and condone homosexuality rather than to heal it, is to deliver the individual into the con-

"What does Christ expect of us as Christians who may want to deal with these victims?"

suming power of his own sin and sickness."²

Real compassion for such a lost soul is necessary for us as well, and while it is modern to be tolerant, the

unrepentant sinners will cry out from their eternal torment. They will say, "Why didn't you warn me?" An AIDS victim recently came home to our community to die. Those who visited and prayed with him expressed their joy in seeing a victorious soul meet his Maker. He weighed only about sixty-five pounds when he died praising a God of mercy. May God give us supernatural wisdom and compassion in this spiritual challenge.

¹Outpost, P.O. Box 7067, Minneapolis, MN 55407

²Payne, Leanne: "The Broken Image," Crossway Books, 9825 W. Roosevelt Road, Westchester, IL 60154, P. 159

A more detailed account of this update may be obtained by writing to Dr. Rudy Skogerboe, 2411 West Fallcreek Court, Grand Forks, ND 58201 for \$1, including postage. Dr. Skogerboe is a member of Christ the King Free Lutheran Church, East Grand Forks, Minnesota.

Note: My source material includes medical journals, State Board of Health reports and my own training and experience in general practice, urology and neuropsychiatry.

refuting claims that a large fraction of the population is homosexual. The fact sheet reports, "Homosexuals are twelve times more likely to molest children than heterosexuals ... Homosexual teachers are ... seven times more likely to have sexual contact with their students ..."

The fact sheet also discusses effects of "gay rights" laws on other citizens. Several recent examples are cited, such as a Madison, Wisconsin, woman fined \$1,500 and ordered to undergo "re-education" for refusing to share her apartment with a lesbian.

The Berean League is a non-profit, member-supported education and

research organization. It defends traditional family values and works to inform, educate and equip Christians and others on political issues affecting these values. The League publishes state bill summaries, occasional special bulletins, and a monthly newsletter, the "Berean Statesman." The League urges concerned citizens to respond to bills being considered in the legislature by phone calls and letters.

For a copy of the fact sheet or more information, write 2875 Snelling Ave. North, St. Paul, MN 55113 or call (612) 633-0654. A nominal contribution would be appreciated to cover costs.

Bible School Receives Money

The Association Free Lutheran Bible School has recently received \$4,850 from Lutheran Brotherhood's IMPACT program, Inviting Member Participation in Aiding Lutheran Colleges and Theological Seminaries. The latest payment covers 55 gifts of Lutheran Brotherhood members made during the first quarter of 1991.

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

Since the beginning of the IMPACT matching gift program in 1979, \$130,038 in IMPACT funds has been received by Association Free Lutheran Bible.

CUTBACKS

giving so that we can once again experience God's gracious provision for us.

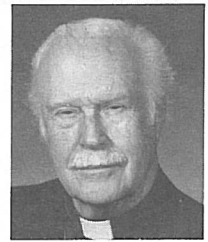
ARC

The Association Retreat Center continues to praise God in the midst of financially stormy times. Establishing financial independence has been our goal and each year we draw nearer. At our last board meeting, Bob Dietsche shared with us that he is retiring. He's still working full-time, but to enable us to freeze the budget without laying off an already under-manned staff, he's working for the maximum allowed by the Internal Revenue Service.

Additional ARC Supporters (individuals who commit a minimum donation of \$100 each year) can do much to lift the burden of needed cash flow. While our retreats and camps pay for themselves, the on-going maintenance and improvements require additional gifts. Another source of help is volunteers to work at the ARC. Year-round opportunities exist. A third boon of financial help comes in the form of increased use. The best promotion for this is word of mouth. Those who have been blessed at the ARC are asked to pass on a good word.

(Excerpts from a letter by the Coordinating Committee to all AFLC pastors.)

The Progress of the Pilgrim



—by Dr. Howard B. Franzen
Hastings, Nebraska

Through Doubt

In his book, "Pilgrim's Progress," John Bunyan pictures his prime character, Christian, and a fellow-traveler named Hopeful, as being wearied by their pilgrimage through the Christian life. They laid down to sleep on the land of "Giant Despair" who became angry at this incursion into his property. He threw them into the dungeon of his castle called "Doubting Castle." This castle, by its name, represents doubt; that enemy of our faith that so destroys our peace of mind and gives us a sense of spiritual defeat.

Bunyan, using the idea of Christian imprisoned in Doubting Castle, uniquely illustrates the problem of the Christian and his or her doubts. As Bunyan moves his story along, he provided an escape for Christian from the prison of doubt. Christian discovered that he had on his person a key named Promise. With this key, he and Hopeful escaped.

Charlotte Elliot, in her hymn based on John 6:37, so aptly states that spiritual problem with the words, "Just as I am, though tossed about, With many a conflict, many a doubt."

Doubt has been defined as a lack of certainty, or state of indecision or uncertainty. With this definition in mind, we know that every Christian, at some time or other, entertains doubts concerning some area of his or her Christian life and faith. Many times an event in one's life will trigger questions and then doubts about God. "Where is He? Why does He not do what I want?" The Christian can have doubts as to

whether God really loves him or her. "Has Jesus really forgiven me?"

Bunyan does not specify what doubts bothered Christian and Hopeful. They are only composite figures in an allegory. Bunyan's point is that whatever doubts bother us are the same ones that plagued Christian and Hopeful in Doubting Castle. We only need look inside ourselves to find the hidden, unspoken, very private doubts that destroy our spiritual peace of mind, and causes us to doubt our own salvation.

The word, doubt, is a "dirty" word in our Christian vocabulary. We are lead to believe that doubt should not be a part of any Christian's life or faith! Yet it is there.

Of the forty-three years of my ministry, thirty were spent in a ministry in military prisons and mental hospitals. There I ministered to the atheist and the agnostic. The atheist told me there was no God. He had no doubts. The agnostic told me he wasn't sure. He or she had nothing but doubts. A prisoner once told me. "Chaplain, there ain't nothin' for sure in this life except dyin'."

For different people, doubt means different things. For some, it means, "It is hard to accept." For some, it means, "It is too good to be true." For others, it means, "I cannot believe it because it is impossible."

To doubt does not mean to deny. The doubter wants proof. The disciple, Thomas, was a doubter who wanted proof. But proof is not always physical or material. This is, of course, to Satan's delight. Christian found the answer to doubt was Promise.

We confess the Apostolic Creed on Sunday morning church service. We teach it in our catechetical classes. How much of it do we believe? How much of it do we doubt? How much of it do we deny? To think to ponder eter-

nal things. We wonder about the spiritual mysteries. We ask questions because we want to learn more. This is not doubting.

The antidote for doubt is the promises of God. He has promised to love us, forgive us, give us eternal life through Jesus on the cross and the empty tomb. The Christian is "standing on the promises of God." Feelings is not faith. Thinking is not doubting. The opposite of doubt is assurance. "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine." Jesus does love us. He did die for us. He did rise from the dead for us. This was done for us that we might believe and be saved.

Will we continue to have doubts even in the midst of our faith? Yes, we shall! The father of the epileptic boy, when confronted with Jesus' call for belief in His healing power, cried: "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief." This is our plight, our spiritual affliction. We believe, but our old nature throws up doubts. Still, Jesus has promised to hear our confession of our sins of doubt. He has told us He loves us. Have we forgotten that Jesus does love sinners? With this promise, in spite of our human nature, Jesus will give us the peace that passeth all understanding, if we will accept it.

"The antidote
for doubt is
the promises
of God."

from a
counselor's
study

Canadian AFLC Holds Eighth Conference



The pastors and their wives who took part in the Canadian AFLC conference. Reading from left to right: President Gene Sundby and wife, Sylvia; Rev. Al and Dorothy Pinno; Rev. Les and Dawn Johnson; Rev. Gerald and Shirley Gettis; Rev. Steve and Kathy Olinger; Lay Evangelist Olaf and Carol Friggstad; and Rev. James and Lorene Winter.



Edmore, North Dakota — with praise and thanksgiving to God, Living Word Lutheran Church is happy to announce a complete debt retirement in just three years. A special mortgage-burning ceremony is planned for June. Pictured are members of the council, the local bank president, and Rev. Walter Beaman, pastor of the congregation. The office and home phone number for Pastor Beaman is (701) 644-2652.



Mentor, Minnesota — The Maple Bay youth group has been actively involved in developing a puppet ministry this past year. Approximately twelve young people (grades 7-12), together with their advisors and pastor, have been presenting programs at the county fair, local nursing homes, youth retreats, and in local churches. Rev. Lynn Kinnberg is the pastor of Maple Bay Church.

PEOPLE and PLACES

Faith Free Lutheran Church, Lake Alma, Saskatchewan, hosted the Eighth Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations in Canada, April 5-7.

The conference theme, "The Indwelling spirit, Christ in Us," (Acts 3:38) was ably addressed by the speakers and Bible study leaders during the three days.

The National Women's Missionary Federation met Friday afternoon, led by President Mrs. Dawn Johnson of Lake Alma. Our speaker was Grace Syverson of Tioga, North Dakota, past president of the WMF in the USA.

At the communion service on Friday night, led by rev. Les Johnson of Lake Alma, Pastor Steve Olinger of Salmon Arm, B.C., spoke of the Holy Spirit's work in the Old Testament.

President Gene Sundy, Outlook, Sas., opened the conference on Saturday morning and Rev Gerald Gettis, Vernon, B.C., led a Bible study on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The rest of the day, devoted to conference business, was led by Rev. Al Pinno of Frontier, Sask., with intervals for prayer and thanksgiving.

At the banquet in Lake Alma Hall, Pastor Sundby reminded us that the AFLC in Canada began in that very building when, invited by members of the congregation, the AFLC held an informational meeting in March, 1983. Faith Free met in the same building for three years.

At the service Saturday night, Lay Evangelist Olaf Friggstad spoke on how we can grieve the Holy Spirit and how to be filled with the Spirit.

Sunday morning Rev. Jim Winter, Calgary, led a study on the fruits of the Spirit. During the worship service, Rev. Pinno spoke of the work of the Holy Spirit today.

The conference was officially closed by President Sundby who read a passage from Genesis 22.

—Mrs. Ceta Rude
Lake Alma, Saskatchewan

People and Places Continued

Pastor Milo Gudim, Argyle, Minnesota, has announced his retirement from parish ministry, effective this summer. He currently serves Our Savior's and Alma congregations, which joined the AFLC in 1988.

Rev. Walter Johnson, Camarillo, California, who has been serving as interim pastor of First Lutheran Church, recently accepted a call from the congregation to be their permanent pastor.

Thief River Falls, Minnesota — The Satersdal Lutheran Church, northeast of the city, which is preserved as a memorial chapel with services twice annually, will celebrate a centennial anniversary this summer. The association that maintains the old country church is seeking a bell to install in honor of the occasion. If any of our readers know of a church bell that might be available, please contact Mr. Art Joppru, Route 4, Box 162, Thief River Falls, MN 56701. (Phone 218-681-1933.)

Annual Conference Corrections and Additions

The AFLC Pastors' Banquet is on Friday night, June 14, during the annual conference. It is not on Saturday as indicated on the registration form.

The Widows and Widowers Banquet will have Nancy Snyder, from L'Abri Fellowship Foundation in Rochester, Minnesota, as speaker.

THE PHONE NUMBER FOR THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE IS (715) 755-3131.

"Count it a blessing when God delays the answer to your prayer for a time in order to enlarge your capacity to receive."

— Keith L. Brooks

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

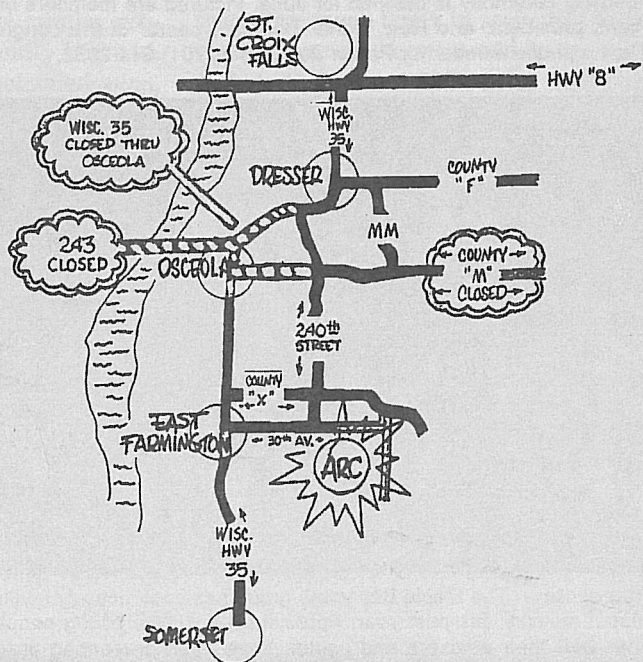
AFLC Benevolences – February 1 - April 30, 1991

FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	REC'D IN APRIL	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	%* TOTAL
General Fund	\$ 276,830.00	\$19,136.34	\$46,819.63	17
Schools - (AFLTS) . .	151,900.00	8,614.16	17,203.82	11
(AFLBS) . .	193,950.00	11,072.55	23,723.94	12
Home Missions	433,616.00	28,361.40	75,000.67	17
World Missions	373,715.00	22,518.94	50,557.59	14
Capital Investment . .	25,000.00	4,725.28	9,056.77	36
Parish Education . . .	62,670.00	2,175.57	5,859.71	9
ARC	20,000.00	511.84	2,078.41	10
TOTALS	\$1,537,681.00	\$97,116.08	\$230,330.54	15
1990 - 1991	\$1,441,565.00	\$65,332.88	\$211,441.90	15
*Goal 25%				

Coming to the Annual Conference? Please Note Road Detours

Summer is here! Main roads are all closed, all detours are now open. From St. Croix Falls take Wisconsin 35 south. After Dresser take 240th Street south to 30th Avenue (approximately 8 miles), then east 1/4 mile to the ARC.

From Somerset take Wisconsin 35 north (at Dairy Queen) to East Farmington. Turn east on 30th Avenue. Approximately 2-1/2 miles to the ARC.



OUR COMMITMENT TO BIBLE CAMPS

The AFLC is committed to the ministry of Bible camps. It would be difficult to deny the central place that these programs have played in the life of our fellowship. In fact, some might say that the family camps in particular have contributed more to our cohesiveness as a church body than any other single factor, including the annual conferences.

Lake Geneva, near Alexandria, Minnesota, was the first home of our family camp, which continued to grow in size and spirit until the denomination that owned the facilities decided against renting to outside groups. The Galilee Bible Camp, Lake Bronson, Minnesota, became the new home of the camp for several years, until the conference acted to acquire the Association Retreat Center (ARC) in western Wisconsin near Osceola. Many of us have special memories from each of these locations, as God showered His blessings upon us year after year.

The commitment to Bible camps contributes to a busy schedule. Most of our congregations are also involved in an area or district camping program, as is evident from the listing included elsewhere in this issue, usually geared to youth. At least a couple of these programs are operated jointly with other evangelical Lutherans, and one or two of our congregations maintain their own camping ministry.

Our commitment to Bible camping is a theological one. The center of Bible camp life is the Bible, as the name implies, and we are persuaded that God works through the daily teaching and preaching of His powerful Word at camp in an intensified way. We are convinced that many of our youth have forsaken their childhood faith and need to be converted to Christ. Not a few of our people point to a Bible camp service as their "mountain top" meeting with the Lord.

Our commitment to Bible camping is a practical one. The life and ministry of a local congregation can be strengthened through a camping program, and the same is true for our family of churches. Our camps have been important "feeders" for the Bible school and seminary. The fellowship between Christians from different congregations will benefit through vacation days together, too, thus strengthening our ties as an association.

Our commitment to Bible camping must continue to be a personal one. This means that you and I are not called to pass a resolution in favor of camps, but to be there ourselves. There is an AFLC Bible camp for you this summer! Shouldn't you attend?

TIGHTENING OUR BELTS?

Portions of a letter from the Co-ordinating Committee to our pastors are included elsewhere in this issue, describing some of the steps taken by the various AFLC boards in response to the current deficits. Initial receipts for the 1991-92 fiscal year have been encouraging, but it is necessary for each department to seriously consider needs and cutbacks in light of the fact that only 75% of last year's budget was received.

Administrative salaries and overhead costs have been frozen, a tuition increase for the schools is under consideration, and funds have been borrowed to meet Home Mission expenses. The commissioning of new missionaries will be postponed, as well as the publishing of new Sunday School and confirmation materials.

The plain fact of the matter is that, as President Snipstead suggests in his cover letter, the giving within our AFLC has not kept pace with the expansion of the ministries of our church.

There are two ways, of course, to interpret this information. Do we have a stewardship problem? Or have the ministries of the AFLC expanded beyond the commitment and/or ability of our local congregations to support them? A third possibility could be that both of the above are true. The reports from the various boards seem to indicate that some are responding on the basis of the first interpretation, and others, the second.

Is it time to tighten our belts? To put pressure on the congregations to dig deeper? To more effectively publicize and personalize our needs? To criticize those who channel some of their gifts to non-AFLC ministries? To promote Biblical stewardship principles among our pastors and lay people?

These questions, and the resulting decisions, may be the main issue for the annual conference to confront this year.

POSTSCRIPT

A congregation in northern Illinois scheduled a centennial celebration last fall, with the theme, "How Firm a Foundation." A local newspaper reported that this theme was based on the favorite old children's story, "The Three Pigs!"

The church is never a place, but always a people; never a fold but always a flock; never a sacred building but always a believing assembly. The church is you who pray, not where you pray. A structure of brick or marble can no more be a church than your clothes of serge or satin can be you.

— John Havlik

Sao Paulo, Brazil (EP) — Brazilian evangelicals are proceeding with plans to launch a Brazilian Evangelical Alliance in May of this year.

This plan received added visibility with the recent visit of World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) director, David Howard, according to a WEF report. Howard met with six members of the ten-person steering committee for the planned alliance March 4.

Brazil once had an evangelical federation; it was launched in 1932, but had to cease operations in 1964 under a military regime. Howard told WEF officials that he "encountered expressions of strong feeling that it is now high time to re-establish an evangelical body that is national in scope."

Glendale, California (EP) — With many economists agreeing that America is suffering through a recession, industry leaders are wondering just how hard they will be hit. While some of the spending reductions undertaken by consumers may be obvious, such as putting off major purchases or reducing the amount spent on luxuries, a particular reduction planned by one in four Americans may not be as obvious — that of reducing the amount given to non-profit organizations and charitable causes.

Survey results released by the Barna Research Group of Glendale, California, reveal that 27 percent of all American adults planned to reduce the amount of money they donate to non-profit organizations in the near future, as a result of the weak economy. The survey was conducted among a nationally representative sample of 1,005 adults.

Churches are likely to feel the effects of the economy, but probably not to the extent that other non-profit organizations will; 16 percent of the respondents planned to reduce the amount of money they contribute to churches in the near future.

George Barna, president of the Barna Research Group, felt that non-profit organizations and churches will suffer with many other industries, but that the suffering may not be as bad as some might expect. "Only one in four

Americans plan any significant reduction of charitable giving," Barna noted. "The rest plan to go right on giving, or not giving, at past levels, or maybe even to increase their giving to help organizations through these troubled times."

"These are not easy times for charities. But trying to raise funds through a panic mentality may send off signals that the organization is unstable or about to go under, whether or not that is true. People are leery of supporting an unstable organization, and 'emergency' requests and 'panic' mailings may actually do more harm than good, especially in the long run."

Lake Geneva, Wisconsin (EP) Recent cases such as that of Christine Busalacchi are setting an alarming and dangerous precedent for the entire community of disabled people, according to the Christian Council on Persons with Disabilities (DDPD), a national consortium of over 180 disability ministries and leaders.

Christine, disabled by brain damage, is being moved by her family to Minnesota where state laws provide less protection for incapacitated persons and her feeding tube can be legally removed. She is expected to be euthanized (killed by starvation and dehydration).

Recently there have been a number

of court orders granting persons with disabilities the right to end their life through assisted suicide. Christians who are disabled are particularly alarmed at society's growing support of the "right to die."

Many members of the CCPD are severely disabled, some connected to assistive machines. "Does this mean some of our members should be urged to die since they cannot live without life-sustaining machinery, a standard we often hear used to justify the deaths of fellow disabled persons?" asked Steven Jensen, president of the DDPD. "Right to die questions used to be contained within the sphere of persons who were actually dying. People who have handicapped conditions such as cerebral palsy, brain injury and the like are not dying. They are disabled," added Jensen.

Joni Eareckson Tada, vice president of the CCPD, explained why Christians with disabilities need to be involved in the debate over euthanasia: "First, Christians need to influence society's ethical framework with godly values. But second, this issue hits home for the disabled person because the handicapped condition may one day be viewed as a social excuse to kill. Instead of making it easier for disabled people to die, we need to concentrate on making it easier for them to live."