

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

May 3, 1994 • Vol. 32, No. 9

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

is published biweekly (except for the first issue of July and the first 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

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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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Dr. Craig Jennings
Mrs. Oryen Benrud

Light on the Way

The Greatest Education

The setting was a weekend retreat some 20 years ago. "Jesus Christ is the greatest education we can have!" is the one statement I remember from that weekend. I've never forgotten it.

For a number of columns now we've been seeking to expand our education in Jesus Christ, studying Him as He is revealed by the names and titles given Him in the book of Isaiah. Our "class" continues as we focus on His names "Root of Jesse, Branch, and Shoot." The texts under consideration are these: "In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious" (11:10). "In that day the Branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious ..." (4:2). "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit" (11:1).

In all these passages Jesus, the Root and Branch, invades history, bringing radical and glorious newness. But something else, something unpleasant to ponder, is also intimately linked with these names. The greatest single poem about the Messiah ever penned speaks of the root and the shoot too, but in a context of incomprehensible suffering. "He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground ... He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering ... He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities" (53:2, 3, 5). Suffering precedes glory; the *splendor* of the Root and Branch (as prophesied in Isaiah 4 and 11) would not be possible apart from the *suffering* of this same Root and Branch (as prophesied in Isaiah 53)! In our continuing education in Jesus Christ, it is imperative that

we keep both His suffering and His splendor in proper order and balance, lest our studies lead us to a wrongfully perceived Messiah and we reject Him (as did the majority so long ago).

Our "class period" for now is almost over, but before class dismisses we consider this question: How can one person be both the *Root* (i.e. the foundation, the source) and the *Branch* (i.e. the offshoot, that which ultimately grows out of the root)? It would seem that the root should be quite different than the Branch: yet Isaiah calls the Messiah both names. This is just another of the countless marvels of our blessed Lord and Savior!

He truly is the *Root*. He said "before Abraham was born, I am!" (John 8:58), thus explicitly claiming to be the eternal God himself! He truly is the *Branch* as well, for He was sent from the living Father (John 8:57). He truly is *both* the Root and the Branch, for He said "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). He also said: "I am the Root and the Offspring of David" (Revelation 22:16). Being both the Root and the Branch, He is all sufficient and able to satisfy for both time and eternity.

"Jesus Christ is the greatest education we can have!" Keep studying Jesus. Nothing you learn will ever become outdated or useless; rather you will be learning what will last forever!



— Rev. Jerry Holmaas

32nd Annual Conference

of the
Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
June 15-19, 1994

Valley City State College, Valley City, North Dakota

Conference Theme: "Stand Firm in the Faith"

Conference Text: Ephesians 6:10-20

Wednesday, June 15

- 9:00 a.m. The conference committees meet for devotions, instructions and room assignments.
Mass Choir rehearsal will begin at 4:30 p.m. or immediately following the WMF session.
- 6:30 p.m. Concert of Prayer. Leader: Rev. Don Richman, Bloomington, Minnesota.
- 8:00 p.m. The opening service of the conference with the sermon on the text by Rev. Gary Jorgenson, Ottawa, Illinois. Mass Choir will sing. The service leader is Rev. James Fugleberg, Fargo, North Dakota. AFLC President, Rev. Robert Lee will open the conference and appoint necessary committees.

Thursday, June 16

- 9:00 a.m. Devotions.
Report of the Credentials Committee.
Adoption of the Conference Agenda.
Election of the Nominating Committee for the 1995 Conference.
The President's Report.
Report of the Chairman of the Coordinating Committee, Rev. David Molstre, Lancaster, California.
Report of the Director of Development, Mr. Ernest Miedema, Crystal, Minnesota.
Report of the Chairman of the ARC Board, Mr. Clifford Seldal, DeKalb, Illinois.
Report of the Director of the ARC, Mr. Kenneth Hokkanen, Osceola, Wisconsin.
Report of New Hymnal Committee, Rev. Tom Olson, Cumberland, Wisconsin and Rev. Brian Davidson, Rice Lake, Wisconsin.
Financial Report, Marlene Unverzagt, New Hope, Minnesota, Bookkeeper.
Report of the Family Bible Camps:
ARC, Treasurer, Sandra Anderson, Amery, Wisconsin.
Lake Bronson, Treasurer, Mrs. Don Balmer, Thief River Falls, Minnesota.
Wilderness, Treasurer, Mr. Roland Peterson, Fargo, North Dakota.

- Report of the Budget Analysis Committee.
Report of the Nominating Committee, always in order.
Election of nominees for the Missions Corporation, Schools Corporation, and ARC Corporation.
Report of Committee #1 (Administration).
- 11:30 a.m. Prayer Hour. Leader: Rev. Philip Haugen, Culbertson, Montana
- 1:30 p.m. Devotions.
Report of Credentials Committee.
Election Procedures.
Elections.
Vice-President — 1-year term.
Secretary — 1-year term.
Selection of nominees to the Home Missions Committee — 1 layman and 1 pastor; World Missions Committee — 1 layman and 1 pastor; Board of Trustees — 1 layman.
Continuing discussion of Committee #1.
Election of two members to the Coordinating Committee — 1 pastor (5 years), 1 layman (2 years).
Selection of nominees to the ARC Board — 1 layman.
Election of Committee #1 for the 1995 Conference.
Report of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, Cokato, Minnesota.
Report of the Dean of the Seminary, Dr. Francis Monseth, Rogers, Minnesota.
Report of the Dean of the Bible School, Rev. Donald Greven, Plymouth, Minnesota.
Report of the AFLBS Alumni Director, Terry Claus, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
Report of Committee #2 (Schools).
- 5:30 p.m. The Schools Corporation Annual Meeting.
- 8:00 p.m. The Mission Festival Service conducted by the Women's Missionary Federation.
Speaker: Chaplain Maj. Timothy Skramstad, San Antonio, Texas

SCHEDULE

Friday, June 17

- 7:00 a.m. The Missions Corporation Annual Meeting.
- 9:00 a.m. Devotions.
Report of the Credentials Committee.
Continuing discussion of Committee #2.
Election of Committee #2 for the 1995 Conference.
Report of the Schools' Corporation Annual Meeting.
Report of the Chairman of the World Missions Committee, Mr. Ken Williams, Ishpeming, Michigan.
Report of the Director of World Missions, Rev. Eugene Enderlein, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
Report of the Chairman of the Home Missions Committee, Rev. Allen Monson, Lakeville, Minnesota.
Report of the Director of Home Missions, Rev. Elden Nelson, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
Report of the Chairman of the Commission on Evangelism, Pastor Lyle Twite, Bagley, Minnesota.
Report of Committee #3 (Missions and Evangelism).
- 11:30 a.m. Prayer Hour — Rev. Philip Haugen
- 1:30 p.m. Devotions.
Report of the Credentials Committee.
Continuing discussion of Committee #3.
Report of Missions Corporation Annual Meeting.
- 5:30 p.m. Pastors' Banquet — Leader: Rev. Kenneth Moland, Kirkland, Washington; Speaker: Rev. David Rinden, Fergus Falls, Minnesota.
- 8:00 p.m. Laymen's Service — Leader: Mr. Ralph Peterson, Portland, North Dakota. Speaker: Mr. Will Olson, Kirkland, Washington.

Saturday, June 18

- 9:00 a.m. Devotions.
Report of the Credentials Committee.
Continuing discussion of the report of the Committee #3.
Election of a member to the Commission on Evangelism — 1 layman.
Election of Committee #3 for the 1995 Conference.
Report of the Chairman of the Board of Publications and Parish Education, Rev. Wesley Langaas, McVile, North Dakota.
Report of the Director of Parish Education, Mrs. Ralph Tjelta, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

- Report of Chairman of Christian Academic Education Board, Mr. Chuck McKeen, Lakeville, Minnesota.
Report of the Chairman of the Youth Board, Rev. Joel Rolf, Radcliffe, Iowa.
Report of the President of the Free Lutheran Youth, Rev. James L. Johnson, Fosston, Minnesota.
Report of Youth Ministries Director, Rev. Dennis Gray, Greenbush, Minnesota.
Report of Committee #4 (Publications, Parish Education and Youth Work).

- 11:30 a.m. Prayer Hour — Rev. Philip Haugen
- 1:30 p.m. Devotions.
Report of the Credentials Committee.
Election of members to the Board of Publications and Parish Education — 1 layman (5 years), 1 layman (4 years), 1 pastor (2 years).
Election of members to the Christian Academic Education Board — 1 layman.
Election of members to the Youth Board — 1 layman.
Election of Committee #4 for the 1995 Conference.
Report of the Chairman of the Stewardship Board, Rev. Rob Lewis, Newark, Illinois.
Report of the Chairman of the Board of Pensions, Rev. Gary Skramstad, Osakis, Minnesota.
Report of Committee #5 (Stewardship and Pensions).
Election of members to the Stewardship Board - 1 layman.
Election of members to the Board of Pensions - 1 layman.

1994 Conference Committees

Nominating Committee and District

- Mr. Gerald Knudsvig, Buxton, ND, Eastern North Dakota
Mr. Jerome Rice, Tioga, ND, W. North Dakota-E. Montana
Rev. Wayne Hjermstad, Faith, SD, S. Dakota-Nebraska-Kansas
Mr. Martin Johnson, Badger, MN, Northwestern Minnesota
Mr. Gayle Melby, Winger, MN, North Central Minnesota
Mr. Art Arneson, Spicer, MN, Southwest Central Minnesota
Mr. Doug Niesen, Cloquet, MN, Lake Superior
Mr. Tony Onen, Cokato, MN, Minneapolis
Mr. Paul Handsaker, Radcliffe, IA, Central Tri-State

Election of Committee #5 for the 1995 Conference.
 Report of Chairman of the Colloquy Committee, Rev. David Skordahl, Dalton, Minnesota.
 Election of the Colloquy Committee for the 1995 Conference.
 Report of special committees.
 Election of 2 members to the Budget Analysis Committee — 3 year term.
 Report of Committee #1 as the Committee on General Resolutions.
 Other Reports.

8:00 p.m. Youth Night at the Conference

Sunday, June 19

8:00 a.m. Communion Service

Leader: Rev. Terry Olson, Valley City, North Dakota.

Speaker: Rev. David Hinrichs, Everett, Washington.

10:30 a.m. Worship Service with Ordination

Leader: Rev. Raymond Klug, Fairbury, Nebraska.

Speaker: Rev. Steven Lombardo, Maple Grove, Minnesota.

Conference Committee

Rev. Robert Lee, President

Rev. Bruce Dalager, Secretary



Zion Free Lutheran

Welcome to Valley City!

Grace Free Lutheran and Zion Free Lutheran Churches, as hosts for the 32nd Annual Conference, cordially extends a warm welcome to all who are a part of the AFLC.

The theme "Stand Firm in the Faith" taken from Ephesians 6:10-20 has been chosen for this conference. With all that is going on in the church and in the world, we feel that you will be truly blessed as we gather, June 15-19, to renew and strengthen our faith in the power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The conference will be held on the Valley City University campus. Facilities available are conference rooms, dorm rooms, food service, and the Vangstad Auditorium. We are located just off I-94. We are looking forward to seeing and greeting many of you this June.

— Pastor Terry L. Olson

Committees to the 1994 Annual Conference

Rev. Jerry Holmaas, Chassell, MI, Northern Michigan

Mr. Ernest Schneider, Wichita Falls, TX, Southwestern

Mr. Al Tollefson, Astoria, OR, West Coast

Mr. Bob Lawson, Massapequa, NY, Eastern

Mr. Sheldon Een, Minooka, IL, Illinois

Committee No. 1 (Administration)

Mr. Dean Crouthers, Nogales, AZ

Mr. Arne Berge, Binford, ND

Rev. Tim Hurley, Bruce, SD

Mr. Eric Westlake, Hamel, MN

Committee No. 2 (Schools)

Mr. Ken Thompson, Nogales, AZ

Pastor Mark Olson, Ottawa, IL

Mr. Arden Jacobson, Champlin, MN

Mr. Junell Remme, Pipestone, MN

Mr. Jerome Rice, Tioga, ND

Committee No. 3 (Missions & Evangelism)

Rev. Roy Johnson, Ortonville, MN

Rev. Steve Odegaard, Tioga, ND

Mrs. Jim (Martha) Johnson, Reva, SD

Mr. Ralph Beyer, Osceola, WI

Mr. Roger Hoikkala, Apple Valley, MN

Committee No. 4 (Publications, Parish Education, Youth)

Rev. Richard Larson, Abercrombie, ND

Rev. Reuben Unseth, Roseau, MN

Mr. Michael Peterson, Thief River Falls, MN

Mr. Sheldon Een, Minooka, IL

Mr. John Sogge, Leeds, ND

Committee No. 5 (Stewardship & Pension)

Rev. Jerry Moan, Minot, ND

Rev. Steve Snipstead, Kalispell, MT

Mr. John Kyrola, Forest Lake, MN

Mr. Albin Haugen, McVillie, ND

Mr. Bruce Walla, Minot, ND

Colloquy Committee

Rev. David Skordahl, Dalton, MN

Rev. Mel Meyer, Amery, WI

Rev. Lynn Kinneberg, Mentor, MN

Rev. Gerald Peterson, Oklahoma City, OK

Rev. Lyle Aadahl, Upsala, MN

Budget Analysis Committee

Mr. Reuben Quanbeck, Grand Forks, ND

Mr. John Schlenk, Brooklyn Park, MN

Mr. Richard Rasmussen, Monticello, MN

Mr. Eldwyn Van Bruggen, Valley City, ND

Pastor Dale Finstrom, Glyndon, MN

Conference Issues Highlighted

Home Missions — desires greater involvement of the corporation and is suggesting a one to two day meeting each year with corporation members. The department has an urgent need for money for new works which have been cut the last two years. Districts will be encouraged to be more involved in church planting.

Youth — in response to last year's conference resolution, the Youth Board is presenting a job description for a full-time youth worker along with a request for a \$12,000 subsidy increase from the General Fund.

ARC — because the ARC Supporters continue to grow and the final debt was paid off in 1993, the ARC Board is requesting conference approval of zero subsidy for the retreat center. Mr. Ken Hokkanen is the new director, replacing Mr. Bob Dietsche who retired the end of 1993. The new director's home will be ready for occupancy later in May.

Publications and Parish Education — the ministry continues to grow and must grow more to effectively serve the church. A completed Sunday School curriculum and other materials are urgently needed. This means major budget adjustments to increase salaries and add office personnel. Being on our board involves a large amount of commitment and time. Nominations for this board and others, should be made in advance to give nominees time to consider.

Board of Trustees — face the continuing need to operate our seminary debt-free. Last year we were short about \$2,000, but did not pay out one full-time salary because of a vacancy. Pray that God may lead the board in calling a man for our New Testament position in our schools. Lay people may want to study a little theology in the area of prevenient grace. If there is some discussion on this, it would be helpful. Ask your pastor for materials; he will be glad to help you.

Coordinating Committee — expresses gratitude to the Hymnal Committee in completing an enormous project! The hymnals may be picked up at conference. Well over 8,000 books have been ordered and our first printing will have to be increased. AFLC 2000 continues to see the debt closer to retirement. In trying to be more cost con-

Conference Elections

Officers:

Vice President (one-year term)

Rev. Kenneth Moland has served two terms.

Secretary (one-year term)

Rev. Bruce Dalager has served one term.

Elected by Corporation:

Home Missions Committee (1 pastor, 1 layman, five-year terms)

Rev. Tony Stockman and Mr. Robert Dietsche have each served one term and are eligible for re-election.

World Missions Committee (1 pastor, 1 layman, five-year terms)

Rev. Ted Kennedy and Mr. Kenneth Williams have each served one term and are eligible for re-election.

Board of Trustees (1 layman five-year term)

Mr. Kent Quanbeck has served two consecutive terms. He is ineligible for re-election.

ARC Board (1 layman, five-year term)

Mr. Al Anderson has served one term and is eligible for re-election.

Others:

Coordinating Committee (1 pastor, five-year term; 1 layman, 2 year unexpired term)

Rev. John Mundfrom served one year of an unexpired term and is eligible for re-election. Mr. Philip Grothe resigned from the committee. Mr. Marlin Benrud was appointed to serve until conference election.

Commission on Evangelism (1 layman, five-year term)

Pastor Lyle Twite has served two consecutive terms and is ineligible for re-election.

Board of Publications & Parish Ed. (1 layman, five-year term; 1 layman, 4-year unexpired term; 1 pastor, two-year unexpired term)

Mrs. Rodney Stueland has served one full term and is eligible for re-election. Mrs. Gwen Berge resigned from the board. Mrs. Charlotte Qualley was appointed to fill the position until conference election. Pastor Tom Olson resigned from the board and now someone is needed to fill his 3-year unexpired term.

Christian Academic Education Board (1 layman, five-year term)

Mrs. Karen Haugen has served one term and is eligible for re-election.

Youth Board (1 layman, five-year term)

Mr. Marshall Nessa has served one year of an unexpired term and is eligible for re-election.

Stewardship Board (1 layman, five-year term)

Mr. Roger Rasmussen served one year of an unexpired term and is eligible for re-election.

Board of Pensions (1 layman, five-year term)

Mr. LaVern Thompson has served two consecutive terms, and is ineligible for re-election.

scious, we no longer have a business administrator and the World Mission, Home Mission and Coordinating Committees are sharing in the salaries of our secretaries.

Stewardship Board — rejoices in the fact that prayer has played a primary role in encouraging members, congregations and leaders of the AFLC to seek the Lord's guidance concerning personal and corporate stewardship. We are investigating the possibility of hosting a training seminar using renewal, growth and discipleship as keys to enabling biblical stewardship. The desire is to move congregations from maintenance to mission.

Pension Board — reports that after our first year in a partial self-funded health insurance plan we are able to offer the same coverage without an increase in rates — \$330 for a family and \$135 for an individual. We now have a 403b pension plan offering pastors to participate with 1-15% of their income without tax obligations. The original plan is also still available. We are seeking information which would provide a disability income insurance policy for pastors at a cost of under \$20 per month and could be provided by the employer if congregations so desired. Dental insurance is another area of study if pastors and congregations so request.

World Missions — is discussing mission possibilities to Mozambique in southeastern Africa; nearly 60 miles from the island of Madagascar. The Brazilian AFLC is pursuing this possibility since they share a mutual language — Portuguese. The Brazil Field Conference may have someone to begin work in Africa but would need financial assistance. Conference input is welcome. Needs in Partners in Mission Outreach, Mexico and Brazil could be better met through a Builders' Fellowship organization or perhaps through a national men's organization.

— by Board Chairmen

Welcome

Stand firm in the faith (Ephesians 6:10-20) is the theme for our Annual Conference this year, and one would be hard pressed to suggest a more appropriate text in times like these. We live in difficult days, facing countless challenges to the faith both from without and within, so that the Biblical images of warfare in this portion of God's Word seem especially fitting.

The purpose of our conferences, which are conducted primarily as a time for spiritual edification and fellowship rather than to transact business, becomes even more relevant in light of the fact that there is a battle to be fought and a victory to be won. We are not called to stand alone, and it is a tremendous encouragement to meet with like-minded believers, to be built up together in our most holy faith (Jude 20).

It will be good to return to Valley City, a place that retains special associations for older AFLC members as one of our pioneer parishes and as the site of past conferences. The local committee has been working hard to plan for record crowds as we meet again for the first time in several years in the region where the largest concentration of our congregations is located. There is every reason to expect excellent facilities at the local college together with warm North Dakota hospitality.

There is no area of our common ministries that does not face difficult challenges, and there is no limit to the opportunities that are open to us. Great needs call for great measures, and no greater response is possible than to begin our conference again this year with a "concert of prayer" on Wednesday evening at 6:30 p.m. May this opening session not be a mere option for those who attend, but a vital necessity, as well as a clear affirmation that we worship a great God on whom the AFLC totally depends.

In a free association, every individual member has a voice and a vote, so your presence and participation are important to our "health" as a church family. Plan to attend the 1994 Annual Conference, and welcome in Christ's name!

— Robert L. Lee

Housing (Valley City motels are full).

Dakota Inn — Hwy 281 and I-94, Jamestown, North Dakota 58401, 1-800-726-7924.

Rates: Single \$38; double \$42.

Valley City State University Dorms — 701-845-7724, Diane Hill.

Rates: Per person \$8 per day, \$3 one time linen fee. Handicapped accessible. Linen fee includes sheets/towels. All rooms have two single beds. Community bathrooms with 198 beds available.

In-Home Housing — Margaret Larson, 701-845-2805.

Valley City Tourist Campsite — East Main, 701-845-3294; 18 sites. Facility includes showers and restrooms.

Rates: \$5 minimum fee; \$2.50 electricity; \$1.50 water; \$1 dump; \$9 includes everything with full hookup.

Other campsites available — 701-845-2970

Ashtabula Crossing, 15 miles north of Valley City.

Eggert's Landing, 10 miles north of Valley City.

Mel Rieman Recreation Area, 10 miles north of Valley City.

MISSIONS

Term Expires 1994

** Rev. Ted Berkas, Wallace, SD
Mr. Paul Flaten, Newfolden, MN
*Rev. Alvin Grothe, Astoria, OR
Mr. Don Hansen, Bloomington, MN
Mrs. Gerald Knudsvig, Buxton, ND
Rev. Paul Larson, Detroit Lakes, MN
Mr. Owen Myhre, Abercrombie, ND
Mr. Truman Rolf, McIntosh, MN
*Rev. John Skeie, New Hope, MN
** Rev. Jeff Swanson, Newark, IL

Term Expires 1995

Mr. Philip Grothe, Thief River Falls, MN
Mr. Robert Halvorson, Elk River, MN
**Mr. Arley Hartsoch, Ray, ND
Rev. Orville Hiepler, Valley Center, CA
**Rev. Ted Kennedy, Jr. Nogales, AZ
Dr. Lyle Mattson, Greenbush, MN
**Mr. Randy Sommer, Chillicothe, IL
Mr. Eldor Sorkness, Sand Creek, WI
Rev. Thomas Tuura, DeKalb, IL
**Mr. Kenneth Williams, Ishpeming, MI

Term Expires 1996

Rev. Richard Anderson, Lakeville, MN
*Mr. Robert Dietsche, Osceola, WI
Rev. Amos Dyrud, Crystal, MN
Mr. Harold Erickson, New York Mills, MN
Mr. Halvor Knapp, Kandiyohi, MN
Rev. Dale Mellgren, Spokane, WA
*Rev. Allen Monson, Lakeville, ND
Rev. Steven Mundfrom, Sebeka, MN
Mrs. Aini Myking, New Hope, MN
Mr. Joel Rogenes, Ely, MN

Term Expires 1997

Rev. Herbert Franz, Dollar Bay, MI
Rev. Richard Gunderson, Lake Stevens, WA
Mr. Mark Knutson, Newfolden, ND
Pastor Henry Mohagen, Towner, ND
Mr. Kenneth Nash, Colfax, ND
Mr. Timothy Rolf, McIntosh, MN
**Mr. Vernon Russum, Grafton, ND
Dr. Wayne Sletten, Faith, SD
*Rev. Tony Stockman, Brandon, MN
Miss Judith Wold, Thief River Falls, MN

Term Expires 1998

Rev. Mark Antal, Leeds, ND
Rev. James Asp, Brooklyn Park, MN
*Mr. Robert Christian, Newark, IL
Rev. Peter Franz, Cloquet, MN
Rev. Philip Haugen, Culbertson, MT
Miss Carol Knapp, Willmar, MN
Mrs. David Nelson, Osceola, WI
Mr. Tom Schierkolk, Plymouth, MN
Mrs. Grace Syverson, Tioga, ND
Rev. Einar Unseth, Glenville, MN
*Member of Home Missions Committee.
** Member of Word Missions Committee.

Schools

Term Expires 1994

Rev. Emerson Anderson, Cloquet, MN
Mr. Don Carter, Lake Stevens, WA
Rev. Bruce Dalager, Grand Forks, ND
Rev. Philip Featherstone, Pukwana, SD
*Mr. Emory Flaten, Newfolden, MN
*Mr. Wayne Floan, Fertile, MN

AFLC

Rev. James Fugleberg, Fargo, ND
Mr. Marlow Nash, Colfax, ND
Rev. Rodger Olson, Fergus Falls, MN
Rev. Ralph Rokke, Minneapolis, MN

Term Expires 1995

Mr. Art Arneson, Spicer, MN
Mr. James Bjorgan, Minneapolis, MN
Mr. David Borg, Cokato, MN
Mr. Loeil Dyrud, Thief River Falls, MN
Mr. Sheldon Een, Minooka, IL
Mr. Eldon Hermunsle, Wahpeton, ND
*Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, Cokato, MN
*Rev. Kenneth Moland, Kirkland, WA
Mr. Kenneth Rolf, McIntosh, MN
Mr. Dale Smith, Lake Stevens, WA

Term Expires 1996

Dr. Philip Dyrud, Middle River, MN
Mr. Stanley Holmaas, Newfolden, MN
Rev. Harvey Jackson, Ishpeming, MI
*Mr. Tim Jones, Wyndmere, ND
Rev. Terry Olson, Valley City, ND
Mr. Roger Peterson, Thief River Falls, MN

Mr. Orville Qualley, Brockton, MT
Rev. James Ritter, Bloomington, MN
Pastor Lyle Twite, Bagley, MN
Rev. Terry Wold, Murrieta, CA

Term Expires 1997

Mr. Clifford Dyrud, Moorhead, MN
Mrs. Farrell Erickson, Badger, MN
Mr. Dean Franz, Cloquet, MN
Rev. Dennis Gray, Greenbush, MN

Meals at the Annual Conference

Please indicate the number of people registering for each meal.

Food service cannot be guaranteed if pre-registration is not received. Pre-registrations must be received by May 22. Cost of the regular meals: Lunch, \$5.25; Dinner, \$6.25.

Regular Meals:

Lunch Dinner

Wed. _____

Thurs. _____

Friday _____

Saturday _____

Special Meals:

Wed. WMF Luncheon \$5 _____

Thu. WMF Breakfast \$4.50 _____

Thu. Builders Fellowship Lch. _____

Thu. Schools Corp. Dinner _____

Fri. Miss. Corp. Breakfast _____

Fri. ARC Corp. & Sup. Lch. _____

Fri. Pastor's Banquet _____

Sat. Miss & Laymen's Bfst. _____

Name: (please print) _____

When you arrive at the conference, the named person will pay for the meal tickets. All meals will be served at Valley City State College.

Regular lunches include: casserole, sandwich, soup, vegetable, salad bar, prepared salads, desserts.

Regular dinners include: entrees (1 solid meat), starch, vegetable, salad bar, prepared salads, soup, desserts.

Please register by May 22 with:

Grace Free Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 37, Valley City, ND 58072

Directory of

Officers:

Rev. Robert Lee, President
3110 East Medicine Lake
Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441
Rev. Kenneth Moland,
Vice President
1161 NE 140th Street
Kirkland, Washington 98034
Rev. Bruce Dalager, Secretary
1708 Olive
Grand Forks, North Dakota
58201
Mr. Ernest Miedema,
Director of Development
Crystal, Minnesota
Marlene Unverzagt,
Bookkeeper
New Hope, Minnesota

Coordinating Committee:

Rev. David Molstre, Chairman
Palmdale, California
Mr. Ralph Peterson, Secretary
Portland, North Dakota

Corporations

Rev. Martin Horn, Astoria, OR
 Mr. Clifford Johnson, Esko, MN
 Rev. Paul Nash, Wichita Falls, TX
 *Mr. Kent Quanbeck, McVile, ND
 Mr. James Rolf, Brandon, MN
 Pastor Rodney Stueland, Kenyon, MN

Term Expires 1998

Rev. Jon Benson, Ortle, SD
 Mr. Arne Berge, Bindford, ND
 Rev. Scott Gray, Morris, IL
 Rev. Craig Johnson, Eugene, OR
 Rev. James L. Johnson, Fosston, MN
 *Rev. Gary Jorgenson, Ottawa, IL
 Rev. Jerry Moan, Minot, ND
 Rev. James Molstre, Zumbrota, MN
 Rev. Mark Molstre, Tioga, ND
 Mr. Ralph Peterson, Portland, ND
 *Member of school board.

ARC

Term Expires 1994

*Mr. Allen Anderson, Amery, WI
 Dr. Peter Dyrud, Plymouth, MN
 Mr. Rod Kjersten, Roseau, MN
 Mr. Tim Kjeseth, Amery, WI
 Mr. Erling Langness, Ishpeming, MI
 Rev. Rob Lewis, Newark, IL
 Mr. John Presteng, Grafton, ND
 Rev. Keith Quanbeck, Wheatland, IA
 Mr. Luis Valdez, Maple Grove, MN
 Mr. Steve Walters, Yorkville, IL

Term Expires 1995

Mrs. Marlin Benrud, Goodhue, MN
 Mr. Don Berge, Fargo, ND
 Mr. Ralph Beyer, Osceola, WI
 *Rev. Michael Brandt, Sioux Falls, SD
 Mr. Halvor Knapp, Kandiyohi, MN
 Rev. Richard Long, Arlington, WA
 Mr. Gordie Newell, Cumberland, WI
 Rev. Brian Pearson, Arlington, SD
 *Rev. Tonnes Pollestad, Blaine, MN
 Mr. Lee Schierkolk, Prairie Farm, WI

Term Expires 1996

Mr. Ivar Berge, Fargo, ND
 Rev. Peter Bergstedt, Forest Lake, MN
 Mr. Allen Delzer, Shoreview, MN
 Mr. Brad Folsiand, Oldham, SD
 Mr. Ralph Johnson, Upsala, MN
 Mr. John Kyröla, Forest Lake, MN
 Mr. John Nelson, Wanamingo, MN
 *Mr. Jim Ray, Cloquet, MN
 Mr. Jerome Stulen, Spicer, MN
 Rev. Tom Tuura, DeKalb, IL

Term Expires 1997

Rev. Brian Davidson, Rice Lake, WI
 Mr. Glen Hodenfield, Radcliffe, IA
 Mr. Clifford Holm, Menanga, MN
 Mr. Dennis Jacobsen, Burlington, ND
 Mr. Arden Jacobson, Champlin, MN
 Mr. Larry Johnson, Amery, WI
 Mr. Dave Osland, DeKalb, IL
 Mr. Victor Parsons, St. Paul, MN
 Rev. John Rieth, Vadnais, MN

Term Expires 1998

Mr. Arne Anderson, Cokato, MN
 Mr. Harlan Clark, Sartell, MN
 Mr. Merle Jacobson, Deer Park, WI

Mr. Steve Johnson, Upsala, MN
 *Mr. Cliff Seidal, DeKalb, IL
 Rev. Joel Rolf, Radcliffe, IA
 Pastor Ken Thoreson, Janesville, WI
 Dr. Tracy Wolf, Maple Grove, MN
 *Member of ARC Board.

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 McVile, North Dakota
 Rev. Dennis Gray

Youth Resources Director
 Greenbush, Minnesota
 Mr. Bob Halvorson

Associate Director
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Commission on Evangelism:

Pastor Lyle Twite, Chairman
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 Mrs. Art Arneson, Secretary
 Spicer, Minnesota

Women's Missionary

Federation:

Mrs. Dee Berkas, President
 Wallace, South Dakota
 Mrs. Karen Knudsvig,
 Executive Secretary
 Buxton, North Dakota

Free Lutheran Youth:

Rev. James L. Johnson, President
 Fosston, Minnesota

the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

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THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

May 3, 1994



Grace Free Lutheran, host church.

32nd Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

June 15-19, 1994

**Valley City, North
Dakota**

***Stand Firm
in the Faith***

Ephesians 6:10-20

Let's Still Be Friends

We'll soon gather for our 1994 Annual Conference. This article is to encourage attendance and participation at our business sessions.

To attend the conference is a privilege. It is also a responsibility. It is important that decisions truly reflect our entire AFLC. That happens only when each congregation is represented.

Our sessions consist of elections and voting on resolutions.

My only thought about elections is that we need to be aware of the talents and gifts of those we vote for, instead of so often basing it on name recognition.

Our resolutions fall into three categories, although they are often interwoven:

1. Doctrine
2. Church Polity
3. Priorities

While the most important, we generally spend little time on doctrine. Most doctrinal issues have been decided, and as Lutherans we accept them. Those not cast in stone usually are not easy to vote on unless a great deal of study and soul searching has already taken place. I believe it is important to not vote on any major issue, doctrine or otherwise, unless and until it has been fully discussed.

We have in the past often voted without taking the time to digest and consider all the issues. Ask for a delay if you aren't sure how to vote. Discuss it with someone you have confidence in. On doctrinal matters, read the catechism. It won't answer all our questions, but it surely won't lead us in the wrong direction.

We have over 200 churches in our AFLC. We come from church backgrounds where practices and policies are varied and diverse. We have in common the Fundamental Principles of the AFLC, which we have all accepted. They are not a legal set of rules, but they provide the framework for us to work together, as we believe the New Testament church did.

We believe in the freedom of the local congregation, with no officer, board, or annual conference telling us what to do. We also believe in living congregations, and one way we practice that is to recognize our dependence upon each other to

carry out the mission of the church. Let's not stress one at the exclusion of the other.

Resolutions and regulations will keep our AFLC together. Our loosely-knit organization will endure and grow only as it remains a spiritual movement where congregations willingly and freely work together for the good of all.

Read and study our Fundamental Principles. They will shed light on how we should work together.

Most of our resolutions deal with priorities. An occasional resolution is simply not practical or wise, but the majority are not issues of right or wrong, black or white, but choices where ideas, opinions, and yes, even convictions, come into play. We need to express and articulate our feelings and convictions so the best solution is found. This means we can and should be passionate and vigorous in our attempt to persuade others to see our point. Let's make sure we deal with issues, not people; principles, not personalities. If we have a spirited discussion with someone, let's shake hands or have lunch together afterwards.

We have a history of free and open discussion, and I believe this helps make us a stronger church. Yes, we have seen our dissent turn confrontational or adversarial at times. These brief moments have not been good for either the church or the Kingdom.

Come to the conference with your questions and concerns. Try to have them answered by the board or committee involved. If you are not satisfied, bring them to the floor at the proper time, and plead your position with conviction and passion. This will help change a bad policy or make a good policy better.

Come also with gratitude and thanks. Our officers, boards and committees need to be encouraged. It also makes them more receptive for that occasional complaint we may have.

Remember, it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from. If you are a member of an AFLC congregation, it is your privilege and responsibility to speak at our conference. We have interesting discussions, and give and take is often part of the final decision. Let's discuss these matters together with love and respect for each other.

See you in Valley City.

— Robert Knutson
McVille, North Dakota

"It is
important
that decisions
truly reflect
our entire
AFLC."

c. Romans 8:1-2 _____

When I realize and accept that Jesus paid for my sins on calvary, His blood is my covering. **He is once and for all the perfect sin sacrifice.** It is **nothing** I can do myself. It has all been done for me.

9. What blessings do we receive because He now lives for us?

a. I Peter 1:3-4 _____

b. Hebrews 1:3 _____

c. I John 2:1-2 _____

* * * * *

“Oh thank You, God, for such love that would send Your Son not only to cover our sins with His blood, but to be resurrected so we have a living Savior. Thank You for the work He has done and is now doing for us.”

* * * * *

Making it Personal

Have you accepted the fact that you were a sinner when you were born? You can only be forgiven when you come under the blood of Christ. He is that perfect, unblemished Lamb, sacrificed as the sin offering in our place. If you haven't received Him as your personal Savior, put your trust in Him today.

SIN OFFERING

As we study the offerings, we find sin and trespass offerings mixed together in many ways. Both were required offerings for sin. These were not the sweet aroma of love and devotion to God as the grain, peace, and burnt offerings were. Each of us too must realize our need for a sin offering.

1. What is SIN? “Sin is a thought or behavior which is contrary to the glory or character of God: to commit an offense against God’s laws.” (Guidepost Family Topical Concordance)

a. Proverbs 24:9 _____

b. I John 3:4 _____

c. I John 5:17a _____

d. James 4:17 _____

What do you think about when you read these verses?

2. a. Who is guilty?

Leviticus 4:3 _____

Leviticus 4:13 _____

Leviticus 4:22 _____

Leviticus 4:27 _____

b. Does this include all groups of people? Romans 3:23

c. What was sacrificed?

Leviticus 4:3 _____

Leviticus 4:14 _____

Leviticus 4:23 _____

Leviticus 4:28, 32 _____

Leviticus 5:7 _____

Leviticus 5:11-12 _____

God provided for even the very poor to be able to bring a sacrifice. No one was excluded.

3. How were the sins committed? Leviticus 4:2 _____

4. How do we commit sins unintentionally? Give some examples.

5. a. What was involved in the sin offering?

Leviticus 4:28 _____

Leviticus 4:29 _____

Leviticus 4:30 _____

Leviticus 4:31 _____

God, in His love and mercy toward mankind, provided a way for their sins to be covered by the blood of the animals. When an individual came in repentance, acknowledging they belonged in the place of the sacrificed animal, they were forgiven (Leviticus 4:20, etc.) BUT, this had to be continually repeated.

b. Read Hebrews 10:1-14. To what did these sacrifices actually point?

TODAY

6. a. How did I become a sinner? Discuss.

b. How does God's Word explain it?

Genesis 2:17 _____

Genesis 3:19 _____

Romans 5:12 _____

Psalms 51:5 _____

Ecclesiastes 7:20 _____

1 John 1:8 _____

We are sinners by nature and by choice.

7. How is it possible for our sins to be forgiven?

a. John 3:16-17 _____

b. Acts 3:19 _____

WMF National Convention

Valley City State College
Valley City, North Dakota
June 15-16, 1994

What? You've never been to a national convention? Has it been many years since you last attended? Perhaps you're one of the many who come regularly.

In whatever category you find yourself, there is something for everyone at this year's National Convention of the Women's Missionary Federation. Decide today to make plans to be there.

"*Life with a Purpose*" is the theme of the convention with the impetus coming from Philippians 2:13, "For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose." Have you ever felt as though you're being tossed about and scattered in so many directions? Ever wondered "Just what is my purpose in life?" You're not alone, it's one of life's basic questions. Three women will grapple with this question at the convention. They are Mrs. Don (Mavis) Richman from Bloomington, Minnesota; Mrs. Dennis (Judy) Torkelson from Fergus Falls, Minnesota; and Mrs. Roger (Carol) Hoikkaia from Apple Valley, Minnesota.

In addition, we will hear from some of our past, present and future missionaries. They will help us gain a Christian perspective of the world and give us insights into what is happening beyond our borders. To give us insights within our borders, our U.S. Army Chaplain Maj. Timothy Skramstad will speak at the Mission Festival Service.

The other integral parts of the convention include prayer, music, singing, praising, sharing, business, food and fellowship. Wrap the various components together and you will see that this is a convention you won't want to miss!

Convention Schedule

Registration:

9 a.m. at Valley City State College, Valley City, North Dakota. A donation of \$2 at the time of registration is suggested.

Meals:

Pre-register by May 22 to Grace Free Lutheran Church, P.O. Box 37, Valley City, ND 58072. Pay for your meals when you arrive at the registration table. Luncheon on Wednesday at 12:30 p.m. is \$5 which includes turkey-stuffed croissant, chips, salad, dessert, coffee. The 8 a.m. women's breakfast will cost \$4.50 and will include scrambled eggs, hash browns, etc.

Offerings:

Each meeting you will be given an opportunity to further God's work through your gifts. Wednesday morning offerings will go to Home Missions, afternoon to General Fund, and the Thursday evening Mission Festival offerings will go to My Missionary For A Day.

Child Care:

Babysitting will be available for children up to four years of age. Vacation Bible School will be for children five years old through sixth grade. There will be a nominal fee for each.

— Cheryl Skordahl
National Secretary

Women's Missionary Federation



Menomonie, Wisconsin — Good Shepherd Free Lutheran Church installed Pastor Paul Pillman as their first pastor on February 27. AFLC President Robert Lee preached the message of "The Perfect Pastor" from 1 Peter 5:1-4. Dr. Steven Lombardo officiated in the baptism of the Pillman's infant son, Matthew, during the service. The Steve Papillon family of Emmaus Lutheran Church, Bloomington, provided special music. Pray for this young congregation as they step out in faith and obedience. Pictured are: Wayne Tjelta, Allen Erdman, Dr. Lombardo, Pastor Pillman, Rev. Robert Lee and Dr. Sherman Lee.

DeKalb, Illinois — Grace Lutheran Church Sunday School participated in their own version of the Olympics this past winter. Classes were divided into three groups and competed against each other by scoring points for attendance, Bibles, visitors, books of the Bible read, memory verses and an Olympic game. During the six weeks, over 500 Bible books were read and 732 verses were memorized by the 71 children and adults who participated.

Thief River Falls, Minnesota — Our Saviour's Lutheran has officially begun fund raising efforts along with preliminary design work on their proposed new building to be located on six acres of land that they have already purchased.

PEOPLE and PLACES

Rev. Brian Pearson, Arlington, South Dakota, has resigned as pastor of Calvary Free Lutheran Church in order to accept a call from St. Olaf Lutheran, Montgomery, Illinois. Pastor Pearson has served Calvary since 1988. He expects to begin his new ministry in July 1994.

Rev. David Molstre, Lancaster, California, has resigned from Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in Palmdale, and has accepted the call to serve First Lutheran Church, Camarillo, California. Pastor Molstre has served the Home Mission congregation since 1989 and will begin his new ministry in July 1994.

Rev. Walter Johnson, Camarillo, California has resigned effective June 1994 as pastor of First Lutheran Church where he has served since 1991. The Johnsons plan to return to their home in Shakopee, Minnesota, where he hopes to enjoy semi-retirement while being available for pulpit supply.

Rev. Raymond Klug, Fairbury, Nebraska, has resigned as pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, Fairbury and Abiding Word Church in Deshler, where he has served since 1987. Pastor Klug plans to begin his retirement this summer and move to Blackduck, Minnesota.

Randall Scott Strand

Randall Scott Strand, 23, Roseville, Minnesota, died March 32, 1994. Randy is the son of Eric and Phyllis Strand, charter members of Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church, Lakeville, Minnesota.



Rev. David Skordahl wrote the following in the April *Parish News and Views*, of Dalton, Minnesota, regarding the sudden death of his nephew.

"Let me tell you a bit about Randy. He was a young man who had some great dreams for his life. After high school, he went on to college. He enjoyed his alcohol as well as a game called 'Dungeons and Dragon.' This is a game the devil uses to gain control of the minds of its players. Randy was hooked. His grades suffered and He dropped out of college. His parents had a deep concern for his spiritual welfare as Randy was not a Christian. They asked us to pray for him. Then, one night at a Lenten service at his church, as Randy heard the preaching of the Word, the Holy Spirit convicted him of his sin and his need to come to Jesus. Randy committed

his life to Jesus that night in the quietness of the church pew. The power of God's Word had prevailed again! The angels in heaven were rejoicing. Randy went on to the AFLC Bible School, 1992, and now was a student at Northwestern College in Roseville. He had so much going for him. He enjoyed his newfound joy in Jesus so much. I don't know why God allowed Randy to die; I have to leave that in God's hands.

"I have emotions of grief and joy. I have joy because the angels in heaven are again rejoicing as one more of Jesus' saints has arrived home. We are all just pilgrims passing through a short journey here on earth. Then we will arrive to our eternal home. I have joy that Randy didn't die four years earlier as then he would be spending eternity in hell.

"I have grief because Randy's family will have to continue life here on earth without him. I don't know what words to share with his family except to affirm with them that which they already know; because Jesus lives, Randy too will live again! I await for that day when I will see him again as 'the dead in Christ shall rise again.'

"How about you, my friend, are you ready to die? This is the most important decision you will ever make."

STEER Inc. Now in Canada

Revenue Canada recently recognized STEER Inc. and has given it a federal identification number. Canadian ranchers and farmers may now participate in supporting AFLC missions through STEER by contacting Mr. Tom Leshar, Box 121, Clive, Alberta T0C 0Y0. Phone (403) 782-2565.



Bemidji, Minnesota — Pictured are the new members who joined Bethany Free Lutheran Church on February 20. During the same service, six adults were confirmed. One week earlier, three adults were baptized. Alvin Sather is the pastor.

A Special Place

A tradition in our AFLC which I appreciate is that of moving the site of our annual conference around to various parts of our church body. This gives some the opportunity to take part in a conference who are not normally able to. It also provides others the chance to visit areas and people in our Association that may be unfamiliar to them.

This year our conference will once again be held in Valley City, North Dakota, the host of the 1964, 1970 and 1980 conferences. Valley City holds a special place in the history of our AFLC. When the Association began in 1962, the two Lutheran Free Churches in the community were pastored by the late Rev. Fritjof Monseth (father of the present dean of the Free Lutheran Seminary, Dr. Francis Monseth). A great deal of conflict erupted over the issue of joining the AFLC or the newly-formed American Lutheran Church. The one church, Zion Lutheran, and a sizable portion of the other church, First Lutheran, followed the leadership of Rev. Monseth and became some of the early members of the AFLC. The one group had lost their church building but not their commitment to principles they held dear. A new church was formed, Grace Lutheran. The influence of Grace and Zion congregations has been felt in many ways throughout our AFLC.

Valley City holds a special place for me personally. In the spring of 1986 I was informed by Dr. Monseth (who seemed to do so with a smile that said, "Of all interns, you are most blessed") that I would be serving my internship in his home town. I traveled to the North Dakota community in June of that year and began a very enjoyable portion of my life.

When I began my internship, I was in some ways a frustrated Christian. It was no one's fault but my own. I was concentrating on being the perfect seminarian and trying to prepare to be the perfect pastor and I was tired and discouraged. I was a little worried as well. My mind was filled with thoughts of all the things I believed I needed to do and be in order to measure up to the calling God had given me. How could I remember it all? How could I do it all? I knew myself. There must have been a mistake. Why had God called me to be a pastor?

Then I went to Valley City. I became part of two loving, encouraging and supportive congregations. I had the privilege of being supervised by two pastors who cared about me and wanted to teach me and help me grow. Through it all, God reminded me of His ability to equip me. I do not have all that

is necessary for being a perfect pastor but that is okay. God can still use me. He made me the way I am for a reason. He loves me and my uniqueness. I can trust in Him and have confidence that, with His help, I can serve effectively in the position to which He has called me.

As I reflect on my internship experience, it reminds me of the value of the congregations. Time in school is important and necessary. Our first fundamental principle, however, says that "the congregation is the right form of the Kingdom of God on earth." God works in lives in unique and important ways through the congregation. When I went on internship I needed to be involved in the life of a congregation in a more intensive way than just the weekend preaching that I had been doing. Possibly our departments should consider whether or not our faculty and directors have those needs as well. More sabbaticals or some type of "job-swapping" could have some value for the departments and the individuals involved as well. My own experience is that God used the time with the congregations to help me get things in a more proper focus. For that I will forever be grateful.

Let's Have None of That

In the fall 1993 issue of *Leadership* magazine, Jim Cymbala, pastor of Brooklyn Tabernacle, states, "Whenever we receive new members into the church, my final charge to them is 'Never slander or gossip about another member.' ... We can't be going to the prayer meeting and calling on God, 'Lord, come in power!' and then during the week be grieving the Holy Spirit by gossip and phone calls. Of all the things that kill the Spirit's power in churches, it's talking."

We are not to conduct our affairs in the same manner as the world. Church business meetings and conferences are no place for talking behind people's backs and engaging in political maneuvering. "Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:25, 29, 32). May the way God treats us in Christ radically transform the way we treat one another.

Poll: Most Americans have no idea what commonly used church terms mean

GLENDALE, Calif. (EP) —

The church has a message for America. But most Americans can't understand what the church is saying, according to a study released February 21 by the Barna Research Group. The study found that the meaning of phrases like "the Great Commission," "John 3:16," "evangelical" and "the gospel" are unknown to the majority of Americans.

The nationwide survey of adults asked for the definitions of these four key terms which are commonly used by Christian churches and ministers.

"The Great Commission" refers to Christ's command found in Matthew 28:19 that those who believe that He is the savior of humankind are responsible to go out into the world and "make disciples of all the nations," baptizing them and teaching them about the Christian faith. Only nine percent of the adult population were able to accurately describe the Great Commission in such a manner. Five percent offered incorrect descriptions. The vast majority of adults were not even willing to hazard a guess: 86% admitted they did not know the meaning of the phrase. Surprisingly, even three out of four born again Christians said they did not know the meaning of this term.

Perhaps the most astonishing result of all was the level of ignorance related to the term "the gospel." The literal meaning is "the good news," that is, the good news that people's sins are forgiven by God through their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their savior and His atonement for their sins via His death and resurrection. Good news or not, most people are unaware of the meaning of this term, although many offered errant guesses.

Overall, less than two out of

every five adults (37%) correctly described the meaning of "the gospel." This includes a significant number who listed the first four books of the New Testament as "the gospel," rather than offering a definition of the term itself. The most prominent answer, offered by one-third of the sample, who said that "gospel" is synonymous with the Bible (33%). One-third (31%) said they did not know what the meaning of this word and 16% of the born again Christians did not offer an explanation of the term "the gospel."

George Barna, president of the research company that conducted the study, expressed his surprise at people's lack of knowledge regarding these terms. "These are some of the most basic expressions used by the Christian Church as a simple means of communicating core beliefs and perspectives about the Christian faith. The fact that most regular and even most born again Christians had no clue what these foundational expressions mean says a lot about the depth of insight that people have into their faith. These figures will undoubtedly challenge many of the assumptions that the leaders of the Christian Church may possess regarding people's knowledge of their faith system, and will defi-

nitely raise questions regarding the capacity of the Christian community to act upon such knowledge."

Barna, whose company has worked with many churches and parachurch ministries, as well as numerous for-profit media organizations, advertising agencies and financial institutions, indicated that the survey data should lead Christian leaders to reconsider the ways in which churches and Christians communicate their faith to others. "Terms such as 'the gospel' and 'the Great Commission' clearly do not convey the intended meaning to the masses. Leaders who rely upon a short-hand language which is comprehensible to a relative handful of insiders are severely limiting their ability to instruct, influence and motivate people to respond to the teachings and goals of the Christian faith," he said. "The fact that so few of the insiders understand the meaning of these terms also suggests that the Christian Church in this country would be wise to invest in training people about the basic principles and concepts of the Christian faith. From a spiritual perspective, it appears that many church leaders are encouraging Christians to run before they have learned how to crawl."