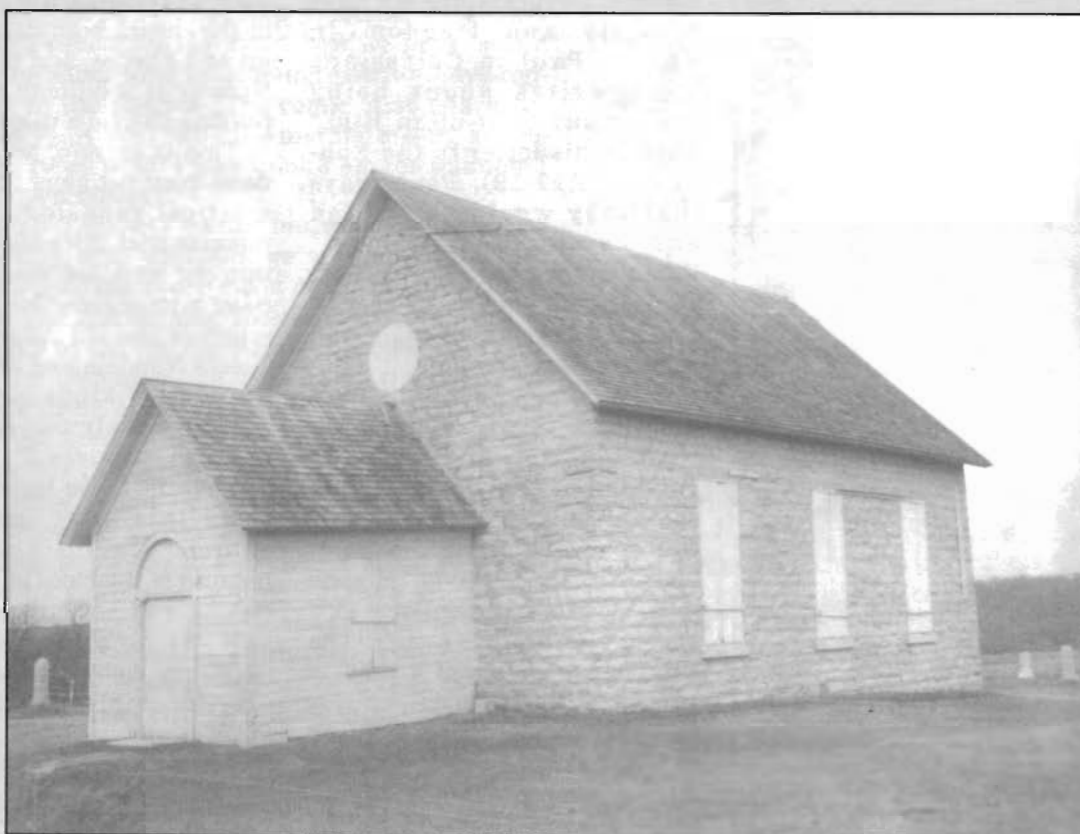


*Faith  
of our  
fathers,*



THE LUTHERAN  
AMBASSADOR

October 18, 1994



*living still!*

# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

October 18, 1994 • Vol. 32, No. 19

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The "Old Stone Church"  
of Hauge Lutheran  
Kenyon, Minnesota

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## Roots and wings

**W**hen our youngest daughter, Rebekah Miriam, was in her mid-twenties, she gave us a poster which read something like this: "You have given me roots and you have given me wings." The picture on this poster was of a beautiful bird in flight. We appreciated this expression of her gratefulness even though we kidded about using her wings. She had "flown the coop." We were in Illinois; she was in California!

Roots and wings, what a blessed combination! We have security and freedom in Christ. Paul in Colossians 2:6,7 writes about being "rooted and built up in Him." Then in his letter to the Ephesians (3:17-19), Paul prays that they would be "rooted and established in love." When we are rooted in Christ Jesus and His love, we can soar on wings as an eagle and rejoice in His freedom.

We who are Christians have been made free from sin, guilt, condemnation and from the bondage of the law by being rooted in Jesus. He is our source of life. He is the "Root and Offspring of David." Yes, he is true Man and also very God and in Him we are secure! The Christian does not find his security in his national, cultural, ancestral, religious, or denominational roots; as good as they may be from a human point of view. Rather, like the Apostle Paul, he counts all such "roots" as garbage that we may win Christ and be found in Him; rooted in Christ!

In preparing this article for the *Ambassador*, I have been thinking about the roots of the AFLC. The history of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations goes back only 32 years to October of 1962 and then only another 65 years to the organization of the Lutheran Free Church in 1897. This is not a long period of time; less than 100 years. But organizational roots are one thing, spiritual roots quite another. The spiritual roots are deeper and longer. They go back to spiritual life movements in the church both here in America and Europe, and especially in Norway. It is difficult to trace all the fine roots of a denomination.

This is certain: we as Christians must not glory in our ecclesiastical genealogy. The fact remains that if we dig too deeply into our past, we will likely discover a lot of defective genes. Too much of the old Adam and the violent Vandals and the raiding, brawling Vikings got into the church. Surely our roots must not be in ourselves.

Therefore, we must find our roots in Christ, not in the church. We do not despair because of the blood of Christ our Savior and the miracle of the new birth. We can trace our genealogy right back to God! We are His children. What roots! What wings!

— by Odell Kittelson

I hate to admit it, but an eagerness to study church history is not burning brightly in the hearts of most North American Christians. In fact many believers mistakenly regard church history in all of its forms as both dull and impractical and merely something for academics to pursue who have nothing better to do.

The truth is an understanding of our Christian heritage is indispensable. We live in a culture which craves novelty and has little patience with a study of the past. We have observed how the loss of a true historical perspective has produced an unbiblical shift in politics, education and morals. Unfortunately, that same dangerous and debilitating historical amnesia has found its way into the church, and unless we take preventative measures, that disease will increasingly take its toll on the body of Christ.

As Lutheran Christians we must, of course, speak to our day with a twentieth-century accent, but in our laudable efforts to be contemporary, we have increasingly tended to neglect the "language" of the past. No where is this becoming more true than in the area of music.

For example, mention the name of the great Lutheran hymn writer Hans Adolph Brorson to the average Lutheran (to say nothing of other Christians) and one will most likely receive a blank look. "I've heard of Steve Green, Michael W. Smith and Amy Grant," someone will say, "but Hans Brorson? Never heard of him! Who is he anyway?"

To put it quite simply, Hans Brorson is one of the greatest Danish hymn writers of all time. (Our new *Ambassador Hymnal* includes seven of his best compositions — 93, 117, 336, 436, 603, 616, 624.) He has hundreds of hymns to his credit, and on this the 300th anniversary of Brorson's birth, it is appropriate to remind ourselves of his contributions to our pietistic Lutheran heritage.

Hans Adolph Brorson was born on June 20, 1694 at Randerup in southern Denmark. His grandfather, his father (who died when Hans was ten years old), and his stepfather were all Lutheran pastors. No one was surprised when Hans entered the University of Copenhagen in 1712 and took up the study of theology. He enthusiastically began his work, but his overexertion in his studies harmed his health and forced him to leave the University in 1715.

# Ever hear of Hans BRORSON?

## Meet one of history's greatest hymn writers

Over the next several years his health returned as he had the opportunity to spend time with his pastor-brother, Nicolai, assist his stepfather in the Randerup parish, and serve as a tutor in the home of his uncle Clausen.

In 1721 Brorson's stepfather died and 27-year-old Hans was offered the Randerup parish. Sensing God's leading he accepted the call and returned to Copenhagen to take his final exams. He passed his exams and was ordained in 1722.

In 1729 he was transferred to the Tonder parish in southern Denmark, and it was there that he began to write and translate hymns. Since the church he served was made up of both Germans and Danes, the congregation had two pastors; one to preach in German and the other in Danish.

However, all the hymns were sung in German. Brorson recognized that the Danes in the congregation needed hymns in their own language, and so he set himself to the task of providing them with suitable material.

In 1732 Brorson published ten Christmas hymns under the unwieldy title: *Some Christmas Hymns, Composed to the Honor of God, the Edification of Christian Souls and, in Particular, of my*

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... but in our laudable efforts to be contemporary, we have increasingly tended to neglect the 'language' of the past. Nowhere is this becoming more true than in the area of music."

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# Remembering a new beginning

**A member of the first class of the Free Lutheran Seminary looks back thirty years ago.**

It was September 1964 and the infant church body had scheduled the opening of the Free Lutheran Seminary. God had led the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations to begin a school where men could be trained for the ministry. The AFLC had purchased some beautiful property overlooking Medicine Lake and it was there in the chapel building that our first class was held.

God called a group of nine men to begin preparation for the ministry. We were not all alike but came from a variety of life situations. Several of us were married with families. We ranged in age from almost 40 to the 20s. Until that day, we had pursued different courses, occupations and worshiped in different churches.

Some of us who were older had seen a lot of the world and had been rescued from a life in the world. I believe it was only two who went to college with plans to prepare for the ministry.

All these differences were blurred by the one thing we had in common: each had been convinced of God's call into the ministry and that the opening of this school was the open door the Lord had provided. We heard the Savior call, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." So we left everything to follow Him.

Were we prepared for this big step, this dramatic change in our life and plans? In one sense we were. We had all come to a saving knowledge of Christ as our Savior and Lord; we had a burden for souls and a

## BRORSON

*Beloved Congregation during the Approaching Joyful Christmastide, Humbly and Hastily Written by Hans Adolph Brorson.* One of those ten hymns which has remained in use throughout the Lutheran church is the exquisite, "Thy little ones, dear Lord, are we" — *Ambassador Hymnal*, 336. Building upon this modest beginning, Brorson went on to produce collections of hymns for each season of the church year. In 1739 he published these collections of 250 songs in one volume which he entitled *The Beautiful Treasure of Faith*.

In 1741 Brorson was appointed bishop of Ribe where he had been district superintendent for four years. He remained in that post until his death on June 3, 1764. During his last few years Bishop Brorson suffered from poor health, but by God's grace he managed to write another 70 hymns. After his death his son published them in 1765 under the title *Swansong*. One of those 70, which has long remained a favorite in Scandinavia and elsewhere, is his hymn based on Revelation 7:13-17 which is entitled, "Behold the Host Arrayed in White" — *Ambassador Hymnal*, 624.

Throughout his life Brorson was a strong Lutheran pietist, and as J.C. Aaberg has pointed out, Brorson's hymns display a "warm and fervid style" similar

to that of Charles Wesley (*Hymns and Hymnwriters of Denmark*, p. 66). Indeed, Brorson's hymns are often deeply personal and passionate in character, and the Bishop has rightfully been called "the sweet singer of Pietism."

Hans Brorson was more than an excellent hymn writer. He was also a true shepherd of souls and a man deeply interested in revival. His interest was shared by his two brothers, who were also ardent pietists and pastored churches near Hans' parish. Although strongly and bitterly opposed by many of the so-called orthodox Lutheran pastors, the three brothers preached a message of personal salvation and regularly called church members to true repentance and living faith. God sent such a sweeping revival that the effects of it were still evident in the area some 200 years later. The following stanza from one of Brorson's hundreds of hymns well expresses his spirit and emphasis.

Hallelujah! I have found my Jesus;  
The dawn of grace is very clearly  
Sprung up within my heart.  
The way to heaven's joy I now can see.  
Now I can, I shall, I will  
Go forward faithfully.

— by Dr. Craig Jennings  
AFLC Schools  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

call from God. That was all the 12 had whom Jesus called to be apostles.

Some of us may have had educational shortcomings but we knew why we were there. God had laid a burden on us that we could not cast away without denying Him. We knew we had "a charge to keep, a God to glorify."

Nine "apostles" reported for duty: Reuben Evenson, Richard Gunderson, James Jacobson, Edwin Kjos, Howard Kjos, David Molstre, Francis Monseth, Raymond (Bud) Peterson, and Robert Rieth. For this writer, at least, it was not a bold, confident act. I felt woefully unqualified. It seemed a radical thing for me to do. For us in the first class, it was somewhat unsettling. Everything was new: the church body, seminary, faculty and now the idea that we were there preparing to become pastors. We sat there in awe and wonder. Is this real? Am I foolish in coming here? Then we remembered and were encouraged by the fact that it was He who had called us.

I recall how impressed we were with our instructors; their piety, zeal for God's truth and knowledge. We were especially awed by the great knowledge of Professor Uuras Sarnivaara, who had not just one, but two Ph.D's! We had great respect for this man of God.

Every morning we began the day with devotions. We read Scriptures, sang a hymn and participated in free prayer as we knelt by our chairs. This is one of the most blessed memories I have of seminary days. We had a favorite song which we often chose. (I was once chided for always

## AFLTS Statistics 1964-94

### Graduates of AFLTS

Total number of graduates .....	143
Graduates serving in the AFLC .....	100
Pastors serving elsewhere .....	7
LC-MS .....	4
ELCA .....	2
Evangelical Free Church .....	1

### Serving in various ministries

Missionaries .....	8
Military Chaplain .....	3
Hospital Chaplain .....	1
Senior Citizens Chaplain .....	1
Christian Media Ministry .....	3
Christian University Professor .....	1
Youth Ministries .....	2

### Graduates who attended

a Lutheran Bible School .....	64
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Those who attended AFLBS .....	45
--------------------------------	----

Graduates from foreign countries .....	4
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(Mexico, Brazil, Canada, Switzerland)

### Graduates who were from AFLC

congregations at time of application	90
--------------------------------------	----

Retired .....	8
---------------	---

Deceased .....	3
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selecting it.) It is "I Look Not Back" (*Ambassador Hymnal* p. 400). We all felt this fit us so perfectly. We sang it with tears because we felt from the heart, "That's my testimony." Even now as I write this, it is not easy as words become blurred when tears fill the eyes.

I pray that all who have and will follow us feel the same way. May the Free Lutheran Seminary continue to shine forth the Light of His Word until Jesus returns!

— by Rev. Howard Kjos  
Roslyn, South Dakota



The nine students at AFLTS in 1964.



# Looking back and looking ahead

## 30 years of AFLC mission work in Brazil

**T**hirty years ago missionary John and Ruby Abel and family entered Brazil as the AFLC's first missionary family sent out by the two-year-old church body. In 1965 missionary Alvin and Frances Grothe and family joined the Abels. In 1966 the Brazilian National Church was formed. The 30th anniversary of mission work in Brazil will be celebrated in January 1996.

The first generation of missions in this vast country in South America required overcoming natural and physical obstacles such as steering jeeps over muddy trails, fording rivers with no bridges, preaching in communities without electricity and never knowing when demon-possessed individuals would openly blaspheme our risen Lord and Savior. I still am overwhelmed as I think of the way in which our Lord took control of these situations and brought victory in our weaknesses against such ominous forces.

The past 30 years were good years. They were often difficult



Then — the new Bible School in Campo Mourao, Parana.



Now — the Campo Mourao campus, photo taken in 1989.

and many tears have been shed. There was, and still is, much to learn as the AFLC spreads its roots more and more in the nation. The Bible school and seminary at Campo Mourão has a

beautiful campus with a fine faculty and growing student body. We now have a yearly average of over one student per church in Brazil.

The Brazil National Church is spreading into new cities with populations of over 100,000. With the shortage of American missionaries, the Brazilian pastors are starting home mission congregations and even are looking to the "fields white unto harvest" in other countries. The Central Church in Campo Mourão had its first missionary conference this last year.

During these 30 years the AFLC in Brazil has reached out to the abandoned children in the states of Paraná and Espírito Santo. God has blessed our send-



**"It was a pioneer mission work. We didn't have modern conveniences. But we clearly sensed God's calling. He closed doors but He always opened another at just the right time. When you make a commitment to God and do His will, He will bless."**

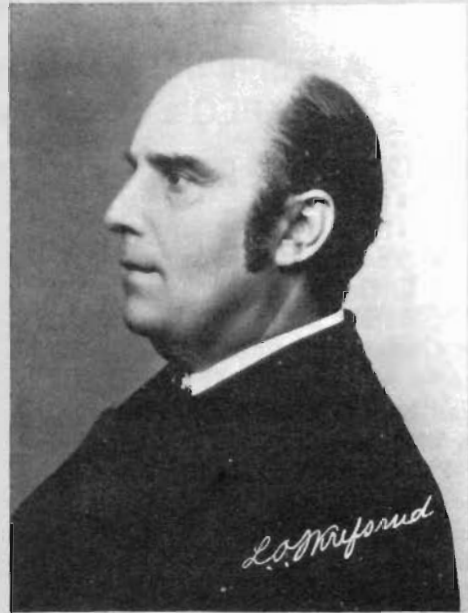
— Rev. George Knapp, missionary, 1968-1990

Lars O. Skrefsrud, a Norwegian missionary to the Santals in India, visited Norwegian-American congregations during June 1894 through September 1895.

According to N. N. Ronning, no one who visited the Norwegians in America has ever made as profound and permanent impression as did Skrefsrud. An editorial in *Santalmissonaeren* summarized his visit to America this way: "He came as a stranger to a church torn with strife and dissensions, but he soon became a friend of all groups. He has not only aroused great interest in the Santal Mission, but has been instrumental in reviving the Christians and in spreading a holy fire throughout many congregations."

After a few months in America, Skrefsrud wrote:

"What our hearers need is not more enlightenment for the head as to what the truth is, but that their consciences should be pierced with the accusation, 'Thou art the man.' You will be eternally lost if you do not repent and seek the mercy of God through Jesus Christ, that you may receive a new heart which hates sin even in its most subtle forms and strives after holiness without which you shall not see God. When that takes place we need not doubt that interest in missions will be aroused and grow."



*Dodge*



—1819—  
RIVERSIDE AVE.  
MINNEAPOLIS



Rev. John Abel, photo taken in 1969.



Rev. Connely and Carolyn Dyrud and daughters Shannon and Christina, photo taken in the early 1970s.



Waiting for a ferry at the Monday River.

ing congregations in the U.S.A. and Canada as they have come to help in this endeavor.

We thank God for the years of faithful support in prayer, love and finances. We thank Him for those who have answered the call of the Lord and said: "Here am I, send me." Missionaries John and Ruby Abel and George and Helen

Knapp are now retired. God has brought others to serve and we praise Him for all who have come — full- or part-time missionaries, FLY teams, support workers, and many others. May the Lord bless you in our sending church body in a special way and together may we look to Jesus for the next 30 years, or until He returns.

The Brazil National Church extends an invitation to the AFLC in the U.S.A. and Canada to attend the 25th anniversary of the WMF in Brazil, January 13-15, 1996, and the 30th anniversary of the Brazil National Church, January 19-21, 1996.

— by Rev. Connely Dyrud  
Campo Mourao, Brazil

# A calling from God

## A profile of Rev. Hans Tollefson, the AFLC's oldest living pastor

It was 1939, Hans Tollefson had just graduated from Augsburg Seminary and was hoping to soon be ordained into the ministry of the Lutheran Free Church (LFC). Before ordination a call from a congregation would need to be accepted. The graduating seminarian had a couple of possibilities. The president of the LFC, Rev. T.O. Burntvedt, told the soon-to-be Rev. Tollefson of a congregation in Bella Coola, British Columbia. No one could be found to go and serve in what was then a remote place. Hans agreed to go and thus began many years of serving congregations and following the calling of God.

Hans Tollefson was born in 1902 in L'Anse, Michigan. He graduated in 1926 from Augsburg College. After college he spent some time in the automobile industry working for Henry Ford. He also taught school for awhile but no job brought him real satisfaction. Contentment did not come until he gave in to the calling of God on his life and went into the pastoral ministry.

God's call led Rev. Tollefson and his wife, Ruth, from Bella Coola to Palermo, North Dakota in 1943. As was common in that day the monetary support the congregation provided was not great, but a food locker was rented and kept well supplied with meat. As Rev. Tollefson remembers, "you would not dare to consider negotiating your salary or asking for a raise. God had said He would take care of us, that we would have what we would need — and He did."

God also provided the physical stamina that was needed for keeping up with a busy schedule. While in the Palermo parish from 1943-50, Rev. Tollefson served four congregations and conducted



three meetings each Sunday. When he served the Hatton, North Dakota parish from 1964-70 he had three congregations, three services each Sunday, three Ladies' Aid meetings, three confirmation classes, two choirs, and attended all of them. The hours were long but the work went on because of the faithfulness of God.

Other congregations that Rev. Tollefson served in the LFC and the AFLC included Hampden, North Dakota, 1950-55; Astoria, Oregon, 1955-64; Eben Junction, Michigan, 1970-74; and interim work in Ferndale, Washington in 1974-75. Since 1975 Rev. Tollefson and his wife have lived in Astoria and have been active members of the AFLC congregation in that community. He continues to sing solos at church and is the oldest pastor on the AFLC clergy roster.

As changes have come to society during his 90 plus years of existence, so have changes come to the church. Rev. Tollefson remembers less music and longer messages being a part of the worship services in the past. "Of course having to rush between three congregations cut down on long-wind-

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1820    1830    1840    1850    1860

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General Synod 1820

Pennsylvania  
Ministerium  
1748

+ Norwegians  
left in 1870

Buffalo

Texa

Iowa

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Ohio Synod 1818

Norw

+ Norwegians

+ Norwegian Danish Aug

"Anti-Missourian B

Wisconsin Sy

Michi

Minn

R. Lee (revised 9/94)

ed preachers." Communication between the local congregation and the church body's headquarters was very minimal. Some of the changes have led to what he feels is "Ministry becoming more detailed. The church family expects more. The pastor is supposed to be superhuman, able to counsel in all kinds of problems and expected to be more profes-





## Man with nail in his brain calls it a miracle

**Grand Forks, N. Dak.** — "You can't just go in your medical books and look under 'Men with Nail in Head,'" explained neurosurgeon Stuart Rice.

Rice let Bill and Dawn McLead know that the situation was risky. Bill was about to undergo surgery at United Hospital in Grand Forks, North Dakota, to have a nail removed from his head. Basing his prognosis on cases of bullets lodged in people's brains, Rice told them that Bill, age 22, had a 20% chance of surviving the operation. If he survived, he had a ten percent chance of complete recovery.

"I'll be fine," Bill said.

A few hours earlier, at Woodland Containers in Roseau, Minnesota, Bill bent down to straighten a board just as a co-worker released the safety trigger on a nail gun to shoot another nail into a worktable they were building. Bill's head bumped the second safety on the gun nozzle, and it fired.

"At first we didn't think there was anything in there. There was no pain, it was so quick," says Bill. They thought the nail must have ricocheted off his head. (There are no nerve endings in the brain mass, notes Bill.)

To be on the safe side, paramedics were called and Bill was taken to the Roseau hospital. "The paramedics didn't think that it was in there. The nurses and doctors didn't think it was in there," he notes.

The examining doctor Ron Bremer ordered a CAT scan as a precaution. Bill was waiting for the test when his wife, Dawn, arrived.

"They had called me at True Value, where I work," Dawn recalls. "I ran every stop sign between the store and the hospital. I was thinking, 'He's dead, and they didn't tell me.'"

When she rushed into the hospital room where her husband was lying, he had just finished telling a nurse to be sure to tell Dawn he

was all right. She was suddenly in tears. "I was just so thankful that he was OK," she says. "He grabbed my hand and said, 'Look, I'm fine.'"

"I guess I was pretty calm through the whole thing," says Bill. "I just felt that if God was going to take me, He would have taken me."

The doctor's presence was comforting for Dawn as well. "Dr. Bremer is one of the elders at our church," says Dawn. The McLeads attend First Baptist Church in Roseau. "He's the nicest guy you'll ever meet. He told us the X-rays would take about 20 minutes. I thought I'd better make a couple phone calls."

"It was 3:45 p.m. when Dawn called," says Bill's mother, Marleana McLead. The precise details have remained solidly fixed in her memory because for a few moments, her world stood still. "My husband had just left for work; I'd just come in."

Dawn called back at 4 p.m. with the news. The nail had penetrated three inches into Bill's skull, entering just above the place where a baby has its soft spot. It was lodged between the two hemispheres, and very near a major artery. He would go by ambulance to a hospital in Grand Forks for surgery.

Marleana called her husband, Bill Sr., and they left from their home in Newton, Iowa, after notifying people from their church, Newton Community Heights Alliance Church.

Dawn rode with Bill in the ambulance. "He wanted to stop at the Dairy Queen!" she exclaims with a little laugh. "He said, 'Can't we get through the line faster with the sirens going?'"

A lot of people were praying as Bill went into surgery. "People in Minnesota and North Dakota were praying," says Bill, who also works as a newspaper carrier for

the *Grand Forks Herald*. "The general manager in charge of the routes in this area is a Christian. His wife put it on the prayer chain. That helped us get through it — all the prayers."

Bill came out of surgery at about 10:30 p.m. For Dawn, the worst part of the ordeal was yet to come. "From about 11 p.m., after my aunt and uncle left, I was sitting there alone. The doctor said it would be touch and go. I hadn't eaten, but during the night I was throwing up and was just beside myself. About 2 a.m. the hospital chaplain came walking in. He sat down and prayed with me. I needed that. It got me through the rest of the night."

Dawn says the incident "forced me to let go. I want to hold on to everything. I want things to be OK because I made them OK and there was nothing I could do."

Bill's operation lasted two-and-a-half hours. The nail had entered the brain between the two hemispheres, and was pressing against the artery wall. "If it had punctured that artery, I would have been dead instantly — or as soon as it was removed," says Bill.

Dawn remembers the doctor saying, after the surgery, that he had never seen anything press against an artery wall like that without puncturing it.

Miraculously the nails Bill had grabbed a number of days earlier for work on the project were the wrong size. They were a quarter-inch shorter than what he had intended to use.

"God was so good to us," Dawn says.

Bill's mother, Marleana, adds, "It's neat to see a miracle. This I consider an old-fashioned, read-in-the Bible miracle. God had his hand in it two weeks before, when Bill picked up the wrong nails."

"Everybody says, 'How lucky can you get?'" says Bill. "But luck had nothing to do with it. I believe in miracles."

(Used by permission of  
Evangelical Press Service.)

# DARE 2 LIVE



1995 AFLC  
National Free  
Lutheran Youth  
Convention  
Estes Park, Colorado

**July 17-22, 1995**

**Ages: 7th grade to 20 years old**

Cost: \$250.00 if registered before  
March 1, 1995

\$275.00 if registered after March 1  
Counselors: \$125

Registration closes July 1, 1995

**Send registration and \$50 to:**

Registrar  
Free Lutheran Youth  
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.  
Plymouth, MN 55441

**For information contact:**

Bob Halvorson at 612-545-5631  
on Thursdays at the AFLC Youth  
Resources office; Dennis Gray at  
218-782-2246; or James L. John-  
son at 218-435-1590.

## YOUTH

### A Bible study on Nehemiah

#### Nehemiah as a leader

In the days of the Old Testament, walls were built around cities. The purpose was *protection* from the enemy. We do not normally build walls around cities today. However, in the Old Testament days it was very wise to do so.

For at least 100 years the wall around Jerusalem had gone unattended because there was no leader to build and maintain the wall. *There was no leader* to give assignments and make certain the assignments were carried out!

The book of Nehemiah tells us what took place when the wall was restored and rebuilt. We can apply the work done on that wall to our youth work today.

Christian teens are not the church of tomorrow, they are the church of today. Christian teens are not the leaders for tomorrow, they are the leaders of the church today. We are all, young or old, developing leaders.

#### Nehemiah's method of leadership

1. Nehemiah, led by God, *evaluated* the situation. Nehemiah 2:11-17, He toured the outskirts of Jerusalem evaluating the condition of the wall. (v. 13)

He reports on the situation to the prospective leaders. (v. 17)

He gets them to commit to work. (v. 18)

2. Nehemiah *makes assignments* to various leaders. (3:1f)

3. Nehemiah *faces the opposition*. (chapter 4)

4. Nehemiah *devoted himself* to rebuilding the wall. (5:16)

5. Nehemiah was always a *man of prayer*. (6:9)

6. Nehemiah was always *directed by God's Word*. (8:8)

7. His reward was *joy*. (8:10)

8. The plan and assignments were presented to the people.

9. A binding *agreement* was made. (9:38)

They made the rebuilding of the wall very important. (Nehemiah 9:38). They bound themselves to the work of rebuilding. The ongoing work of maintaining the wall was an opportunity to serve the Lord. (10:28, 32).

If your church, parish, district or even national Free Lutheran Youth is to be instrumental in meeting the needs of young people, it will take someone like you to commit your life first to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the work of leadership. You have a place of service right now!

#### What do we learn from Nehemiah?

Leaders are to

- be people of prayer.
- be people of the Word.
- commit their lives to Christ and His work.
- evaluate the situation now and in the future.
- plan and then work out the plan.
- involve other leaders.
- understand God will accomplish His work.
- experience joy in service.
- be willing to start over again and keep on keeping on.
- guard what you have.

(Study written by Rev. Dennis Gray, AFLC Youth Resource Director. You may reproduce this study for your ministry with youth.)

## World Missions

### **Storm damages campus in Campo Mourão, Brazil**

On September 13, a severe storm swept through Campo Mourão, Brazil. The storm broke a drought which had been plaguing the region. An estimated \$6,000 of damage occurred on the AFLC's Bible school and seminary campus. The greatest damage was on the unfinished second floor of the new clinic building. On its completion it will provide additional classroom space. The roof was nearly blown away on the structure and windows were broken in many buildings.

Urgent repairs are underway. Funds to help repair this damage may be designated as such and sent to the World Missions office in Minneapolis.

### **AFLC President and Missions Director to go to India**

On October 22, President Robert Lee and Rev. Gene Enderlein, World Missions Director, expect to leave for two weeks of preaching and evangelism in India. They also plan to meet with the church leaders in India. This is the first trip by AFLC church leaders to India since the ending of the litigation in this country regarding the AFLC's relationship with the Indian congregations. Pastor Enderlein hopes to stay a third week in India for more meetings before returning home.

### **Missionary David Abel family returns to Vitória**

Missionary David and Janet Abel and family have just arrived safely in Vitória, Brazil. They are looking for affordable housing as they begin working to establish a new congregation in that region. The currency exchange rate for the dollar has never been so low and the missionaries continue to need wisdom in managing their resources with the shrinking dollar.

# Make a life-changing investment



Would you like to make a difference in the life of a child? In the city of Vitória, Brazil there are approximately 3,000 abandoned children living on the streets. Our AFLC congregation in the area now has two homes for children but they need your help. If your family or church group would like to sponsor a child you may do so by sending \$20 per month to the AFLC World Missions Department, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441. Include a note indicating it is for the "Vitória Children's Fund."

You will receive a picture of the child you are helping to support along with a brief biography about him/her. From time to time you'll receive a letter from your child and a brief update. The program, as initially approved by the World Missions Board, will seek to sponsor 25 children. To sign up as a sponsor or for more information, contact the World Missions office and the director, Rev. Eugene Enderlein at the address given or phone 612-545-5631.

# Street children sponsorship

# Missionary candidates prepare to leave for Brazil, Mexico and the Czech Republic



**Rev. David and Sarah Nelson** have raised approximately 85% of their needed financial support and are in the process of seeking to secure work visas for serving as missionaries in Brazil. As of this writing, they hope to leave for Brazil in November. This depends on the reasonable completion of the necessary paperwork. The Nelsons continue to serve on deputation in the meantime.



**Rev. Todd and Barb Schierkolk** have moved their scheduled time to leave for language school in Texas to May 1995. They also have nearly 85% of their support raised. They continue to work on deputation while serving Ebenezer Lutheran Church in Evergreen Park, Illinois. This adjustment in their schedule was agreeable to both the mission board and the Illinois congregation. The Schierkolks hope to be working in Mexico by the first part of 1996.



**Rev. Tim Hinrichs** is finalizing plans to minister with the Silesian Lutheran Church in the Czech Republic, beginning early next summer. The East European Missions Network (EEMN) is putting together the final details for sending Pastor Hinrichs to the vicinity of Ostrava, a city of about 330,000 in the north-eastern part of the country. He is currently on deputation and his schedule is as follows: In November he will be in Nebraska then on the West Coast. In January he will go to California before attending the Missionary Internship School in Colorado Springs, Colorado. By mid-February he will return to the Minneapolis area. He would appreciate the opportunity to share with all interested congregations and organizations. Pastor Hinrichs can be contacted at 1810 Cottage Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55116; phone 612-774-7240.

Has your congregation or organization signed up for a unit (\$50 a month) of support for a missionary?



## PEOPLE and PLACES

**Arlington, South Dakota** — Pastor Mark Olson was installed as the pastor of Calvary Lutheran on September 18, with Rev. Elden Nelson officiating. Pastor Olson's corrected home phone number is 605-983-9976.

**Rev. Merle Knutson**, Hawley, Minnesota, a retired AFLC pastor, is conducting worship services at Grong Lutheran Church, Rollag, Minnesota. The church recently voted to withdraw from the ELCA.

**Lake Park, Minnesota** — This past Labor Day weekend several families met at the AFLC Wilderness Camp near Lake Park, Minnesota for a refreshing weekend both physically and spiritually. A worship service was held on Sunday with Rev. John Strand preaching on John 15. People came from Fergus Falls, Remer, Hitterdal and Lake Park, Minnesota and Fargo, Bismarck, and Valley City, North Dakota.

**Chaplain Michael Crowell**, Ft. Hood, Texas, will complete his service as an Army Chaplain in November. Chaplain Crowell previously served as pastor of Christ Lutheran in Wichita Falls, Texas, before beginning full-time service in the military in 1991.

**Free organ for any AFLC congregation.** Baldwin Organ-sonic, approximately 20 years old, two levels of keys, floor pedals, good working condition. Move at your own expense. Call Calvary Free Lutheran, Eben Junction, Michigan 906-439-5574 for more information.

## Home Mission news

**Spokane, Washington** — Bethany Lutheran is being repainted and receiving other cosmetic improvements after the arrival of their new pastor, **Rev. Doug Wagley**. Pastor Wagley was ordained on July 31 at Solid Rock Lutheran in Osseo, Minnesota. He and his family moved to Spokane in August. Their new address is 7201 N. Hamilton, Spokane, WA 99208; phone 509-483-1279.

**San Antonio, Texas** — On September 18 the first worship service of a new congregation in the area was conducted by Rev. Michael Peterson of nearby Pleasanton. Twenty-two attended this first service held in a home. Future plans are to rent the chapel in the Methodist Mission Home. For more information regarding this new mission, call Pastor Peterson at 210-569-6760.

**Melbourne, Florida** — Rev. David Barnhart, joined by Rev. John Abel of Hitterdal, Minnesota, has begun survey work in this city on Florida's eastern seacoast. They expect to begin worship services shortly. For more information regarding this new mission work, call Pastor Barnhart at 407-253-9387.

**Park River, North Dakota** — Victory Free Lutheran burned their mortgage at a service on September 25. Home Missions Director Elden Nelson officiated. Victory began in 1984 as a Home Mission group. The church was built in 1988. Rev. James Rasmussen has served the congregation since 1988.

**Murrieta, California** — Shepherd's Church of the Valley has a new pastor. He is **Rev. Curt Emerson**, formerly of Sartell, Minnesota, where he served as pastor of Granite Free Lutheran in St. Cloud.



**Rev. Clyde Grier**, pastor of Faith Lutheran, El Campo, Texas, drives up to **Bellville, Texas**, to conduct Saturday evening worship services for a new mission group.



Home Missions Committee of the AFLC requests prayer on their behalf as they call a new director to replace Rev. Elden Nelson who has resigned after 17 years in the position.

## Hear the whole story

A man was suing his former employer. According to him the reason he was fired was his protest of what he said were some unsafe working conditions on the job site. He said his dismissal was unfair. He felt the fact he put poison ivy on his boss' toilet seat had nothing to do with his losing his job.

The worker was most certainly guilty of behavior deserving of dismissal. He wanted to be seen, however, as one who courageously stood up for what was right and was now a victim of persecution.

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness" (Matthew 5:10). This is meant as an encouragement and promise to those who are unfairly suffering persecution. It is not to be taken as a directive to go seek out martyrdom, yet, that is how people have often acted throughout church history. Many seem to have a strange desire to be the suffering victim. They want the focus to be on the actions of the others who they say have caused the problems, instead of letting the light shine on what they have done.

Many times in relationship problems we should spend less time thinking about how we have been a victim and more time considering how we have contributed to the trouble. The comic strip character Pogo said years ago, "We have met the enemy, and he is us." At times when I may think I am the solution, I may be the problem.

We should humbly admit that we may not be the victim every time we think we are. We should also recognize that not every claim of unjust persecution is valid. The one making the claim may be a major contributor to the trouble. All sides need to be heard. If only the employee had been heard it would have appeared to be a clear case of injustice. When we hear of the toilet seat incident we start to see that the story has further details. Let us not be too hasty to hold some people up as courageous martyrs and attack others as if they were enemies and persecutors. Some details may be unknown. Some guilt may need to be shared. The problem may not be the unjust attacking the just. It may not be a case of some who are upholding truth being persecuted by others who are in error. It may be a case of people more interested in attacking than building up brothers and sisters in Christ. It may be a case of people working hard at pointing out what they consider error, but exerting little effort at striving for the unity among God's children that is so clearly desired by Christ. It may be a case of people focusing too much on what others have done and should do, and not enough on what they should do and what God has done.

Let us follow the urging of the hymn writer to "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonder-

ful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace."

## A crazy thing to do

It must have seemed like a crazy thing to do. The church body was only two years old. Their size wasn't impressive and their resources were limited. One of the families they were planning to send to the mission field had seven children and the other had six. How could such a small group even consider such a thing as sending them to Brazil? But the families told of how God had called them to go and preach the gospel to all the world. The congregations confirmed the call was real. And so, 30 years ago at the 1964 AFLC Annual Conference in Valley City, North Dakota, the John Abel family and the Alvin Grothe family were commissioned and sent forth to the nation of Brazil as the first missionaries of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

Sending forth missionaries to the ends of the earth is most definitely a major part of our heritage in the AFLC. This year's anniversary of the sending of our first missionaries reminds us that from our beginning days we have been concerned about those who have lived beyond our borders. Our heritage is one of longing for all people to hear the gospel so that they might come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior. We have been willing to make sacrifices and take steps of faith in order to see that happen.

As we look back 30 years we may be tempted to say, "They should have built up a bigger base before sending out missionaries." The majority of our church body's founders did not say that. They knew that if God had called, God would provide. The people who had never heard about Jesus couldn't wait.

The temptation may still exist to think the base needs to be expanded before more missionaries can be sent out. We have to wonder — if the base isn't big enough now, when will it be? How many people will have to suffer and die without hearing of Jesus before that time comes?

Our heritage is not of looking to see what our budget can handle, not of doing mathematical formulas to determine if the base is large enough, but of asking — has God called these people to go? If the answer to that question is yes, then our heritage has been to send them, trusting that God will provide. And He has. We look back and see people for whom we give thanks, but most of all we see God, who always has been and always will be faithful to keep His promises and care for those who follow Him.

## World Watch

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### THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

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Second-Class

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**Burnsville, Minn.** — The Rev. Jacob Preus Jr., former president of the 2.6 million-member Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), died Aug. 13 after suffering heart problems. He was 74. Preus shaped the direction of the conservative LCMS during a theological battle in the 1970s by insisting that the church's seminary adhere to the traditional view of Scripture as inspired, inerrant, and infallible. He retired from the denomination 13 years ago, and devoted his life to translating from Latin and Greek the works of Martin Chemnitz, a contemporary of Martin Luther.

#### **Small Town Learns that the "M" in "MTV"**

##### **Stands for Mandatory**

**Sleepy Eye, Minn.** — Over 1,000 residents of a small Minnesota town are trying to clean up their cable television service, but their cable company is tuning out their efforts. The city council in Sleepy Eye voted in May to remove the cable music channel MTV because of its objectionable content, and to replace it with VH-1, another music channel. However, the cable company which services the town says it will not make the change.

The dispute began when a mother saw her two children acting strangely. When she asked them what they were doing, they replied that they were acting like "Beavis and Butthead," cartoon characters from a program on the cable music video station MTV. The mother asked her parish priest John Richter to watch the show and see what the community's youth were watching.

Richter tuned in to the program, and saw what he described as a lack of respect for authority and for others, a degradation of the person, and a degradation of women. "It was degrading to our moral values," he said.

Beavis and Butthead are two

characters who have encouraged playing with fire, have performed other dangerous acts that young viewers have imitated, and who openly defy authority. Other programs on MTV are also known for violence, vulgarity, and rebellion against authority.

The city council's advisory committee on cable television recommended that the council ask the cable company to make the change, and this summer the council voted to do so. But cable officials say replacing MTV with the less-offensive VH-1 is impossible. "We have a contractual obligation with MTV," said Rob Gordon, general manager of Midwest Cablevision, the cable company that services Sleepy Eye.

"The cable company explained to us that the city cannot dictate what cable channels they want to receive. That is considered censorship. But if we don't want it, why do we have to have it?" asks Laurie Stage, a member of the cable advisory committee.

**Havana, Cuba** — Former missionary David Fite celebrated his 25th anniversary of being released from prison by returning to the country where he had been imprisoned — and continuing the activity which put him behind bars.

Fits and his wife, Margaret, traveled to the communist nation of Cuba in early August. The couple

led conferences in pastoral care and family relationships for the Baptist Convention of Western Cuba.

The Fites return is their first since they left in 1969, following his nearly four-year imprisonment by the Cuban government. They were missionaries in Cuba from 1960 to 1969.

**Chicago, Ill.** — Membership in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) declined slightly in 1993, according to figures just released by the denomination. With a total membership of 5,212,785, down 21,783 from 1992, the ELCA continues to be the fifth largest Protestant denomination in the United States, after the Southern Baptist Convention, United Methodist Church, National Baptist Convention, and Church of God in Christ (Memphis). However, despite a membership figure of 5.2 million, the denomination reports only 1,580,025 worshippers in ELCA congregations on an average Sunday morning. The Rev. Lowell G. Almen, ELCA secretary, said that about 20% of the membership loss was due to roll cleaning and statistical adjustments in congregations. Losses due to death increased by 1,323 to 47,211 in 1993, but losses to non-Lutheran congregations declined 640 to 16,242.

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