



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

October 26, 1993



The
righteous
will live
by his
faith

Habakkuk 2:4

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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Light on the Way

Gratitude

As I write this, my wife, Marilyn, and I have been back just one day from visiting the land of Martin Luther. We have spent two weeks walking in the footsteps of that great Reformation leader.

We have worshiped in the church where, at the age of one day, the baby Martin was baptized. We walked the halls of the castle where Luther was hidden from the Pope and where he translated the New Testament into the language of the people. We stood on the spot where Luther posted his "Ninety-Five Theses" which was to change the course of history. We photographed the pulpit where Dr. Luther delivered his final three sermons. We visited the home where, four days after his last sermon, he passed away. What a great experience that journey has been!

There are so many experiences that I would like to share in this Reformation issue of the *Ambassador*. However, there is one outstanding thought that impressed my heart. It is one of gratitude to God for His care and control of His plan of salvation.

Since the beginning of time God has used men and women of special character and faith to reveal and safeguard His purpose and plan for mankind. As early as the Old Testament our Lord chose people of unique faith to carry out His plan. Chapter 11 of Hebrews names some of those people of great faith: Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Gideon and David to name a few.

Over the years as Israel would stray from the truth, God would use men of faith to bring them back. That has been the story of civilization. God has safeguarded and proclaimed His message of salvation through people of His own choosing.

In New Testament days there were Peter, Paul and John. As years went by and the truth of God's Word was challenged our Lord saw fit to leave with us three foundational confessions of faith: the Nicene Creed, the

Athanasian Creed and the Apostles' Creed. These creeds have served to keep our Christian doctrine on course, and I have a greater appreciation for these statements of faith in the light of Christian history.

By the 14th Century the church had strayed far from its base of salvation in Jesus alone. God prepared His bride, the church, for a cleansing; a Reformation. Concerned believers began to speak out and even sacrificed their lives for the truth. In the latter part of that century, John Wycliffe in England and Jan Hus in Bohemia attempted to bring about reformation in the church. The bodies of both men were ordered to be burned and their ashes scattered in rivers.

At the beginning of the 16th Century, a man by the name of Martin Luther responded to God's call to reform the teachings of the church of his day. As Luther translated the Bible so that the people could read it for themselves, he sounded three foundation principles in understanding God's Word: the Word alone (the Bible); grace alone (God's love); and faith alone (our response).

Luther discovered in Romans that "the just shall live by faith." We are made right with our Lord only through the merits of Jesus Christ. I am eternally grateful for that.

I thank God that I can read the Scriptures in my language and that He stirred men to write the Creeds and Catechism to keep me on course. I praise Him for the long line of those through whom God secured the message of salvation for me, including the reformer Dr. Martin Luther.



—by Rev.
Walter Johnson

The Word Alone

We must listen to the Word only, simply because it is God's Word. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 3:16, 17 NKJFV).

The Word of God comes to us with certainty and power; contrary to reason. Since the fall of our first parents, people are so corrupted concerning divine things that the lost do not understand the Scriptures. They even consider it foolishness when it is preached.

In spite of the scoffers, the Word comes with the power of God to convert and save. Without the Word man is lost with no hope; for people do not approach God. Rather, the lost are enemies of God until by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word, a miracle occurs. Through the Word which is preached and heard, God alone, by His power and grace, works conversion and belief, regeneration and renewal. This action of God is the base and beginning of being able to take a stand on the Word alone. It is only from the Word of God that judgments on articles of faith are to be pronounced.

We listen also because this Word is Truth when all else fails. This is so for us when we were baptized. We were brought with the purpose and hope to believe with prayers to grant faith. The *Book of Concord* states:

"But we do not baptize him on that account, but solely on the command of God. Why? Because we know God does not lie. My neighbor and I — in short, all men — may err and deceive, but God's Word cannot err." As we are older we go to the altar not on our own strength of faith, but on the strength of Christ's Word. His command is to go, eat, and drink. He gives me His body and blood. He will not lie or deceive me.

Is God visiting us today? Yes, for through that Word we are instructed and led in all of life. The Word of God and nothing else, not even an angel, establishes articles of faith. Martin Luther set forth in his writings that the Word of God is and should remain the sole rule and norm of all doctrine. No human writings dare be put on par

with it. Everything must be subject to His Word.

We need to spend time talking about the Word. "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (Romans 1:16).

Thinking about and sharing His Word is vital in our battle against Satan. "Nothing is so effectual against the devil, the world, the flesh, and all evil thoughts as to occupy oneself with the Word of God, talk about it and meditate on it. Psalm 1 calls those blessed who 'meditate on God's Law day and night.' You will never offer up any incense or other savor more potent against the devil than to occupy yourself with God's commandments and Words and to speak, sing and meditate on them. This, indeed, is the true holy water, the sign which routs the devil and puts him to flight" (The *Book of Concord*).

Even if you know the Word perfectly and have mastered everything, still you are under the dominion of the devil. He never at any time relaxes his efforts to come and kindle in your heart unbelief and wicked thoughts against the Lord's ways. Therefore, we must continually keep God's Word in our hearts, on our lips and in our ears. For where our treasure is, there our heart will be also. If the heart stands idle and the Word unexercised, the devil comes and does damage before we realize it. But if we ponder the Word, it will bear fruit in our understanding, pleasures and spirit of devotion as it cleanses the heart and purifies our meditation. For these words are not idle or dead, but effective and living.

With hearing and knowing of God's Word and the use of the sacraments, we are enabled to know His will and to live God honoring lives. Paul's instruction to Timothy is for us: "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and teaching" (II Timothy 4:1, 2).

— Rev. LeRoy Flickinger
Newfolden, Minnesota

RMS Photo



Pulpit in Castle Chapel in Torgau. Luther preached here in 1544.

The Great Reformer Martin Luther challenged the mightiest power of earth in his day; the Roman Catholic Church. He posted the "Ninety-Five Theses" on the castle door in Wittenburg on October 31, 1517. The debate he called for created an explosion that continues nearly five centuries later. Only after his death, did wars of religion begin in Europe. They lasted for a century before denominational lines were drawn between the Protestants and Catholics.

After studying God's Word itself, Luther was troubled by the Roman Church's penitential system which taught that while God was willing and able to forgive sins, He required some religious act or good deed to prove that the sinner truly was sorry. In other words, before one's spiritual slate was wiped clean, he had to meet certain standards. If the forgiven sinner died without fulfilling his penance, he would spend time in purgatory; a place of purifying pain until his spiritual obligations were met. In this system most church members expected to stay in purga-

Grace

tory a long time before proceeding to heaven.

This plan also declared that sinners could leave purgatory early, given the right circumstances. Most people failed to satisfy God's expectations but the saints, Mary and Jesus were above His righteous demands. God then gathered this excess righteousness and deposited it in a heavenly account. That Treasury of Merits was then entrusted to the papacy. As Christ's vicar on earth, the pope could transfer this righteousness to overdrawn spiritual accounts and reduce the sinner's stay in purgatory. These transactions became known as indulgences. One could buy an indulgence by fighting in a crusade, worshipping at a shrine, have reverence for a saint's relics or to simply purchase them.

Observing this, Luther believed people with coins were proclaiming an intimate relationship



This nailing of "The 95 Theses."

RNS Photo

Alone

with God. Repentance was no longer necessary! His "Ninety-Five Theses" questioned the long-standing assumptions about repentance and papal influence.

Luther anguished with the struggle between God's punishment and grace; between guilt and hope. He traveled to Rome looking for peace. He found none. While lecturing at the University of Wittenburg on the Psalms and later, in Paul's letter to the Romans, Luther began to realize that Christ's death and resurrection had provided him and all people with faith both for forgiveness and eternal life.

The Lord's righteousness always held a sinister connotation for Luther as he perceived God's absolute holiness demanded damnation of sinners. But in his studies of Paul's letters, Luther discovered righteousness in different terms. "For in the Gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith'" (Romans 1:17 NIV).

Luther struggled to understand. To him God's righteousness was bad news, but the Apostle recognized it as the good news, the gospel. Then one day freedom came. He wrote: "Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that 'the just shall live by faith.' Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which, through grace and mercy, God justifies us through faith. I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors thereupon into paradise."

Luther's theology of grace alone was a message of God reaching out to raise the fallen and condemned sinner. It brought light to the world then and brings hope and light to a needy world today. When he preached on Luke 10:23-27, Luther explained the futility of the law to save the sinner. "The law discovers the disease, the gospel ministers the medicine."

Sinful man as Luther personally discovered, needs a spiritual cleansing. He must be forgiven completely so that he is removed from condemnation to the place of acceptance by God. Salvation that God has provided in the gift of His love does exactly that! Deliverance from His judgment upon sin is made possible because of God's grace (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

Grace, as defined in Luther's Small Catechism, means unmerited or unearned love. It is the favor

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ. Cheap grace is not the kind of forgiveness of sin which frees us from the trials of sin; cheap grace is the grace we bestow upon ourselves.

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer

and mercy of God obtained by man through belief in His Son Jesus Christ. The spiritual gifts developed by the continual working of the Spirit of God in our lives is also only by grace.

Yes, salvation is by grace. I am thankful for that because not one of us sinners could ever save himself.

God's grace is part of His being, His nature. "But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love" (Nehemiah 9:17). With joy the Christian will diligently use the means of grace; the Word and the sacraments.

I remember twin sisters telling the story of their Christian mother having devotions early in the morning after a difficult night of labor. Psalm 84:11 spoke to her believing heart: "for the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly." A believer can appreciate the rest of the story; the twins were named Grace and Glory. God is so good to us in Christ!

Yes, Luther discovered that salvation was a free gift. Sacraments, rituals, the papacy and all the indulgences in the world could not bring people into a right relationship with God. Without faith in Jesus Christ, those things only damn a soul. Luther saw that grace is free, but it is not cheap. It cost the Father His Son's life. And once received, grace costs the sinner everything he has, including himself.

Luther said: "I'd like all my books to be destroyed so that only the sacred writings in the Bible would be diligently read." Man may write many books but nothing compares to God's Book; revealing His heart of grace in Christ to today's people of spiritual need.

*"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see."*

— John Newton



**— Rev. Mike Klenner
Freeman, South Dakota**



The Wartburg Castle.

Faith Alone

(We) know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified (Galatians 2:16).

In early September, newspapers across the nation headlined the tragic shooting death of a German tourist in Florida. The couple had carefully listened to the warning about “bump and rob” tactics against tourists. They trusted information they had been given. They were on a well traveled street when the van behind bumped them, trying to get them to stop. They didn’t, believing the orientation brochure. Tragically, the people in the van hadn’t read the rules and shot the driver anyway. His faith in those instructions had been misplaced. They couldn’t protect him.

Our emphasis on faith always need to include the biblical emphasis on the object of faith. We do not have faith in our faith. Saving faith saves because it trusts in Jesus (notice Paul’s repetition of Jesus’ name above). It is Christ’s atoning death on the cross that saves. Faith is effective in justifying the sinner because of the great object of faith.

This truth leads naturally to the Reformation emphasis on faith alone. Martin Luther stressed this point because the Roman Catholic Church of his day was more than willing to agree a person is saved by faith. But they wouldn’t stop there. They taught that one must add good works and follow the teachings of the church and act in love to be justified. Luther was adamant. It is through faith alone that we can be declared righteous in God’s sight.

Luther was adamant because Scripture is so clear. In Galatians 2:15, Paul repeats the point three times. He can’t say it enough. The first

phrase states the general principle. The present tense of the verb with the negative makes it a strong statement: Justification can never take place at any time by works of the law. The second phrase makes the point personal. The third phrase emphasizes it by adding the stamp of Old Testament authority — alluding to Psalm 143:2.

Faith alone is reaffirmed in our experience. If we are honest, we know that in relation to God our works do not work. The word “justified” makes that clear. It is a legal word picturing a judge declaring some one righteous, not guilty. The judge always renders his verdict in relation to some standard of justice. In this case the judge is God and the standard is his holiness expressed in His Law. With that standard our works can never justify!

That point was brought home to me clearly a few years ago in a Confirmation class. We were talking about the fifth commandment (You shall not murder) in light of Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:22. I told the class that we break this commandment when we call people names, tease, or make fun of others. Jesus says this is murder! The class was surprised. Their immediate reaction included comments like, “What if we were just kidding? Everyone does it. It’s not such a big deal.” I persisted with Jesus’ point: if another person is hurt it’s murder. Finally one student stated, “Then you would have to be perfect to keep this commandment.” That is exactly the point.

That is why the biblical truth — faith alone — is such good news! A Christian is a person who is legally declared righteous by God; innocent in His judgment. This legal declaration is valid because Jesus died on the cross to take the penalty for our sin. He lived a life of perfect righteousness that can be applied to the account of the individual who places his trust in Jesus. Salvation is by faith, faith alone, without reference to any works of Law.



— Rev. Jim Johnson
Reva, South Dakota

“Luther was adamant because Scripture is so clear.”



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Meet the New Ambassador Editor

Craig S. Johnson was born in the coastal city of Astoria, Oregon, in 1962. The son of a commercial fisherman, Craig is the youngest of three children born to Floyd and Alice Johnson.

The Johnson family were members of the Lutheran Free Church in Astoria, Bethany Lutheran. The AFLC's oldest living pastor Hans Tollefson, baptized Craig.

In the 1970s Craig was confirmed by Rev. Alvin Grothe who continued to be his pastor through his college days. When Craig was 16 years old, his father passed away. As a teenager, his interest in writing landed him a position on the school newspaper staff.

In 1980, Craig enrolled at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, where he began his studies in Political Science. His love for sports and writing combined to earn him a job as the football reporter for the university's newspaper.

Following God's call to the ministry, Craig left the Willamette Valley after receiving his B.A. degree in 1984. He moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, to attend the AFLC's seminary. He was awarded the Master of Divinity degree in 1988 from AFLTS.

Spencer Creek Lutheran Church, located on the edge of Oregon's second largest city, Eugene, called the native Oregonian to be their pastor. Rev. Craig Johnson accepted in 1988 and continues to serve that congregation.

—Solveig Hjermstad

Partners in Mission Outreach Plan Four Trips to Mexico

Do you find it hard to imagine what it is like in spiritually impoverished countries? Is it difficult to picture the "hunger for God's Word" that we hear so much about?

It is easy to get so comfortable with our abundant American blessings and

our easy American Christianity that the struggles of others do not seem real. But there is a cure for that!

This winter you could go into the heart of the Mexican mission field and participate in church construction, street evangelism and tract and Bible distribution. Families are welcome, minimum age of five years old. There are jobs for all ages and skill levels.

Spend two weeks in a foreign culture working, fellowshiping with other Christians and praising our Lord and Savior. Cost varies from \$350 to \$450 per person and includes transportation, food and lodging.

Trip Dates — 1993-94 Season

December 3-17: Departure from Illinois and the Midwest.

January 14-28: Departure from Minnesota and the Midwest.

February 11-25: Departure from Montana.

March 11-25: Departure from Montana, Idaho and Western Region.

For additional information, contact Partners in Mission Outreach, 705 Lost

Creek Drive, Kalispell, MT 59901; phone 406-755-4160.

Experience Seventeen Days in Brazil

Join veteran missionary-evangelist Rev. John Abel for 17 inspiring days from February 28 to March 18, 1994 and personally experience our Brazilian mission field. See eight of our Brazil AFLC churches, our schools and orphanage at Campo Mourao and beautiful Vitoria on the Atlantic Ocean. Enjoy lush farming and ranching countryside during Brazil's warm fall season.

First class accommodations only! Approximate total costs from Minneapolis — Chicago — Brazil is \$1,890. This includes Brazilian travel, lodging, meals and return trip.

Reserve by November 30, 1993, with a \$400 deposit. Space is limited to 18 people. For more information, call 1-800-635-2032, ask for Paul at Meno Travel Services or call Pastor Abel at 218-962-3458.

Church Extension Fund Has Monies Available for Building and/or Purchase of Property

Congregations interested should contact the Home Mission Office for further information at 3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard, Minneapolis, MN 55441; phone 612-545-5631.

A Note From Our Chaplain

Recently, I read a sermon by a Rev. Stein in which he related a story about a reporter who came to church, and was asked by the pastor why he came. The reply was: "Well, one time, our son was dying, and he was being operated on in the hospital, and the former pastor came there and spent the night with us outside surgery." The pastor asked, "Well, what did he do? What did he say? How did it make a difference?" The man replied, "He didn't say or do anything special. He was just there!"

That story touched my heart,



Chaplain Crowell (second from right) ministering during a field exercise at Fort Hood.

because so often that is exactly what God calls us to: either for me as a military chaplain, or for all of us as Christians ... **to be there, where God has called us to be!** Of course, sometimes we get discouraged, mostly because we don't always see the **fruit** of our labor! But every once in awhile, we get a

glimpse of what God is doing, and we are encouraged.

What that little story reminded me of was the Scripture that tells us to not weary of well doing (Galatians 6:9). **We shall reap, the Scripture says, if we faint not! We may not see it, but we can believe it!** Perhaps we shall reap by the joy of seeing a soul in heaven because **we were there, where God called us to be.**

We don't have to worry about what to say. God will lead. We don't have to worry about the "hows and whys." God knows those! All we have to do is **be where we are called** and the opportunities for ministry will become apparent. Then, we simply trust in Him for the results!

— *CH Michael Crowell*
Fort Hood, Texas

India Work Continues

The AFLC continues to support and encourage a national church (BFLC — Bible Faith Lutheran Church) ministry in the vast nation of India. Our particular work is in and around the city of Guntur, in the State of Pradesh in east central India.

This is the same area where the first American Lutheran missionary to India

Christian Frederick Heyer, went in the mid 1800s.

The use of the name of the church body, the BFLC — India, has been an issue in the recent litigation against the AFLC. Although the lawsuits have been dismissed in the U.S.A., legal conflict over this and other issues continues in India. Pray that these disputes will soon end.



Pictured is a recently completed pastor's home at the church in the village of Amodagiri Patnam. Note the water buffalo in the foreground. This animal is the source of milk and meat for the Indian. A medical service has been initiated that travels periodically to the different churches. A local doctor Anand Kumar



Satuluri has provided his services. Free homeopathic medicines are given to the poor. One of the church leaders recently wrote: "Many non-Christian people are also attending during these camps. So we get an opportunity to preach the Word of God."



Announcing . . . The New Ambassador Hymnal

The new *Ambassador Hymnal* will be available by June 30, 1994. Those of you who have been patiently awaiting this event will be encouraged to know that your wait is nearly over. The music is being engraved and the text material is being typeset on or ahead of the schedule we have with A-R Editions, our publisher.

We continue to need the financial support of our AFLC churches and individuals. Any shortfall of monies will mean a delay in the typesetting, since we have continually affirmed our conviction that this must be a "pay as you go" proposition. Please continue to promote the hymnal in your congregations as a project worthy of their assistance.

Thanks to the fact that we now have a publishing deadline, we are able to offer to your congregation the opportunity to purchase hymnals in advance of the publishing date. These pre-sales will also help us to keep the payment schedule for typesetting current and avoid delays. Since it is in our best interest to have the money now, rather than later, we are offering a substantial discount to those congregations which pre-purchase hymnals. Those congregations which purchase the hymnal before January 31, 1994, will be able to purchase it for \$12 per hymnal plus shipping and handling. The price after that date will be \$14 per hymnal. An order form is enclosed for you.

A sampler of the hymnal has been prepared to help you decide whether the *Ambassador Hymnal* will be the right hymnal for your congregation. This sampler contains five well-known hymns, one of the orders of worship, the hymnal's table of contents, and a list of the hymns as they will appear in the hymnal. Additional copies are available for \$1 each, which will defray our cost for shipping and handling.

If you are interested in the purchase of hymnals, please use the order form enclosed. If you are not ready to purchase new hymnals at this time, but wish to remain on our mailing list, use the response card enclosed. If your congregation is satisfied with your present hymnal, you might consider the purchase of the *Ambassador Hymnal* for your pianist, organist, or choir. The *Ambassador Hymnal* would also make a wonderful gift for confirmation or to welcome a new family into your congregation.

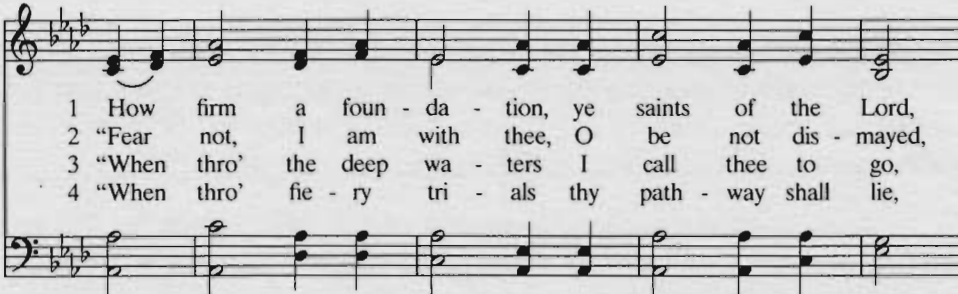
We trust that the *Ambassador Hymnal* will be of value to many Lutheran congregations throughout the U.S.A. and Canada which desire a hymnal with both a strong Lutheran emphasis and with good, singable "Gospel" hymns.

Pastor Thomas C. Olson

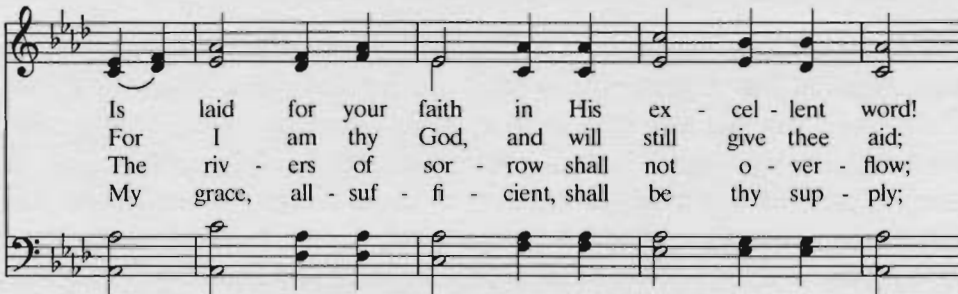
Pastor Thomas C. Olson, Chairman — Ambassador Hymnal Project



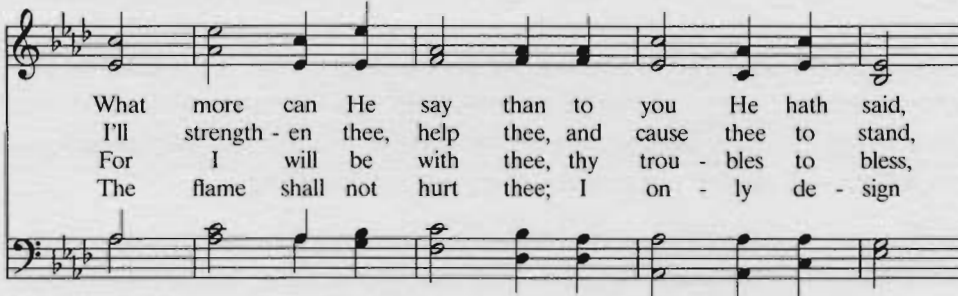
How Firm a Foundation



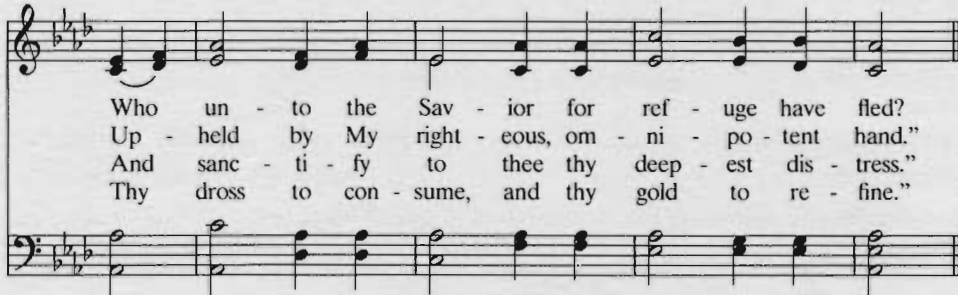
1 How firm a foun - da - tion, ye saints of the Lord,
 2 "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dis - mayed,
 3 "When thro' the deep wa - ters I call thee to go,
 4 "When thro' fie - ry tri - als thy path - way shall lie,



Is laid for your faith in His ex - cel - lent word!
 For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
 The riv - ers of sor - row shall not o - ver - flow;
 My grace, all - suf - fi - cient, shall be thy sup - ply;



What more can He say than to you He hath said,
 I'll strength - en thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
 For I will be with thee, thy trou - bles to bless,
 The flame shall not hurt thee; I on - ly de - sign



Who un - to the Sav - ior for ref - uge have fled?
 Up - held by My right - eous, om - ni - po - tent hand."
 And sanc - ti - fy to thee thy deep - est dis - tress."
 Thy dross to con - sume, and thy gold to re - fine."

Text: "K" in Rippon's Selection, 1787
 Tune: early American melody

FOUNDATION
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Please add \$2.00 to your order for handling. When using the table, use the zone that corresponds to the address where the hymnals will be shipped.

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Zone 5	AL, CT, DE, GA, LA, MA, MD, MS, NC, ND, NH, NJ, NY, OK, RI, SC, SD, VA, VT
Zone 6	CO, FL, ME, MT, NM, TX, WY
Zone 7	AZ, ID, NV, UT
Zone 8	CA, OR, WA

Shipping Charges Table

Hymnals Ordered		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ZONE	3	2.65	2.95	3.25	3.55	3.85	4.15	4.45	4.75	5.05	5.35
	4	3.10	3.50	3.90	4.30	4.70	5.10	5.50	5.90	6.30	6.70
	5	3.35	3.90	4.45	5.00	5.55	6.10	6.65	7.20	7.75	8.30
	6	3.65	4.40	5.15	5.90	6.65	7.40	8.15	8.90	9.65	10.40
	7	3.90	4.80	5.70	6.60	7.50	8.40	9.30	10.20	11.10	12.00
	8	4.50	5.50	6.50	7.50	8.50	9.50	10.50	11.50	12.50	13.50

Hymnals Ordered		11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
ZONE	3	5.65	5.95	6.25	6.55	6.85	7.15	7.45	7.75	8.05	8.35
	4	7.10	7.50	7.90	8.30	8.70	9.10	9.50	9.90	10.30	10.70
	5	8.85	9.40	9.95	10.50	11.05	11.60	12.15	12.70	13.25	13.80
	6	11.15	11.90	12.65	13.40	14.15	14.90	15.65	16.40	17.15	17.90
	7	12.90	13.80	14.70	15.60	16.50	17.40	18.30	19.20	20.10	21.00
	8	14.50	15.50	16.50	17.50	18.50	19.50	20.50	21.50	22.50	23.50

Shipping will be done from Newark, Illinois for the pre-publication sales. If you wish, you may call for your hymnals there or at the 1994 AFLC Annual Conference in Valley City, ND. The handling charge of \$2.00 still applies to "will call" orders. Please indicate below if that is your choice:

Do not ship, we will pick up the hymnals at:

☐ Newark, IL ☐ Annual Conference, Valley City ND ☐ AFLC Headquarters

The largest unit of shipment will be boxes of 20 hymnals. If your order is larger than 20 hymnals, you should use the charges for unit(s) of 20, then use the table to figure the charges for the remaining hymnals in the order. Thus, for example, if you were ordering 55 hymnals for a congregation in ND: 55 hymnals = 2 boxes of 20 + 15 hymnals. The charges for each box of 20 would be \$13.80 (Zone 5), totalling \$27.60 for the two boxes. The charges for the remaining 15 hymnals would be \$11.05. Thus, you would pay \$40.65 (\$27.60 + \$11.05 + \$2.00/handling) for shipping and handling.

_____ Quantity of full boxes
 x _____ Shipping cost for full box
 = _____ Cost of shipping full boxes
 + _____ Partial box shipping (from table)
 + \$2.00 Handling charge
 _____ Total shipping charges

AMBASSADOR HYMNAL ORDER FORM

Church / Organization _____

Contact Person _____

Phone (____) _____

Shipping Address (no P.O. Boxes) _____ _____ _____	Billing Address _____ _____ _____
---	--

Dark Blue Cover: Quantity _____ x \$12 =	\$ _____
Dark Red Cover: Quantity _____ x \$12 =	\$ _____
Organists Edition (Perfect-Bound) Qty _____ x \$18 =	\$ _____
Shipping / Handling Costs (refer to table on back)	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

Make checks payable to "AFLC". Send
form to:
Ambassador Hymnal Sales
3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd
Minneapolis, MN 55441

Refer to chart for **shipping**
and **handling** charges. All
shipments will be sent as
UPS Ground unless other
arrangements are made.

Reminder: These prices are only good for pre-publishing orders
received on or before **January 31, 1994.**

AFLC — 2000

Our President Writes

This is a day of both crisis and challenge for the church. Perhaps never in the past has the reputation of Christian organizations and workers been so poor, as one heart-breaking scandal succeeds another while the media-crazed world thirsts for more. Our shame is paraded before the public, and hearts are hardened to the good news as a result.

Yet it can also be affirmed that perhaps never in the past have there been so many open doors of opportunity for the church. The AFLC occupies only one small corner of the Kingdom, which means that our perspective is limited, but we can declare without a doubt that the fields are truly white unto harvest.

The calendar shows us that the end of a decade is approaching, as well as the dawning of a new century and millennium. How shall our church fellowship prepare to meet the crisis and challenge of this crucial hour?

One of the answers is a three-fold vision entitled: AFLC — 2000. The

heart of this challenge is "The Vision for a Prayer Shield," seeking to enlist 2000 people throughout our church family to commit themselves to fervent prayer at least one day each week for the AFLC and its ministries. Many of our congregations have prayer chains, and this phase of the vision presses on toward a goal of creating such a fellowship on a church-wide scale.

The second part is "The Vision for Freedom from Debt." Deficit spending in various departments, plus the debt remaining on our new administration building, add up to a total burden that hinders our ministries from entering the open doors before us. The challenge is that we would promise by faith as God provides to give a special gift beyond our regular support before the next annual conference so that this debt might be completely cancelled.

Then, as God provides for these special gifts this year, are we willing to ask Him to do the same every year through the year 2000? This is the third phase, "The Vision for Future

Ministries," which has a goal of creating an AFLC — 2000 fund to support new endeavors in the coming years. Conference has been challenged with the need for a full-time evangelist, a youth worker, new missionary families, the completion of our "Ambassador" curriculum, the planting of new congregations, etc. These open doors and others will be entered as God provides through His people.

You will be presented with the challenge to be a part of this AFLC — 2000 vision in the months to come, as 20 special representatives visit our congregations. May you purpose in your heart to pray and to participate as God provides!



— Robert L. Lee

The Vision for a Prayer Shield

Romans 15:30

The Vision for Freedom from Debt

Romans 13:8

The Vision for Future Ministries

Revelations 3:8



Mr. Mike McCarlson, Webster South Dakota, and Pastor Wayne Hanson, Lakeville, Minnesota, at the AFLC-2000 kick-off banquet September 27, 1993.



Mr. James Boe, Ottawa, Illinois, Mr. George Hartman, Dalton, Minnesota, and Evangelist John Abel, Hitterdal, Minnesota, are three of the 20 AFLC-2000 representatives visiting churches.



Rev. John Abel addressed the All Boards group on behalf of the Commission on Evangelism. He encouraged the AFLC congregations to keep evangelism as a priority and hopes the day will come soon when the AFLC can again support a full-time evangelist.



AFLC Pension Board — Left to right: Mr. Rodney Kjersten, Roseau, Minnesota; Mr. LaVern Thompson, Fergus Falls, Minnesota; Rev. Frank Cherney, Hatton, North Dakota; and Rev. Gary Skramstad, Osakis, Minnesota. Not pictured: Mr. Larry Gustafson, Thief River Falls, Minnesota. Thankfulness to God was expressed by Rev. Gary Skramstad, Chairman of the Pension Board. A new health plan for AFLC pastors and employees was recently entered into. It has been a positive experience.



The Coordinating Committee — Seated: Mr. Michael McC Carlson, Webster, South Dakota; Rev. Terry Olson, Valley City, North Dakota; Rev. John Mundfrom, Bismarck, North Dakota; and Mr. Philip Grothe, Thief River Falls, Minnesota. Standing: Rev. David Molstre, Palmdale, California; Rev. Bob Lee, AFLC President; and Mr. James Boe, Ottawa, Illinois. Not pictured: Mr. Ralph Peterson, Portland, North Dakota. The chairman of the Coordinating committee Rev. David Molstre, told of a recent joint meeting of the various committees and directors. Hope was expressed that this could lead to greater communication and mutual assistance. The committee is encouraged by the interest of congregations and pastors in joining our fellowship.

All Boards Meet

The annual All Boards meeting was held at the ARC on September 28. The morning session included reports from each department. Individual boards met before and after this time.

Rev. Robert Lee began the day by urging those who were gathered to do what was most important. That was to pray.

He reminded them of the need to pray for those who are leaders. Lee stressed the seriousness of this because those who are higher in Christian leadership are higher on Satan's hit list. He also reminded them of the Word's prescription of prayer as an effective tool for prevention of spiritual disasters.

The AFLC president concluded his remarks with a session of prayer during which many participated.



Mr. Bob Dietsche, Director of the ARC reported that many of the things recently done at the Retreat Center were in response to the State of Wisconsin's requests. He also announced on behalf of the board that the ARC is "financially sound." ARC Board members are Mr. Cliff Seldal, DeKalb, Illinois; Rev. Tonnes Pollestad, Blaine, Minnesota; Mr. Allen Anderson, Clear Lake, Wisconsin; Mr. James Ray, Esko, Minnesota; and Rev. Michael Brandt, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Mr. Ken Hokkanen is the Assistant Director.



The Board of Trustees — Seated left to right: Rev. Ken Moland, Kirkland, Washington; Rev. Gary Jorgenson, Ottawa, Illinois; Mr. Kent Quanbeck, McVile, North Dakota. Standing: Mr. Tim Jones, Wyndmere, North Dakota; Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, Cokato, Minnesota; and Mr. Emory Flaten, Newfolden, Minnesota. Not pictured: Mr. Wayne Floan, Fertile, Minnesota. The Board of Trustees continues to pray for a godly consensus on the calling of a new faculty member, according to Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, Chairman. They are thankful for the part-time help that has been secured for this school year in the absence of Dr. Francis Monseth on sabbatical and Rev. Phil Haugen who returned to the parish ministry.



Youth Board — Seated: Rev. Dennis Gray, Youth Ministries Director and Mr. Bob Halvorson, Associate Youth Ministries Director. Standing: Rev. Lloyd Quanbeck, Northome, Minnesota; Mr. Marshall Nessa, Cloquet, Minnesota; Mr. Farrell Erickson, Badger, Minnesota; Rev. Joel Rolf, Radcliffe, Iowa; and Mr. Paul Kneeland, McVile, North Dakota. The AFLC Youth Board is involved in the development of a budget and job description in anticipation of the hiring in the near future of a full-time youth worker. Foundation Seminars offer training for people working with youth. These seminars, taught by Bob Halvorson, will hopefully be available in each district at some time in the near future.



Board of Publications and Parish Education — Mrs. Barbara Stueland, Kenyon, Minnesota; Mrs. Katha Tjelta, Director of Parish Education; and Rev. Wes Langaas, McVile, North Dakota. Not pictured: Mrs. Linda Mohagen, Towner, North Dakota and Rev. Tom Olson, Cumberland, Wisconsin. Rev. Wes Langaas, Chairman, spoke of the posters that will soon be available illustrating *Luther's Small Catechism*. Finances continue to be a need as more materials are ready for printing.



The new *Ambassador Hymnal* Editor Rev. Brian Davidson, and the Hymnal Committee Chairman Rev. Tom Olson are rejoicing in the progress of the hymnal project. They are currently proofreading pages as they come from the printer. The books are scheduled to be ready for shipment on June 3, 1994.



Mrs. Helen Knapp, WMF 2nd vice president, visited with Mrs. Ruby Abel. Both ladies are retired missionaries from the AFLC's Brazilian field. The Women's Missionary Federation announced their convention theme for 1994, "Life with a Purpose."

In 1990, there were 500,000 fewer baptized members of Lutheran congregations than there were in 1970.

About 3.6 million people in the United States who identify themselves as Lutherans are not on the baptized membership roles of any Lutheran congregation.

Of the 8.4 million baptized members of Lutheran congregations, only about three million attend worship services in an average week.

Those numbers from a recent report sponsored by the Aid Association for Lutherans. "Church Membership Initiative," are an alarming indication of what has happened and what is happening to churches — and not only Lutheran churches — in the U.S.

Membership is down, and even those who sign up don't often attend.

One of the big problems is "back-door" losses: members who leave the church to take a break and don't come back. For whatever reason — personality conflict, loss of faith, a desire to sleep late on Sundays — these former members have found that church membership no longer meets their needs.

In 1990, about 250,000 people were

Milwaukee Congregation Targets Former Church Members

released from membership in Lutheran congregations, becoming back-door losses, according to the AAL report.

Dale Radke wants to do something about that.

On Sunday, Radke, a lay pastor in the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, will open services at Wisconsin Memorial Park to reach out to people who have walked out the back door.

"I'm hoping to offer people a way to get back into the spiritual life they need and that they're thirsting for," Radke said in a recent interview. "Churches have a selling job to do. I will use every approach I can think of to get people back into church."

"The message hasn't changed," he added, "but the approach must."

Radke, 60, has always wanted to be a pastor. He studied for the Lutheran ministry in high school but got a job after graduation instead of going on to the seminary.

He worked in a paint and hardware

store, and returned to it after Army service, where he served as a chaplain's assistant. He eventually became store manager, and worked in the wholesale hardware business from 1968 to 1973.

But the desire to serve never left. In 1973, he became executive director of the Greater Milwaukee Federation of Lutheran Churches of the Missouri Synod, and the editor of the Badger Lutheran. From 1983 to 1989 he also was the executive director of Lutherans of Wisconsin and editor of the Milwaukee Lutheran newspaper.

And since 1973, Radke has been the voice of the God-Love Prayer Phone Ministry, which more than five million people have called, he said.

And he's a clown.

As Rollo the Clown, Radke has been featured at the Circus World Museum, in the Milwaukee Christmas Parade, in the City of Festivals Parade and as lead clown in the Great Circus Parade.

Radke said he recently applied to be an alternate minister in the Missouri

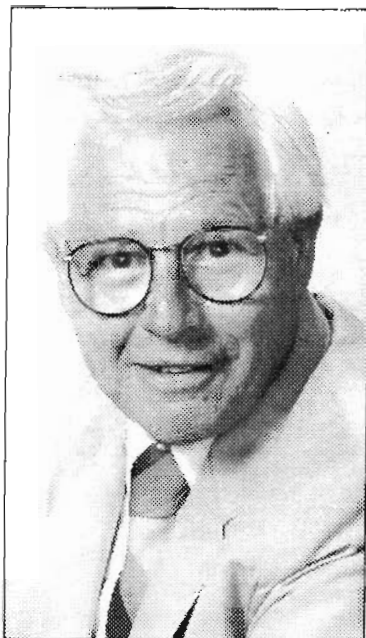
ALL BOARD MEET



Home Missions Committee — Seated left to right: Rev. John Skeie, New Hope, Minnesota; Rev. Alvin Grothe, Astoria, Oregon; Mr. Bob Dietsche, Osceola, Wisconsin. Standing: Rev. Elden Nelson, Home Missions Director; Rev. Tony Stockman, Brandon, Minnesota; Mr. Bob Christian, Newark, Illinois; and Rev. Allen Monson, Dickinson, North Dakota. Not pictured: Pastor Henry Mohagen, Towner, North Dakota. According to the Director Rev. Elden Nelson, the Home Missions Committee is being challenged and excited with the new works beginning in the Wisconsin cities of Milwaukee and Superior and in Beulah, North Dakota. Numerous contacts have also been made in Texas recently.



World Missions Committee — Seated: Mr. Kenneth Williams, Ishpeming, Michigan; Mr. Vernon Russum, Grafton, North Dakota; and Rev. Eugene Enderlein, World Missions Director. Standing: Rev. Jeff Swanson, Newark, Illinois; Mr. Randy Sommer, Sparland, Illinois; and Rev. Ted Berkas, Wallace, South Dakota. Not pictured: Mr. Arley Hartsoch, Ray, North Dakota and Rev. Ted Kennedy, Nogales, Arizona. Pastor Enderlein reported that the conclusion of the lawsuit in India has brought rejoicing to the World Missions Department. They are also thanking God for the new works in Brazil and Mexico. The World Missions debt is noticeably shrinking and there is growing support for the two new missionary candidates, the Todd Schierkolks and the David Nelsons.



"I'm hoping to offer people a way to get back into the spiritual life they need and that they're thirsting for."

Why should people attend Radke's church when many other established churches are also working hard to attract members?

Radke said he thought many back-door losses were due to people feeling uncomfortable with the church as a large organization or because of personality conflicts with individual pastors or other members.

"Most of these are not because of a loss of faith," he said. "People decide to take a break for a while, but the break becomes a habit and they don't come back.

"As a layman, I think I can reach out, by God's grace and mercy, to these people," he said. "They might be able to relate better to a lay leader or pastor."

He said he expected "about 20" people at his first service. To attract new members, Radke said, he was sending out letters and audio tapes inviting people to attend.

"I'm targeting people I know who haven't gone to church for a while," he said. "I'm not going after members of other churches."

He also wants to involve new members in the church. "People have so many talents," he said. "I want to use those talents in the church." He said he also hoped to develop a Sunday School and a Bible school.

"I plan to be a people pastor," he said. "The congregation is made up of all God's people, and I want to get them all involved."

— by Ernest-Ulrich Franzen
Religion editor
Milwaukee Sentinel,
September 11, 1993
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Synod, but his application was turned down. He then heard about Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, which has its headquarters in Minneapolis, Minnesota. It has about 225 congregations, Radke said.

"I met with their committee; the theology fit," he said. "They are warm people, committed to the Christian faith. But they had no money for this mission."

"My wife asked me what we were going to do," he said after in the interview. "I said, 'Don't worry about it. Put this in the hands of the Lord.'"

"This is a real faith ministry," he added.

"I'm not interested in bricks and mortar," Radke said. "We'll be holding services in the Chapel of the Chimes at Wisconsin Memorial Park for six months and then we'll be looking for a church willing to share its sanctuary with us."

Radke said his service would be a traditional Lutheran worship service with prayers, responsive readings and a sermon.

He said the sermons would be "very scriptural; not watered down. They will be about the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ. They won't be legalistic, but I will offer the Word and a way to grab hold of the Word."

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/s/ Robert L. Lee, Editor

PEOPLE and PLACES

Onalaska, Wisconsin — On September 26 Christ is Lord Lutheran Church celebrated their 15th anniversary worship service in their new building. The congregation is completing their building only as finances come in. The siding is being installed and funds for plumbing and heating are now being raised. Meanwhile, the congregation is meeting at rented theaters in the nearby Valley View Mall.



Wallace, South Dakota — Gerry Kasin's 40 years of playing organ and piano at Calvary Lutheran Church was marked at a reception after the morning worship service on September 12. Her faithfulness to her task has been an inspiration to the congregation. Pictured are Gerry and Horace Kasin and Jim Keller, president of the congregation.

Canton, Centerville and Freeman, South Dakota — These three AFLC congregations joined with a church in Flandreau, South Dakota, to host an area LEM Conference, September 12-14. Speakers were Rev. Mike Brandt, Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Pastor Rodney Stueland, Kenyon, Minnesota; Rev. David Skordahl, Dalton, Minnesota; and Rev. Gary Skramstad, Osakis, Minnesota.

Rev. Clyde Grier, El Campo, Texas, was accepted on the AFLC Fellowship Roster following a colloquy interview with the Co-ordinating Committee on September 27. He is the pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, El Campo, which recently joined the AFLC, and was previously on the clergy roster of the World Confessional Lutheran Association (WCLA).

Reva, South Dakota — Slim Buttes Lutheran Church held their Special Meetings on October 10-12. Rev. Peter Franz, Cloquet, Minnesota, spoke on "Men Who Met the Master."

Rev. Don Voorhees, Dannebrog, Nebraska, began his ministry at St. Peder's Lutheran Church on October 1. His new address is Route 1, Box 57, Nysted Community, Dannebrog, Nebraska 68831.

Rev. Christian Oswood, Minneapolis, Minnesota, received a heart transplant on September 29. Initial reports are that his recovery is going well. His address is 318 8th Avenue Nebraska, Minneapolis, MN 55413.



Pastors Unseth, Mundfrom and Wellumson.

Bismarck, North Dakota — Calvary Free Lutheran Church celebrated its 15th anniversary on September 5. The day began with the Sunday School hour where former pastor Rev. Einar Unseth, Glenville, Minnesota, led the adult Bible study. Current pastor, Rev. John Mundfrom, preached at the morning worship service.

The service was followed by a fellowship dinner. The afternoon Anniversary Service was held with Rev. Unseth preaching on "A Call to Service," from Joshua 1:1-9. Rev. Jon Wellumson, Williston, president of the Western North Dakota/Eastern Montana District, brought greetings on behalf of the AFLC. A letter of greeting was read from Rev. Reuben Unseth, Roseau, Minnesota, who worked with his father during the early days of the congregation.

Calvary Church began with home Bible studies in September 1978. The first services were held in the YMCA until a building was purchased in 1979. That building was later sold and the present structure at 417 South Anderson Street was purchased in 1989.

Fergus Falls, Minnesota — Calvary Lutheran Church has begun a major construction project. They hope to have their new sanctuary enclosed before winter. The current sanctuary will become the Fellowship Hall. Future plans are to add Sunday School space and larger kitchen facilities.

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences - February 1 - September 30, 1993

FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	REC'D IN SEPTEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$261,657.00	\$18,515.71	\$136,979.66	52
Seminary	148,620.00	6,139.89	56,451.83	38
Bible School	214,230.00	10,390.20	80,923.92	38
Home Missions.	292,593.00	17,391.15	145,916.55	50
World Missions.	310,000.00	25,639.56	206,335.79	67
Capital Investment	50,300.00	1,507.65	17,950.36	36
Parish Education	53,147.00	3,321.19	35,007.56	66
ARC	13,200.00	163.50	4,065.77	31
Chrism. Acd. Ed. Bd.	4,000.00	108.43	845.08	21
TOTALS	\$1,347,747.00	\$83,177.28	\$684,476.52	51
1992 - 1993	\$1,631,326.00	\$104,347.00	\$674,860.19	41
Goal 67%				

A LITTLE NERVOUS

You might be a little nervous right now. I don't blame you. Our magazine has a new editor. He is considered a fairly young guy, except by the youth group and Sunday School kids. He is from the Pacific Northwest, the region in the nation that one survey said has the highest percentage of people who goof off at work. Who knows what might happen?!

Can I let you in on a secret? I'm a little nervous too. Being able to influence the lives of others is a frightening prospect. I feel like Paul when he says, "Who is equal to such a task?" (II Corinthians 2:16). Effectively sharing the gospel of Christ through the vehicle of a magazine is a task far beyond my abilities. A humbling truth is God knows that better than I do. Jesus says, "Apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). I think I'm limited and not up to the challenge. God says, "You don't know how incapable you really are."

Before we despair and run from the challenge, God points us to the gospel. He reminds us that He can use us in amazing ways. We can go forward with confidence in the knowledge that, while we are unable, He is able.

God has given me this opportunity to serve Him and His church not because I deserve it. He lets each one of us serve because of His grace. He gives us the privilege out of His undeserved goodness and favor. Then, He promises to strengthen us so that we can do all things through Him (Philippians 4:13).

In order for this to be the beginning of a positive and fruitful chapter in our magazine's history, something must happen. People must pray. I seek your prayers for myself and the rest who are involved in this work. Our desire is the same as the Apostle Paul's: "Pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored" (II Thessalonians 3:1).

WHY OR WHY NOT

And you think you have problems in your congregation! Consider what Martin Luther faced. The church of his day was selling tickets to heaven. The common person was blocked from reading the Word of God in an understandable language. Not even a hard working, dedicated-to-the-church monk ever heard a clear presentation of the way of salvation. It was a sad state of affairs.

How did Luther respond to this dismal situation? He courageously spoke out. He did not hesitate to point out what was contrary to the truth of God's Word. Complaints were not the only thing coming out of his mouth, however. Much effort was put into making a positive difference. Throughout the struggle, the main point of his ministry remained the proclamation of the gospel. Luther let people know the good things God had done.

In a congregation, it is often easy to see the problems. The things that are not being done right seem to shine forth with the brightness of a neon sign. Sadly, often that is all that is seen. Pointing out the problems is, at times, all that is done.

Let us learn from the example of Luther. He did not compromise the Word of God. He proclaimed the whole Word: the law and the gospel. He saw the problems, but also the power of God. He knew what was not being done right, but he also knew what God had done and could do. He did not just complain. He strived, by God's grace, to work for change.

Someone once said, "Some men see things as they are and say why. I dream things that never were and say why not." Many see the problems in their congregations and say, "why?" Luther saw what God could do and said, "why not?"

Let us not be simply complainers, pointing out where others have failed. Let us be dreamers. Let us be people inspired by a vision of what God can do. Let us not just see our congregations' difficulties and say, "why?" Let us see God's desires and plans for our congregations and say, "why not?"

THANKS

God gives good gifts to His church. One of the good gifts He has given to our church body is my predecessor as editor: Rev. Robert Lee. One thing about good gifts, they often get used a lot. Rev. Lee has served as both editor and AFLC president this past year. We wish he could continue the excellent job he has done as editor, but we know that even a gifted man like himself cannot do it all. We thank God for him and all he has done and continues to do for our AFLC. May God bless him with much wisdom and strength and maybe even a little free time once in awhile.

The Sinners Prayer

Evangelism is intended, through the Word of God, to bring all mankind to a heartfelt sinner's prayer. The shortest of these is probably the one recorded in Luke 18:13c, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner." The longest may be Psalm 51. Evangelism has not completed its work with that initial prayer as many suppose. No, the gift of evangelism, given to the church, was meant not only to get us to the point of the sinner's prayer but, also, to keep us there. Indeed, Luke 18 may be describing a beginning in spiritual life whereas Psalm 51 portrays a return to spiritual life. Martin Luther prescribed daily renewal as an imperative to spiritual health and life.

We will never get away from the need of the sinner's prayer in this life. In fact, it is clear from the two passages of Scripture referred to above that God's people get into trouble when they stray from or neglect the sinner's prayer! That is not to say that merely going through the words is going to be effective. No, it must be accompanied by a daily sensitivity to the Lord through the Word He has given us.

We note that in the tabernacle worship (Exodus 40) those who would serve the Lord on any given day must first look into the laver and wash. This laver was placed before the tent which held the holy things of the Lord and, of course, ultimately, the Holy of Holies. The clear lesson is that if we wish to be a partner (co-laborer) with a holy God it must be via the invitation of, obedience to, and the cleansing of the Word of God. In the New Testament, Jesus gently reminded Martha of this when He told her, "Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42). Preceding that Jesus said Mary had chosen the one thing needed: to sit at His feet.

Evangelism is therefore an ongoing process which will not only bring us to the sinner's prayer but keep us in the attitude of seeking God's face and

turning from our wicked ways. Actually, God's prescription in II Chronicles 7:14 of humility, prayer, seeking God's face and turning from our wicked ways, is inseparable if God's will for His people and their land is going to be realized.

Prayer may not be so much what we say but more what is our attitude to ourselves and to God. In Luke 18:9-14, the attitude and prayer accepted by the Lord did not include a recitation of good deeds nor a comparison with those around. Neither did the length of the prayer nor the exalted position from which it was prayed give the Pharisee an advantage. Going through pious motions such as looking up to heaven did not help the cause either. So, what does attract the attention of God? Spiritual bankruptcy is the secret.

We note that is evidenced in the tax collector as he had nothing to offer but his sin. His only recourse was the mercy of God. He had nothing with which he could bargain. He obviously recognized that even his righteousness was a filthy rag. This essential attitude is noted in Psalm 51:1-2: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin." Later in verse 17 David says: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and

contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." The same attitude and condition is noted in Isaiah 55:1, where the invitation is given: "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters, and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost."

A total lack of confidence in self and a total dependency on God is required. This attitude will get the attention and action of God. The maintenance of this attitude will also meet the requirement of I Thessalonians 5:17, which is, "pray continually." Jesus, in His humanity, fulfilled this injunction perfectly as He said: "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of Him who sent me" (John 6:38).

Lord grant us the knowledge of self which will grant the attitude of prayer that will humbly seek your face and simultaneously cause us to flee the sin in and around us. Consequently, by faith, we await Your healing in our lives and nation. Amen.



—Pastor
Gene Sundby