

SERVICE IN HIS CHURCH

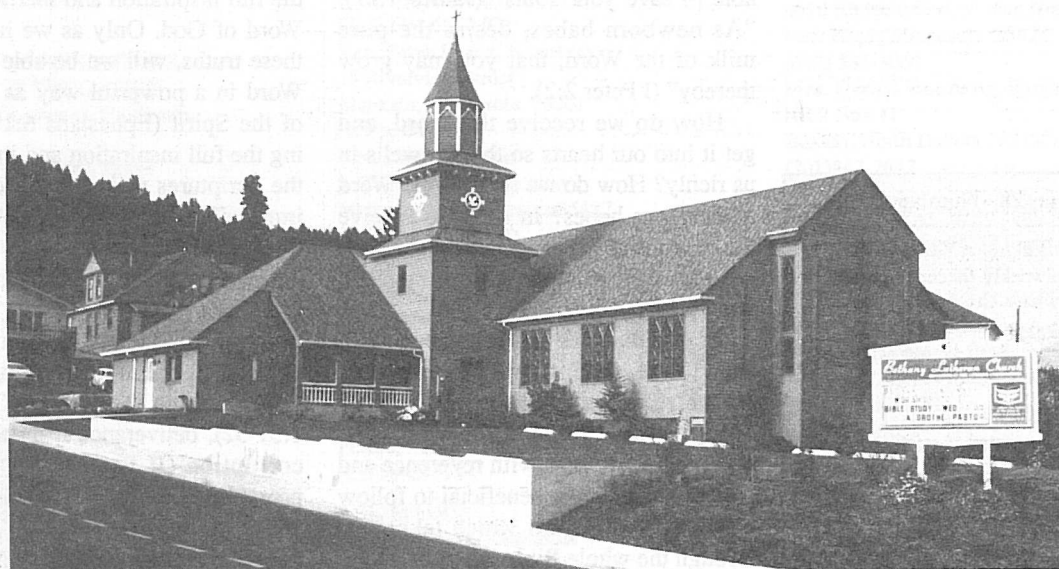
How we work.
AFLC directory.

Ezekial and
Saddam Hussein.

AFLTS dean visits Brazil.
Brazil orphanage opens

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

October 30, 1990



100 YEARS
for
Bethany Lutheran Church
Astoria, Oregon

LIGHT on the WAY

meditations on God's Word

Volume 28 Number 20

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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"Continuing in the Word"

In order to live the Christian life and grow in our faith we need the Word of God. In Matthew 4:4 our Lord Jesus states: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God." We need the Word of God in order to keep alive spiritually just as much as we need food to live physically. Without the Word of God we would starve to death in our spiritual life with the Lord.

Because we have such a desperate need for the Word of God, the Scriptures exhort us to feed on it and receive it in our heart. "These words which I command you today shall be in your heart" (Deuteronomy 6:6). "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly"...(Colossians 3:16). "...in humility receive the Word implanted, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby" (I Peter 2:2).

How do we receive the Word, and get it into our hearts so that it dwells in us richly? How do we feed on the Word as newborn babes? In order to receive the Word and get it into our hearts we need to read, to study, and to meditate upon it on a daily basis.

In our daily devotions we need to spend time reading the Word of God. As we read, we need to ask the Holy Spirit to speak to us in the Word; and we also need to read with reverence and devotion. It is most beneficial to follow a Bible reading plan which takes one through the whole Bible in a year.

As we read the Bible we also need to meditate upon selected portions of Scripture that the Lord puts in our heart. In Psalm 1 we read that the man is blessed who delights in the law of the Lord and meditates on it day and night. We meditate on the Word as we go over it again and again in our mind, soaking it up and pondering it. Just as a cow chews a cud, so we are to chew on the Word and ponder it continually in our heart. Psalm 1 tells us that the person who meditates on the Word day and night is blessed! May we take time to meditate upon and ponder the Word to ourselves so that we may receive the Lord's special blessing.

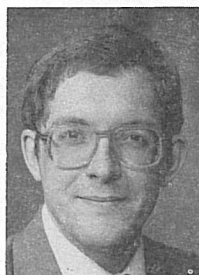
As we read and meditate upon the Word, we also study the Word. In II Timothy 2:15 the apostle Paul exhorts: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of truth." In order to handle the Word of God accurately we need to be good students of the Word.

As we read and study the Word of God, we must seek to apply it in our lives. We must be doers of the Word and not hearers only (James 1:22). We experience the Lord's special blessings as we do His Word and apply it to our daily lives.

In order to effectively receive the Word in our hearts, and live it in our lives, we must continually hold fast to the full inspiration and inerrancy of the Word of God. Only as we hold fast to these truths, will we be able to use the Word in a powerful way as the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17). Doubting the full inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures makes it difficult (if not impossible) to apply the Word effectively in our daily lives.

As we continue in the Word of God and receive it in our hearts, it will not return void (Isaiah 55:10-11). It will work in us manifold blessings such as freedom from the power of sin (John 8:31-32), deliverance from the world's corruption (II Peter 1:3-4), spiritual prosperity (Psalm 1:3), wisdom (Psalm 19:7), faith (Romans 10:17) and the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

Since God gives us such marvelous blessings in His Word, may we receive it into our hearts each day. And may we earnestly apply it in our lives. We will be abundantly blessed as we do so. The Word of God brings us every blessing in Christ Jesus our Lord.



—by Rev.
Mark R. Bateson

the Sweet Savor of Service

WSomerset Maugham, in *Of Human Bondage*, wrote, "These old folk had done nothing, and when they died it would be just as if they had never been." Apparently "these old folk" must not have been Christians because believers do "something" and impact the world for Christ. This "something" is what is commonly called "service." Just like bread and butter, Christians and serving go together.

Service flows out of one's relationship with Jesus Christ. Rosenius writes: "If from the heart you believe that you are perfectly justified and forgiven for the sake of the suffering and death of Christ upon the cross, as the Word of God declares, surely your heart would burn within you for love to such a Savior." It is that "burning heart" love for Jesus, that deep gratitude to God, that passion for Christ, which presses for expression. Service is that lively expression. But we are not saved to serve, for serving is not the focal point of God's salvation. Rather, we are saved to belong to Jesus, to know Him now and for all eternity. Oswald Chambers once said, "We are saved and sanctified not for service, but to be absolutely Jesus Christ's, the consuming passion of the life is for Him."

I recently read of a Christian husband who left his ministry to stay home and care for his beloved wife. She has Alzheimer's and now needs constant care. It's obvious that they share a lavish love for each other. He commented, "She is such a delight to me. I don't *have* to care for her, I *get* to." Such is the essence of serving God. I don't *have* to serve Jesus, I *get* to serve Him! Service is the valve which releases the pressure in a Christian's heart bursting with praise.

We serve in the context of the Church, the Body of Christ. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, encourages believers to grow up into Christ. That is, the Body should correspond to its Head. It is true, as Lenski says, "The body cannot remain an 'infant' indefinitely." It is Christ "from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the

body for the building up of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:16). It is Jesus, the Source and Sustainer of the Body, who enables His people to serve in concert building up the Body.

Every Christian has a place of service in the fellowship of believers. Some serve on committees, some counsel the hurting; some varnish the pews, some visit the lonely; some teach classes, some travel as missionaries; some prepare food, some preach messages. I think of a lady, loved by Jesus and loving Him, who serves by taking her pastor's young children for a day now and then, so that the pastor and his wife can have some time together. She would never think of preaching a sermon in church, but her joyful service is a silent sermon whose message cannot be denied.

The "proper working of each individual part" means that, as each Christian serves, something is supplied for the good of the other members of the body. The "body builds up itself in love," love for Jesus and for one another. There is no room for personal agendas and pampered egos. Rather, "teamwork" describes life together in Christ.

It was teamwork that enabled the 1984 U.S.A. Olympic basketball team to win the gold. In fact, after winning the first three games the reporters praised the coach for his ability to get near perfect teamwork from great individual stars. "Yes," the coach replied, "I'd like to see ten of you egomaniacs write a column together!" There are no individual stars in the Church. We serve together, we work together. As Austin Lewis once said, "The Christian who tugs on the oars hasn't time to rock the boat."

Serving doesn't mean conceit, it means Christ. Serving doesn't mean duty, it means delight. Someone once described missionaries as a "bunch of nobodies trying to exalt Somebody." That's what servers are, "nobodies", and that's what servers do, "exalt Somebody". With the help of the Holy Spirit, keep on serving, expressing your love for such a lovely Savior who, while we were yet sinners, died for us. Hallelujah!

(Dr. Lombardo is the professor of Practical Theology at the AFLC Schools.)

"Service is the valve which releases the pressure in a Christian's heart bursting with praise."



— By Steven C. Lombardo

Who are the ones chosen at annual conferences to serve on the various boards and committees? They are only names to some who vote, perhaps selecting them on the basis of area or incumbency...or because the names are easy to spell!

But our board members are real people, and the purpose of this profile to take a small step in the direction of helping our readers get better acquainted with some of those who serve us.

A survey form was distributed at the all-boards workshop in September, and the following glimpses into the lives of these special people are gleaned from the information received at that time.

The first fact that emerged from the surveys was no surprise: most of our board members live in Minnesota or North Dakota. But this should not seem strange, considering that over half of our congregations are located in these two states, and that our church body is headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The surprising side of this aspect of the survey was to see how many other states were represented: Illinois (the next highest number in attendance), Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, and South

Dakota, as well as the western states of Arizona, California, Oregon, and Washington. It was clear that the AFLC is growing to be more of a national church body, and that location is no barrier to service.

Ken and Barb Moland, Kirkland, Washington, one of the two husband/wife teams at the workshop, mentioned this dimension of their involvement. Ken, chairman of the Schools' Board of Trustees, and Barb, a member of the Board of Publications and Parish Education, find it difficult to complete assignments and schedule meetings with his pastoral duties and their fami-

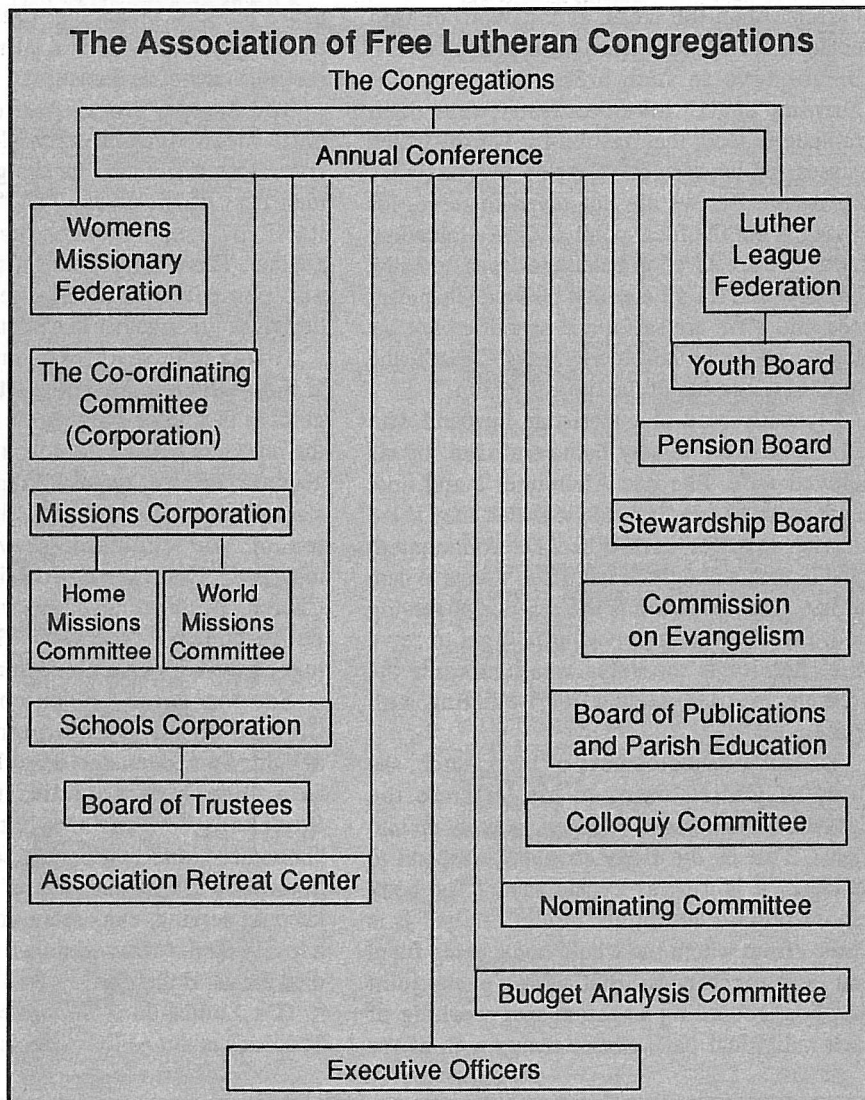
ly commitments (they have six children), but are convinced that their involvement brings the West Coast district "closer to headquarters."

Both also refer to the rewards of serving in areas of our common work for which they have a special concern, as well as the good fellowship with others who share the same love.

The results of the survey reinforced the conviction that Bible School is an important preparation for service. Almost half of those who responded had attended such a school, including Lutheran Bible Institutes in Minneapolis, California, and Washington, and



Rev. Eugene Enderlein, World Missions director and Marlene Unverzagt, AFLC bookkeeper.



WHO SERVE US

our own AFLBS. All but one of the members of our Board of Trustees are former Bible school students — the exception is Pastor Moland, who was fortunate enough to marry one! (He may also qualify on the basis of the fact that he is the former dean of AFLBS).

Pastors seem to predominate on the boards, if our unscientific sampling is any indication. It may be a surprise to see homemakers placing second (because of the national WMF officers present at the workshop); but this must be qualified by the fact that some are involved in part-time employment outside the home. Farmers are next on the list, and the fourth category is "retired." All of the above are vocations that are flexible enough to permit people to attend Tuesday workshops, which is sure to be reflected in the results.

But it was striking to see the variety of other vocations, too. LaVern Thompson, Fergus Falls, Minnesota, a member of the Pension Board since 1983, is the superintendent of a chemical dependency treatment center. Randy Sommer, Chillicothe, Illinois, a new member of the World Missions Committee, is an engineer with Caterpillar, Inc. Ralph Peterson, who serves on the Board of Trustees, is the owner of a furniture store in Mayville, North Dakota. Mary Lindquist, associate professor of special education at the University of North Dakota (Grand Forks), has served since 1982 on the Board of Publications and Parish Education.

The old adage advises us, when we want to get something done, to find a busy person. The members of our AFLC committees and boards are no exceptions to this rule. Several mention their pro-life involvement. LaVern Thompson is a state leader for the *Gideons*; Mike McCarlson, Webster, South Dakota, a new member of the Co-ordinating Committee, is president of the local camp of the same organization.

Pastor Ted Kennedy, Jr., who serves a bilingual congregation in Nogales,

Arizona, mentions several areas of special interest, including membership on the boards of an association against substance misuse and the "Very Special Arts" organization. He was elected in 1989 to our World Missions Committee.

Many also serve on local boards in home communities, and it goes without saying that their resumes include long lists of church involvements in the congregations to which they belong.

These busy people even have time for hobbies, and seem to approach them with the same dedication and enthusiasm that mark their AFLC service. Fishing, hunting, gardening, and sports were frequently mentioned, together with other outdoor activities such as traveling, camping, and hiking. Pastor Frank Cherney, Arlington, Washington, who serves on the Pension Board, and Owen Myhre, Abercrombie, North Dakota, a Home Mission Committee member, are both ham radio operators, with the latter frequently in contact with our Brazil missionaries.

Some find time to follow professional sports, and Pastor Keith Quanbeck, Camarillo, California, a Youth Board member, concluded his survey form with the words, "Go Dodgers!" Rumor has it that his name has even appeared in lights at the stadium in Los

Angeles...ask him about it sometime.

All of those who serve in any way within the AFLC would hopefully be able to echo the words of Mike McCarlson: "It is exciting to be involved!" But he expresses the fact that it is also a humbling experience, especially as one realizes the "awesomeness" of our common endeavors.

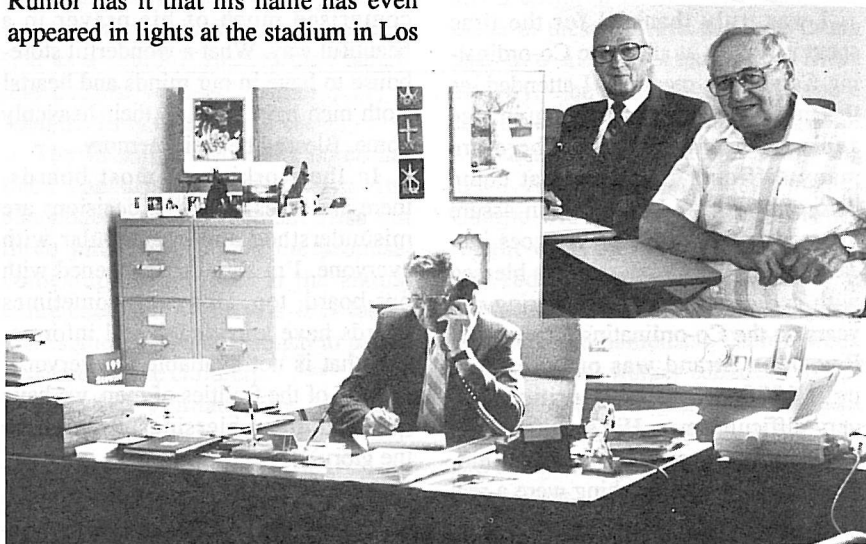
McCarlson, a young South Dakota farmer and father of four children, puts his goals as a new board member in words, as follows: "I would hope, Lord willing, that I can have an impact, first, in the Association, hanging on to the good qualities we have." His second concern is to be an impact for change in the areas where we might be doing "less than our best for the Lord and His work."

Some are new to the fellowship. Others have been in the AFLC from the beginning. Kent Quanbeck, a McVile, North Dakota, farmer and member of the Board of Trustees, has attended every annual conference since 1962, and Ralph Peterson, another member of the same board, belongs to the first graduating class of AFLBS.

Many different people from many different places. Gifted people who are giving time and talent to the Lord's service through our church family.

All glory be to God!

—Robert L. Lee



President Richard Snipstead at his office. (Inset) World Mission Committee members, Rev. Einar Unseth and Mr. Vernon Russum.

In June, 1970, I had the honor of being elected to the Co-ordinating Committee of the AFLC. Now I have been asked to share some thoughts about the ten years that I served on this board. I remember how surprised I was when I came to the Annual Conference that year and was asked if I would object to having my name placed in nomination for this position. I said that I would need time to talk it over with my wife. We were the owners of a retail business and, since she was working with me part-time, it would mean more work for her. It says in I Corinthians 3:9, "For we are fellow workmen for God; you are God's field, God's building." We decided to place it in God's hands and trust Him for the future. I was elected and began to serve my first term in the fall of that same year.

Our congregation, New Luther Valley Church, was a member of the Lutheran Free Church before 1962, and we have been with the AFLC from the beginning. I appreciated the firm stand that had been taken on the inerrancy of the Bible, and the decision to continue under the "Fundamental Principles and Rules for Work" that encouraged the work of "free and living congregations."

The 1970 Conference was the eighth one for the AFLC. God had blessed the work, and from a small beginning the roster now numbered 107 congregations.

I was truly thankful for the time spent in prayer at all of the Co-ordinating Committee meetings I attended, as the members sought God's guidance and wisdom for the day. There are many difficult decisions that come before the AFLC boards. I can assure the readers that much prayer goes into each decision. Our church was blessed with dedicated leadership during my years on the Co-ordinating Committee. Rev. John Strand was our president until 1978. He served during some very difficult times. His steadfast faith in God and his emphasis on sound biblical and Lutheran teaching were a real inspiration. Rev. Richard Snipstead, who succeeded him in 1978, had also been with the AFLC from the begin-

RECOLLECTIONS OF ONE WHO SERVED

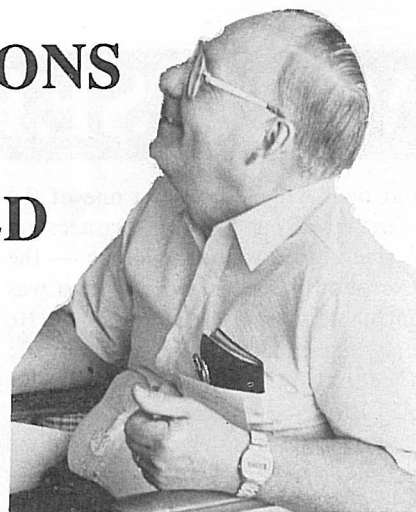
by Clarence W. Quanbeck
McVie, North Dakota

ning. He was well acquainted with all departments of the church, having served both as dean of the Bible School and as parish pastor. He had a real concern that the work of the AFLC should continue and grow.

I served with many different pastors and laymen during those ten years, and realize how blessed we were to have men who were willing to take time from their own occupations to serve on the boards of our church. Many lasting friendships developed during those years. I cannot name them all, but there are two who merit special mention. Rev. Julius Hermunsle was with the AFLC when it was only a small group of pastors and lay people gathered for Bible study and prayer. His deliberate and thoughtful statements on Lutheran doctrine were always worth hearing. They were a great help to me as well as a solid influence on the church. Also, I especially remember Rev. Harry Molstre's prayers. He had committed much Scripture to memory, so that, as he prayed, the Word of God comprised much of his prayer in a beautiful way. What a wonderful storehouse to have in our minds and hearts! Both men have gone to their heavenly home. Blessed be their memory.

In the working of most boards, there are times when the decisions are misunderstood and not popular with everyone. I'm sure that happened with our board, too. However, sometimes boards have knowledge and information that is not available to everyone. In spite of the frailties of men, we have received many blessings. To God be the glory.

I would like to add another personal note. God blessed our business with growth during these years, and provided for all of our needs. During the



many years that I traveled to board meetings, often alone, in winter and summer, the only car trouble I ever had was one flat tire in a city where it was quickly repaired. God does take care of His own.

In closing, I would ask all of you to remember our president and other officers, pastors, board members and others who serve in your prayers. God is a living God who hears when we call to Him.

The Near East crisis and Ezekial's prophecy

During the past month or so a number of people, both members and non-members, have been asking me, and I suppose most other pastors have also been asked the following question: "Pastor, what do you think of the situation in the Persian Gulf? Do you think that this could be the fulfillment of Ezekial chapters 38 and 39?"

Many different answers are being given over radio and television by preachers and Bible teachers of many different backgrounds. While I know full well that not all Bible students will agree with what I have to say on the subject (perhaps even some of the AFLC theologians may disagree), my answer is this: "No, I do not see this present Middle East crisis as a fulfillment of Ezekial's prophecy."

AFLBS alumni offer 1991 calendars

Over 1,000 students have passed through the doors of AFLBS since its beginning nearly 25 years ago. The results are students who are further educated in the Word of God and better prepared for the life ahead. II Timothy 3:17 says, "That the man of God may become adequately equipped for every good work."

In thankfulness for these enriching years of education and fellowship, we, the AFLBS Alumni Association, have compiled the first ever 1991 AFLBS Calendar. Hopefully, this can be an annual endeavor.

This calendar project gives three wonderful opportunities:

- 1) It promotes AFLBS and familiarizes people with the campus and events taking place.
- 2) It can assist in providing grants available to Bible School students.
- 3) It gives each of us, as Alumni and friends, the opportunity to be partners in this ministry through the sale of the calendars.

If you are interested in selling calendars, as the delegate from your church or as an individual not necessarily representing a church, please contact the address or phone number below.

If you sell 10 calendars, the church you attend gets one free. If you sell 20, you get one free. These calendars contain 12 months of beautiful color photos, inspirational Scripture verses, plus all the major events happening in our AFLC Schools. They would make great gifts or Christmas presents. The cost per calendar is only \$7.00. If you wish to order by mail please add \$.50 per calendar for postage and handling.

AFLBS Alumni Calendar

Attn: Alan Arneson

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard

Plymouth, Minnesota 55441

or Call (612) 535-2995 or

(612) 593-0149.

— *The AFLBS Alumni Committee*

Seminary faculty and students receive grant

APPLETON, WISCONSIN — The Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary, Minneapolis, has been awarded a \$5,800 grant from Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL).

The grant will provide financial assistance for students and help pay some continuing education expenses for faculty members. The grant also will cover tuition costs for approximately 35 pastors taking courses to enhance their skills in preaching, teaching, counseling and administration.

The money has been awarded to Free Lutheran Theological Seminary through AAL's Church Vocations Enrichment Program.

According to Charles Bose, manager of the AAL grant program, "The program helps the various Lutheran seminaries provide educational growth opportunities to those who are or will be pastors in the Lutheran community."

IN MY OPINION

Events may later prove me wrong, but from my present knowledge of the Bible I do not yet see this as a fulfillment of Ezekial's prophecy. Why not? Because, as I understand the Book of Ezekial, chapters 36-39 are all parts of the same general prophecy of the last times, and there are several things which must first be fulfilled before the great attack on Israel will occur. Let me list some of them for you:

1. According to chapter 36, the "heathen" must be driven from the land and Israel must have full possession. This is not the case today.

2. Israel as a nation must be living in peace, without fear, before this attack can occur. But today the nation is an armed camp, prepared for war.

3. In the battle between forces of God-Magog and Israel, it appears that Israel will not have the armaments to successfully repel the invaders. Yet today the nation has plenty of weapons, and the U.S. is ready to supply her with

more. The situation in Ezekial 39, as I see it, will be something like it was in the days of Gideon. Israel's power will seem so insignificant that God alone will receive the glory for the victory.

These are only a few of the reasons behind my answer. I do not intend to be dogmatic about it nor to insist that mine is the only valid opinion.

I personally believe that Saddam Hussein is the key to the present crisis. He started it, and I believe that he will likely finish it. But he will do so with as little loss to himself as possible. Saddam is a typical bully, flexing his muscles to make the world (or at least the Arabs) believe that he is in control.

Like most bullies, however, I believe that he has a streak of coward in him. I look for Saddam to try to drive us to the very brink of war. There may even be a few shots fired, but he knows that he cannot win. I look for him to back down and settle the crisis diplomatically just before he touches

off a major conflict. But he must do it in such a way that will make the other Arabs at least think that he is the one who made peace. He doesn't dare to lose face in the eyes of the Arab world.

But even if the Iraqi dictator does back down and ends the current crisis, I am convinced that he is still a very dangerous man. As long as he is living he will remain a threat to world peace and especially to Israel. We must keep an eye on this man. He may well end the present crisis and then, like a desert rattlesnake, suddenly coil and strike again when the world least expects. Saddam's ultimate goal is to set the entire Arab world against Israel to wipe out that country. As long as he is in power, he will try again. We must not trust his pretense for peace.

— *Pastor Robert D. Giles*
Tucson, Arizona

THE CHRISTIAN'S SOURCE OF JOY

"Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice."

Philippians 4:4

Perhaps you, too, may have made the observation that many of those who talk much in holy phraseology give little evidence of true Christian joy in their daily living.

The testimony that really counts often comes through the soul who demonstrates a rugged, sturdy, simple faith. The drawing on the riches of God's all-sufficient grace produces that inner joy of which Paul writes. It is the kind of joy that could cry out from a Roman prison, "Rejoice in the Lord alway." What a privilege it is for the Christian to experience his joy in God, and God alone, at all times, in all places, under all circumstances. The Psalmist had experienced the reality of that, as he stated, "In thy presence is fullness of joy" (Psalm 16:11). We rejoice in God because of who He is.

The "joy of the Lord" is so vital for the Christian as he seeks to be a witness for his Lord. In Nehemiah 8:10, we are told that "the joy of the Lord is our strength. In Galatians 5:22, we are told that "joy" is the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

As individual believers, within the membership of our

congregations and within the larger fellowship of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, it is vital that the genuine "joy of the Lord" be the hallmark of our Christianity.

I find myself making statements to the effect that "God has been so good to us as an AFLC." "He has blessed us beyond measure." "We have so much for which we should praise Him." This is well and good. But what if God should not be pouring out an abundant blessing at some point in our lives or at some time in the church? Do we still rejoice? The words of the Psalmist come to us again: "Delight thyself also in the Lord: and He will give thee the desires of thy heart."

Within our AFLC we are much aware of what God has been doing. We are also aware of many needs within our Church. Many of us have many desires for our AFLC. May the Spirit of God so renew our personal relationship to Christ, that His joy may permeate our lives. Oh, that our delight might be so centered in God that we would see Him fulfilling our desires for our Church.

Rev. Richard Snipstead

Meet our Michigan Home Mission work

The beginning of the Escanaba Free Lutheran Church, our Home Mission congregation in Escanaba, Michigan, located on the northwestern tip of beautiful Lake Michigan, was not according to the traditionally recommended procedure. Normally a congregation begins with a nucleus of dedi-



cated Christians desiring biblical Lutheranism.

Instead the Home Mission Committee, seeing the potential for an AFLC congregation, purchased an available church building and parsonage first and then began the work of gathering together like-minded Lutheran Christians.

The first service was held in 1981, but official organization as a congregation did not take place until 1984. Pastoral leadership in the beginning was provided by Seminarian Peter Franz. Pastor Gary Skramstad was the first resident pastor, serving from 1981-83. During the first winter there were Sundays when the only ones meeting for worship were the pastor's family and one faithful woman. Incidentally, this faithful woman never gave up. She is still with the congregation and currently serves as its secretary. The Lord, however, was faithful and blessed the congregation causing numerical, and most importantly, spiritual growth so that today it is an active, living congregation dedicated to sharing Christ with those about them.

Other pastors who have served

include Pastor Richard Gunderson, 1983-86. Interim Pastors Ernest Langness and Roger Krueger, 1987-88, and Pastor Jerome Nikunen 1989-. Orville Jensen, a member of the congregation, has also faithfully served the congregation during pastoral vacancies.

Down through the years Escanaba Free Lutheran Church's outreach has included Sunday School, V. B. S., Teens, Youth Group puppet ministry, W. M. F., Men's Bible Study, Men's Prayer Breakfast, Boy's Brigade, Confirmation Classes, Adult Instruction and a nursing home ministry. At least once each month the congregation family meets for fellowship and supper. Special events for congregational fellowship this year have included an old-fashioned horsedrawn sleigh ride during the winter, and a picnic this summer.

The potential seen by the Home Mission Committee in 1981 still exists. A recent estimate sets the number of Lutherans in Escanaba in excess of 5,000. Many of these are becoming increasingly concerned about what's happening in their churches. Others, equally concerned about the direction

EDITORIALS

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

It's exciting to be a part of a growing church family! I hope that is true for your local congregation as it is for our AFLC. Surely one of the ways in which God answered our prayers for spiritual awakening has been the welcome addition of so many new congregations during the past few years.

One of the challenges that faces a growing family is the need to get to know one another.

Consider the annual conferences, for example. It seems to this seasoned observer that a strong majority of delegates are well acquainted with the people and procedures of conference actions. But this is changing, and one can sense a spirit of frustration at times as those who are new to the family struggle to follow the unfamiliar structure and the nomination of unfamiliar names.

This issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* seeks to be a step in the right direction. We want all of you to get to know our church body better. The structure of the AFLC is illustrated. The boards and committees are introduced.

But we need to get to know you, too. The call has been included in many issues of this paper, and now it comes again. What's happening in your congregation that could be of interest to our church family? Do you have a local or district correspondent? Is *The Lutheran Ambassador* on the mailing list for your church newsletter?

Praise God for the challenge! Please help our paper to be a part of the answer as we grow together. Heart to heart. Hand in hand.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The religion editor for a midwestern newspaper called me a couple of months ago with a question. He was wondering about the word from the pulpit concerning the present Middle East crisis. Does it relate to the Book of

Revelation? Do Ezekial's prophecies pertain to modern events? Could Armageddon be around the corner?

This issue includes one pastor's opinion. Other readers will disagree. Most discussions of eschatology (study of the end times) within the AFLC seem to spark both heat and light.

It is difficult to comment on current events in a church paper like ours. The details may be outdated by the time you read them. Presently the crisis continues to escalate, and informed sources speculate about when, not if, there will be war.

It is difficult, too, to resist the temptation of relating current events to Bible prophesy in a dogmatic manner. Most of us have lived long enough to recall many mistaken interpretations. Neither J. F. Kennedy nor Henry Kissinger was the final Anti-Christ. The unification of Jerusalem in 1967 did not terminate the times of the Gentiles. The 88 reasons why the Rapture would occur in 1988 were all refuted on January 1, 1989.

We need to take care not to compromise the message of the clear teachings of God's Word by indulging in sensational interpretations. A little humility doesn't hurt.

The Bible speaks of wars and rumors of wars (Matthew 24:6), and seems to suggest that this will be true until Christ returns. The Persian Gulf crisis is a warning to our world of the way in which one belligerent nation can bring us to the brink of war, in spite of super-power accord.

Remember to pray for the world leaders during these troubled times, that peace might prevail. Remember our soldiers, too, and the chaplains who minister to them.

Remember that we are living in the last days (Hebrews 1:1-2). Jesus Christ is coming again. The believer's blessed hope still brings peace to heart and home in a world on the brink of confusion and chaos.

Perhaps today!

their churches are taking, come to us from other denominations. In spite of the fact that we have 29 Protestant and Catholic churches, there still are many unchurched to whom we are also reaching out.

Yes, the potential for a living congregation still exists here in Escanaba and the opportunities are limitless. Just as Paul heard the Macedonian call, the Home Mission Committee saw the vision of our congregation. The Lord has blessed His work here and we ask that you pray with us for His continued blessing.

— Rev. Jerome C. Nikunen

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
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AFLC Benevolences – February 1 - September 30

FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	REC'D IN SEPTEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	%* TOTAL
General Fund	\$ 223,110.00	\$14,064.09	\$110,957.51	50
Schools - (AFLTS) . .	136,822.00	2,848.47	38,199.96	28
(AFLBS) . .	186,850.00	5,547.51	67,922.56	36
Home Missions.	433,616.00	11,070.86	175,639.77	41
World Missions.	366,197.00	7,783.68	128,739.63	35
Capital Investment . .	30,000.00	687.57	15,475.36	52
Parish Education . . .	64,970.00	1,842.14	30,636.68	47
TOTALS	\$1,441,565.00	\$43,844.32	\$567,571.47	39
1989 - 1990	\$1,308,281.00	\$74,259.93	\$535,952.24	41
*Goal 67%				

Seminary dean and wife visit Brazil mission

A dream come true!

—by Dr. Francis Monseth

An invitation arrived to take part in a seminar at Campo Mourao, Brazil, for the seminary and Bible school students, the national pastors, and our missionary staff. Ellen and I had several months to look forward to our mission field visit, and as the time of our August departure drew nearer, our anticipation increased. It seemed like a dream, and now it was about to become a dream come true!

We reflected on our first exposure to AFLC mission work in Brazil during the early 1960's. We remembered scenes from slide programs presented by our missionaries, the muddy roads and the red soil which would even color the air when dry. We recalled some of the early church buildings, beautiful in their simplicity, and, most of all, the faces of young and old that graced the screens.

We thought of our missionary families: the John Abel's, whom God used so effectively in evangelism and in establishing congregations; the George Knapp's, gifted in so many practical aspects of ministry and so willing to help wherever needed; and the Connelly Dyrud's, who provided able leadership and wise administration in various phases of the mission. What a wonderful privilege it was going to be to actually see firsthand the great work which God has given us in Brazil!

Although a small book could be written on our trip, we offer these highlights and impressions so that the reader can get a fresh perspective of the wonderful work God has done during the first quarter century of AFLC missions, as well as of the great opportunities and needs that still exist.

Campo Mourao

This growing city of almost 100,000 is the headquarters of our work in Brazil. The seminary and Bible school are located on a hillside overlooking the city. The student bodies consist of happy, earnest Christians. The national pastors who serve on the faculty are gifted and humble men. There is a very good working relationship between them and our American missionary personnel.

The campus has undergone quite a transformation in the past few years. There is a new chapel building and a new men's dormitory. A new women's dormitory as well as an orphanage building are under construction, too, with the latter intended to provide facilities for the care of twenty children.

There are four AFLC congregations in Campo Mourao. Central Church is the oldest and largest, operating a Christian pre-school program and active in evangelistic and social ministries. A large sanctuary is under construction adjacent to the present facilities.

Other congregations in Campo Mourao include Lar Parana, the closest to the campus; Cohapar, in a southern suburb; and a new mission in the northern part of the city. The progress and growth of our work in Campo Mourao are cause for thanksgiving and praise to God.

Curitiba

Pastor and Mrs. Paul Abel serve two congregations in this city of one and a half million. It was a joy to meet several new Christians there and to note with thanksgiving the strategic ministry given to each church.

The Abels open their home to many people who stay with them for longer and shorter periods. This ministry of Christian hospitality has enhanced the outreach of the Curitiba work, and there is much reason to praise God for the progress here.

Vitoria

There are also two AFLC congregations in this coastal city. Pastor and Mrs. David Abel labor in a field of great opportunity. Much spiritual fruit has been seen in the relatively short history of this work, and what a blessing it was to meet many recent converts as well as those who have walked with the Lord for many years!

It was also our privilege to visit congregations at Iretama and Foz do Iguacu. Again we praise the Lord for the steady growth of these churches and the able leadership He has provided for them. Our national pastors are intent on building free and living Lutheran congregations.

God has mightily blessed the AFLC mission work in Brazil these first 25 years! Let us thank Him for all that He has done and for the way He has used our missionaries to extend and sup-



Dr. and Mrs. Monseth standing at the entrance to the AFLC Schools.

port the effective work done by the national church. This is like a dream come true, too.

Even as we thank God, let us join with our Brazilian brothers and sisters in supporting their dream of continuing to expand into more major cities of Brazil as well as renewing efforts in Paraguay. There has been much accomplished to the glory of God. There is much more to do. May God help us to do our part in this great mission opportunity.



Ellen Monseth and one of the orphans.

“And she opened it (the basket), and saw the child: and behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, this is one of the Hebrew children. Then said his sister to Pharaoh’s daughter, shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?”



Missionaries John and Ruby Abel gathered all their children together last summer for the first time in over fourteen years. They met at the Paul Abel home in Curitiba, Brazil. Adults pictured (l. to r.): David (son) and Janet; Tamba and Jonathan (son); Priscilla (daughter); Nathaniel (son); Lydia (daughter); Becky and Paul (son); Debbie (daughter) and Fred. Pastor and Mrs. Abel are seated and surrounded by thirteen grandchildren.

THE ASSOCIATION FREE LUTHERAN

EXODUS 2:6-7

MIRIAM INFANT HOME

We hear the childrens’ cry

—by Missionary C. J. Dyrud

There are over 10 million abandoned children on the streets of Brazil today. Tomorrow the majority of these rejected boys will be drug addicts and criminals and many of these girls will become prostitutes. What is our obligation as a church? To help the “fatherless and the widows” (James 1:27) is what the Lord demands of us.

The Brazilian National Church has been concerned about the growing abandoned children problem these last three years. Every year the proposal comes up on the floor at the annual conference and every year it is tabled until someone could be found to parent and care for the children.

This last January, the Missions Field Conference included in our ten-year plan the goal of starting an orphanage and reaching out to the homeless. Now it seems that the Lord is pushing us along faster than we expected because doors are opening

beyond our plans and imaginations.

It all started like this: Our oldest member in Central Church called two weeks ago to tell us that her 33 year-old daughter died unexpectedly and left 5 children from 1-10 years. The father of these children is a local drunk and had all but abandoned them already. The social worker in town called us and pleaded for help: “Who will take care of these children?” she asked. Also, two weeks ago, a man in Campo Mourao came home drunk, fought with his wife, shot and killed her. Today he is in jail, his wife is in the cemetery, and 5 children, 10 years on down are homeless. Then a week ago, the social worker called me again. “Pastor,” she said, “this last weekend a drunken husband fought with his wife and stabbed her to death and there are 3 homeless children on the streets. Is there any way your church can help?” She also mentioned, “I know your mission here in Brazil, and it has been

ORPHANS

highly respected over the years, and these little children need Christian love and upbringing. Your people, I know, could fill that need."

When a plea like this comes from an unsaved but caring person, it makes it really difficult for me to go to bed at night and know that those children and millions more are lying on the dirty streets crying every night, because they are hungry, afraid and know that no one loves them or wants them.

Then another push came. A young widow in our Lar Parana Church said she would be willing to leave her job and take care of some orphans for us. Within the same week my sister telephoned from the United States, and as I shared with her these happenings, she said, "I want to help. I'll give \$1,000 to start building an orphanage in Brazil." Another brother telephoned to wish me a happy birthday. He asked about the work in Brazil and I shared with him about the orphanage. He said, "I would like to support a child monthly at \$25."

The AFLC National Council of Brazil accepted as an answer to prayers the widow's willingness to help with the orphans and also the social worker's urgent plea for help to take care of the abandoned children, plus the enthusiasm from friends in the States, as a "go ahead" signal from the Lord.

The plan for our orphanage would be as follows:

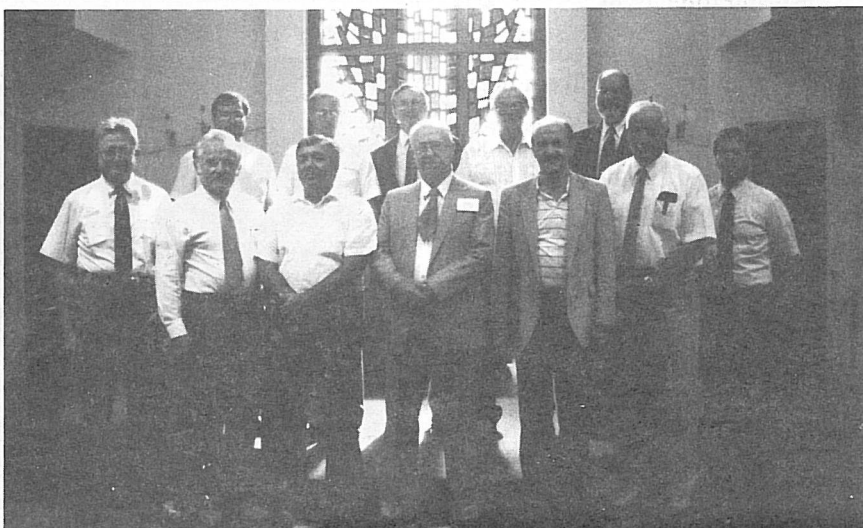
1) Take the babies that have been abandoned in the hospitals by their mothers. These babies will be legally up for adoption, but the legal process could last weeks. We will work with the social worker and judge.

2) Open our doors to children who find themselves suddenly orphaned or abandoned because of accidents and deaths to one or both of the parents.

3) The social worker stated that little girls through age 12 are the most rejected in Brazil. We are planning to reach out more to this needy group.

4) Stateside couples can adopt these Brazilian babies, too. However, Brazilian law requires that adopting parents stay in Brazil with the baby for at least one month.

First southern states conference



Row 1 (l. to r.): Pastor Robert Giles, Tucson, Arizona; Pastor Vincent Will, Springfield, Missouri; Pastor Ted Kennedy, Nogales, Arizona; Mr. Adrian Hamann, Tucson, Arizona; Pastor Gerald Peterson, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Mr. Earl Huebner, Mountain Home, Arkansas; Pastor Michael Crowell, Wichita Falls, Texas. Row 2: Pastor Don Voorhees, Pleasanton, Texas; Pastor Richard Snipstead, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Pastor Orville Hepler, Fallbrook, California; Mr. Ernest Schneider, Wichita Falls, Texas; Pastor Willard Conradson, Salem, Alabama.

5) The city mayor, alderman, juvenile lawyer and social workers are giving us legal advice and helping us to organize and register the Association Free Lutheran Orphanage in Brazil.

At the January missions committee meeting a new girls' dorm was approved, but building was conditional upon the funds that came in. The National Council agreed to building the girls' dorm with matching funds from the States. In other words, for every dollar spent in Brazil, the States will match it.

The new girl's dorm would be a replica of the new boys' dorm, which was completed in 1988. That cost \$20,000. The matching fund program would ask for only half, or \$10,000 from the U.S.A., as the AFLC of Brazil would provide the other half.

The plans for the orphanage building would be to build near the Bible School Campus, but the two constructions would proceed together as the funds came in. The estimated cost for the orphanage is \$10,000. This first unit would hold from 15-20 children, depending on the ages of the children.

In conclusion, the name of the orphanage would be "The Association

Free Lutheran Miriam Infant Home," with reference to Exodus 2:6-7.

There are millions of innocent children, just as baby Moses floating in a basket, on the seas of life who are complete at the mercy of our societies. They did not ask to come into this world, nor did they have anything to do with the society that put them in a basket. Now the question is "Will you and I have compassion on them, The Little Ones, who may become future leaders like Moses?"

In future *Lutheran Ambassador* issues, we are going to present a series on the abandoned children in our care. The series will be called, "From the Baby Basket." As the babies come to the Miriam Infant Home, we will tell you a little about each one. Missionary C. J. Dyrud will write the articles for them.

Keep in mind that we are starting out as a foster home until all the legal paper work is done. That means that each child that comes to our Infant Home from the juvenile judge is up for legal adoption and we are guardians of these babies until adoptive homes are secured in Brazil.

An inspirational conference was held in Amarillo, Texas, on September 5th for AFLC pastors and their wives, together with interested guests. Over twenty people were in attendance at this unique gathering.

The conference, borrowing the facilities of a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregation, began at 8:30 a.m. with a service of Holy Communion. The schedule for the rest of the morning included a presentation by AFLC President Richard Snipstead, outlining the history of our church body, and followed by a discussion on the Fundamental Principles and Rules for Work.

Pastor Michael Crowell was the afternoon Bible teacher, and the conference concluded with a discussion of plans for future meetings. Those present, representing seven different states, agreed to continue these fellowship conferences on an annual basis.

Northern Michigan District meets

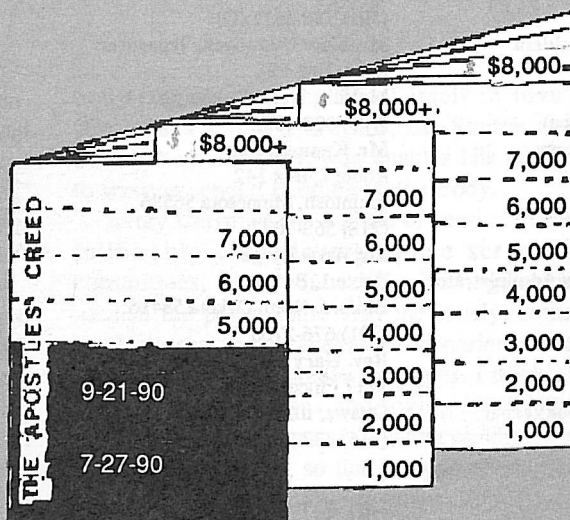
The Northern Michigan District held its annual meeting in conjunction with the Fall WMF Rally and Men's fellowship on Saturday, September 15, at Maranatha Free Lutheran Church in Chassell.

It was estimated that at least seventy persons were in attendance, approximately 20 men and over 50 women. They represented all of the district's six congregations.

Men and women met separately in the morning as the ladies heard from former missionary Helen Knapp and the men from Pastor George Knapp. The Knapps have recently retired after more than 30 years of service on the mission field in Brazil.

In the afternoon, all participants gathered together to hear the Knapps share from their experiences during 32 years as missionaries. They were accompanied by daughter, Carol, and Neusa da Silva, a former student at the Bible School in Brazil, who now lives in Canada and was visiting with the Knapp family for a few weeks. Special music was provided by the Art Hill

Let's Print A Book!



**\$24,000
by
April,
1991**

New 4th Grade Books

The Board of Parish Education has established a book fund for the purpose of printing the new, revised 4th grade student books and teacher's manuals, \$24,000 is needed by April 1, 1991, in order to have the books ready for use in the 1991-1992 school year. Any gift designated for the *4th Grade Book Fund* will be set aside for that purpose. Other gifts will be used for other printing and operating expenses.

The NEW 4th Grade Sunday School books will teach the meaning of The Apostles' Creed according to the Bible. They will provide nurture in the Lutheran faith which will result in Biblical, personal, living Christianity. These books are written at grade level and are accompanied by detailed, informative teacher's manuals.

Perhaps you can join us in this endeavor by sending a gift to the *4th Grade Book Fund*. If that is not possible, please pray with us that we will be faithful to the work God has given us, knowing that in His time and provision these books will be completed. Thank you for praying for this and all AFLC ministries.

In memoriam

NORTH DAKOTA

Grand Forks

Mr. Palmer T. Isakson, 84,
September 17, Trinity.

family from Maranatha.

The district business meeting followed, and the day was concluded with a coffee hour in the church basement.

Many thanks to host pastor, Jerry Holmaas, and the congregation in Chassell for their hospitality.

Pastor John Mundfrom
District Secretary

"Lighthouses blow no horns;
they only shine." (Selected)

Personalities

Dr. Wayne Sletten, Faith, South Dakota, has resigned from his position on the Stewardship Board. Dr. Sletten operates a veterinary clinic that serves a wide area in western South Dakota, and the pressures of his business have made it difficult for him to be an active board member. His position on the board will be filled by a Co-ordinating Committee appointment until the annual conference.

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November 1-4

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Greenbush, Minnesota

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Schools.

November 4-7

Hosanna Free Lutheran

St. James, Minnesota

Speaker: Rev. David Barnhart, Min-
neapolis.

November 4-7

Our Saviour's Lutheran

Thief River Falls, Minnesota

Speaker: Rev. Dale Mellgren, Tioga,
North Dakota

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.

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Second-Class

Oregon Church celebrates centennial

Bethany Lutheran Church, Astoria, Oregon, celebrated a centennial anniversary on the weekend of August 11-12, as the climax to a most eventful year.

It was one year ago in August that the new church building was dedicated. Dr. Francis Monseth, AFLTS dean, shared the Word of God during special services from August 16-18, and AFLC President Richard Snipstead officiated at the service of dedication on Sunday, August 20. The day concluded with a Praise Service, as the congregation thanked God for a beautiful new house of worship.

The first activity in the new building was the golden anniversary open house for one of Bethany's retired pastors and his wife, Rev. Hans and Ruth Tollefson, with a program in the new church followed by a reception in the old.

The 100th anniversary schedule began on Saturday, August 11, with a banquet and program at the Red Lion Inn. Greetings were given by former pastors Hans Tollefson and Ray Persson, and Willis Tofte, son of former pastor James Tofte, spoke on behalf of his father, who is a nursing home resident in Minnesota. A written greeting was received from another former pastor, Rev. Arthur Reesnes.

Scripture and prayer were shared by Rev. Craig Johnson, a son of the con-



Rev. and Mrs. Alvin Grothe, President Snipstead, Rev. and Mrs. Hans Tollefson and Rev. and Mrs. Ray Persson.

gregation who serves the AFLC church at Eugene, Oregon, and the guest speaker for the banquet was Rev. Richard Snipstead. Over 170 members and friends were in attendance, including two daughters of charter members, Agnes (Lillenas) Jeppeson and Anna Helmersen.

The centennial weekend was concluded with a communion service on Sunday morning. The new church was filled almost to capacity, with many guests from out of town, and the message was again presented by Rev. Snipstead.

Another highlight of the celebration was the arrangement by a Bethany member, Paul Stangland, with the help of his son and daughter, of most of the confirmation pictures for the past 100 years in special frames. The names of those from missing photos were included in frames, too, written in calligraphy lettering.

Bethany Congregation was organized on October 6, 1890, as a member of the United Norwegian Lutheran

Church. It affiliated with the new Lutheran Free Church in 1899, and chose to continue as a free congregation with the AFLC during the merger of the early 1960's.

The first pastor, Rev. Hans Olson (1890-92), died while serving the congregation, and was succeeded by Rev. Peter Steen (1892-98, 1918-31), who married Olson's widow. Other pastors were C. S. Osterhus (1899-00), O. E. Haaheim (1901-07), G. Blessum (1907-17), John Loland (1931-34), James Tofte (1935-46), Arthur Reesnes (1947-50), Lars Stalsbrotten (1951-55), Hans Tollefson (1955-64), Ray Persson (1964-75), and Alvin Grothe (1975-90).

The congregation is looking forward to the arrival of a new pastor, Rev. Martin Horn, who will begin serving in November.

The earnest prayer of Bethany Lutheran Church is that the Lord would continue to bless and use her as a "lighthouse" in this seaport community.