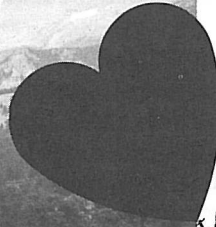
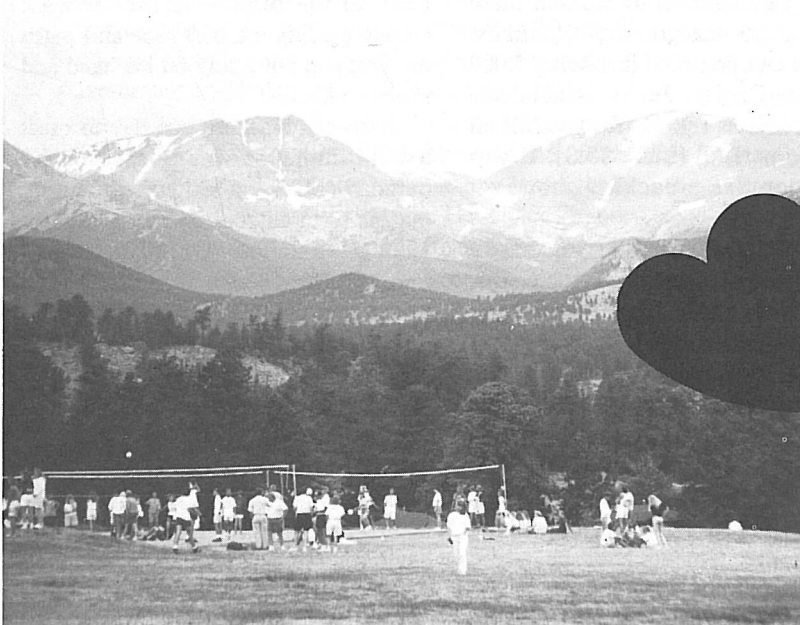


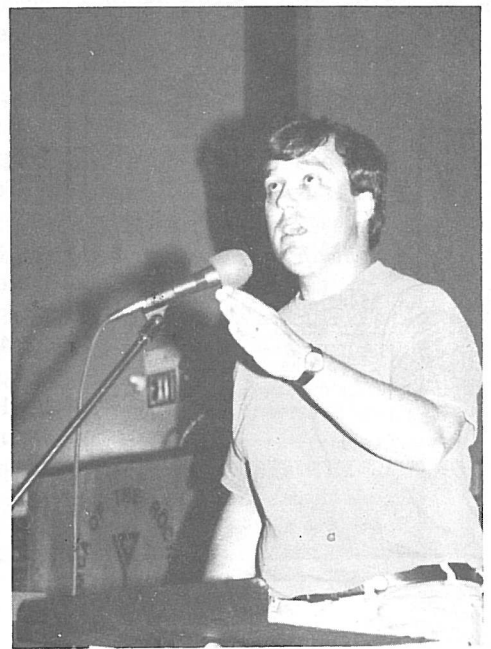
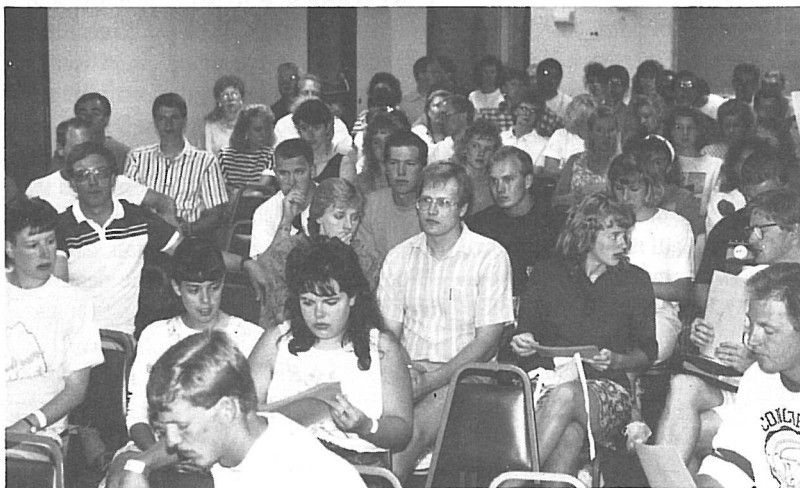
THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

September 3, 1991



*After
God's own
Heart*

THE 1991 LUTHER LEAGUE CONVENTION Estes Park, Colorado



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

September 3, 1991 • Vol. 29, No. 16

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An Unpopular Word

It's not a popular message. But it is necessary. In early times, men were stoned, sawed in two, killed by the sword, and some went about in skins from sheep and goats, destitute and afflicted for daring to preach it. They were men of whom the world was not worthy (Hebrews 11:37). It was a little word "Repent." They dared to call their generations to repentance!

When God sent His messenger to prepare the way of the Lord, He gave him a message of repentance. He lost his head to the wicked, but Jesus said: "Among those born of women there has risen no one greater," (Matthew 11:11). Peter preached it to bring 5,000 souls to Christ. Jesus is all love warned: "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). It was never popular preaching, nor is it today.

Usually children are told that to repent is to feel sorry for their sins. Some have asked: "How many tears must I shed over my sins to repent?" The best answer is: "Just enough so that you turn from your sins to Jesus to be healed."

Others avoid repentance by claiming the half-truth, "God will accept us the way we are." It is true God will not turn us away no matter how sin-stained we come, but He will not leave us the way we come. We must be ready to confess our wrong and be ready to be changed. "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

Let us learn from some examples in Scripture:

Saul was an angry man filled with hate for Christ and Christians. He himself testified: "I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women" (Acts 22:4). He even called himself the "foremost" or worst of sinners (I Timothy 1:15-16). But Saul met Jesus on the Damascus road. "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting." He became the great Apostle Paul who preached Jesus to all. "For I decided to know nothing

among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:2). He could say in Philippians 3:8: "For his (Jesus') sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him." That is repentance.

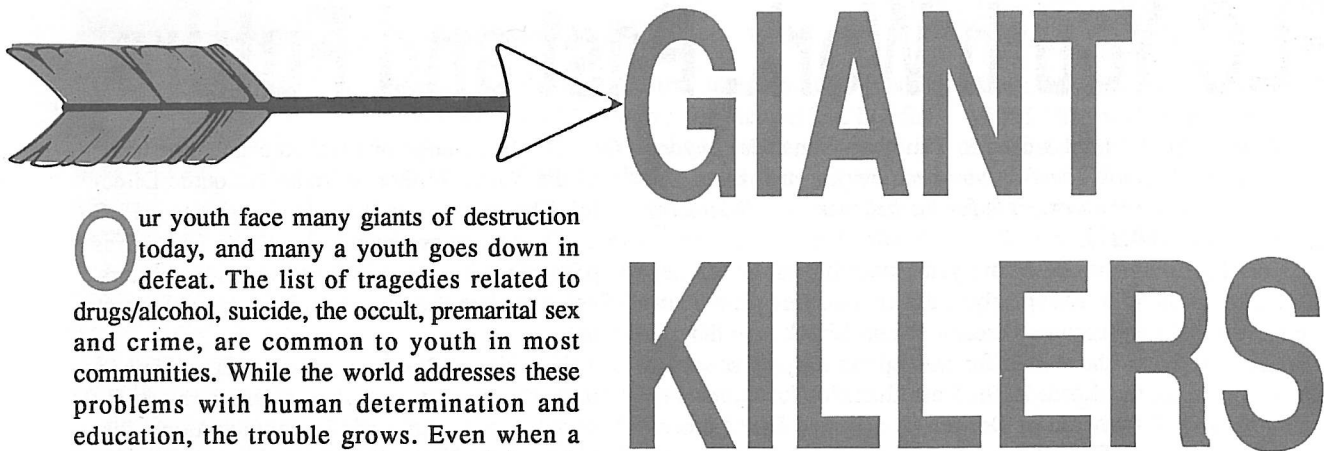
Consider the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) who came just as he was, stinking from the pigsty, ragged, dirty, hungry and ashamed. The father received him gladly as he was. But he did not leave him thus. Quickly flew the orders of the father, not to get out of there and back to the pigsty. Rather it was: "Bring quickly the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet."

Jesus came ashore one day to meet a wild man. He was possessed by demons (Mark 5), naked, screaming out his tortured soul by day and night among the tombs. Out of that darkness: "When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped him." Men bind and imprison such. Jesus frees and heals from within. When the cast-out demons entered the swine herd, the whole herd rushed down the steep shore to a suicide death in the waters of Galilee.

We might ask, "Had these same demons tempted this man many a night to rush down the slopes to find relief in a suicide death in the waters?" So many slaves of Satan have done so. But now the neighbors found him "clothed and in his right mind." Jesus had healed the mind and provided for the new life. Now he wanted to stay with Jesus, but Jesus commissioned him: "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you." O slave of Satan, whoever you are, whatever your condition, repent, come to Jesus and be free!

The ancient cry of the prophets rings down through the corridors of our day: "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 45:22). "For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God: so turn and live" (Ezekiel 18:30-32).

—Rev. Kermit C. Grundahl



GIANT KILLERS

Our youth face many giants of destruction today, and many a youth goes down in defeat. The list of tragedies related to drugs/alcohol, suicide, the occult, premarital sex and crime, are common to youth in most communities. While the world addresses these problems with human determination and education, the trouble grows. Even when a measure of outward success is achieved through these tactics of man, the result is often a greater self-reliance and growing independence from God.

The idea that if we educate our youth regarding these things, they will make wise and responsible decisions. However, this often breaks down under the pressure of temptation. Man has "known better" for generations, yet the reality of a sinful nature perpetuates our problems. Out youth need more than a fear of consequences. They need a power greater than the forces they face. While the world insists that education is the answer and relies on human "strength," every believer knows that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). How then can we help our youth meet and conquer these giants of destruction?

When David faced Goliath, he said: "You come to me with a sword, a spear and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands ..." (I Samuel 17:45-46a). One commentator says: "David's courage was based entirely upon his faith in the covenant of God and His almighty power." Another amplifies this by saying that David: "derives his authority from God ... by the special grace of His covenant ... depends for success upon God ... devotes the praise and glory of all to God." Without pretense, David simply takes God at His Word and goes out to meet the giant of destruction saying: "... the Lord does not deliver by sword and spear (human education and determination?); for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands" (I Samuel 17:47). Then God did just that.

It takes a living faith in the living God if the

giants of destruction are to fall. Did David have some new insight, an "open sesame" doctrine which gave him the victory? Was it that he had just come from a rally, "excited" about the great things he would do for God? No. David knew the old and often forsaken truth that God's grace and His faithfulness are the strength of His people.

We will have giant killers among our youth if we faithfully instruct them in the Word of God. The ideal is that our youth remain in their baptismal covenant, growing continually in their practical knowledge of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. We have Bibles and Luther's Small Catechism Explained at our fingertips. When these are faithfully used in homes by parents and children, God can nurture true repentance and a deep and abiding trust in His grace and promises. Prodigals are too often the norm because this isn't being done. However, prodigals can be brought back through such devotional use of the Bible and catechism. Even if the prodigal doesn't participate, the rest of the family will be grounded in the truth and better able to be the examples and counselors which the prodigal needs. As our baptized children are made conscious of their sin and need for God's grace by the Holy Spirit, and when the prodigal returns, the matchless counsel and comfort of the Gospel are provided for the repentant sinner through the Bible and catechism. I have given out countless of our little blue catechisms to concerned parents and new converts, and their response has been amazement and great joy at what they have received for their souls as they study. You will see giants of destruction fall if you will avail yourself of the basic and deep doctrines of Christianity revealed in God's Word and so clearly explained in the catechism. Where God's Law and Gospel are doing their work, souls revive and His Kingdom advances. ◇

"We will have giant killers among our youth if ..."

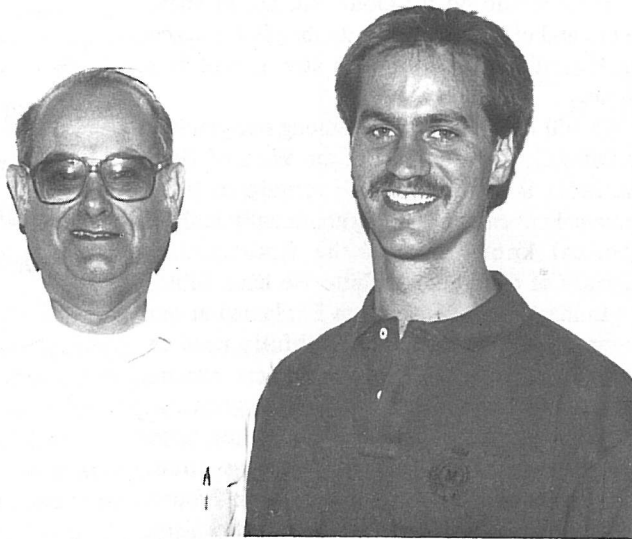


— Rev. Dale Mellgren
Tioga, North Dakota

AFLC Youth Work, Past and Future

Paul writes to Timothy: *"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers ..."* (1 Timothy 4:12).

It has been four years since it was my privilege to accept the call to become the Youth Resource Director of our AFLC. I am thankful to the AFLC for this opportunity of service to the Lord. Also, I am thankful for Grace Free Lutheran of DeKalb, and United Free Lutheran of Greenbush, the congregation I now serve. These congregations have been willing to share their pastor's time so he can serve as the Youth Resource Director.



Rev. Dennis Gray and Mr. Bob Halvorson
(In the next issue, Mr. Halvorson will share his testimony.)

The first thing done was to change the name of the Youth Worker to Youth Resource Director. The area of service was changed to AFLC Youth Resources because the Youth Director is primarily a resource person for youth, pastors, youth leaders and for the Luther League Federation.

The Youth Resource Director is not only a resource person, but also an encourager. He encourages youth work in congregations, districts and the National LLF.

He is responsible for leadership training. He is available for training pastors, adults and other youth leaders, helping them win and hold youth for the Lord Jesus Christ. He is also responsible to have youth work seminars which teach youth to "own" their own ministry. Such a ministry will give them a valuable place to be in the church and community. It will help youth and adults work together as leaders seeking the Holy Spirit's direction.

We have had seminars and retreats on youth work. So far, the aim has been to work with adults. Through the co-operation of St. Paul's Free Lutheran in Fargo and Maranatha Free Lutheran in Glyndon, Minnesota, we have begun "Win Teens" seminars. Our second seminar will take place September 28, 1991, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Living Word Lutheran in Eagan, Minnesota.

This is done through the co-operation of the Youth Board. The funding is supplied through the Youth Board budget. Most, if not all of the cost for this ministry, is paid by the congregation served.

GIANT KILLERS

Much more could be said, and there are many more books that God uses to foster a faith which rests solidly in the power of His grace. Such was David's trust in God. It was good for him that he did not go out to meet Goliath because he was "really excited," or because he "felt good about himself," or because he had a "good self-esteem," or there were "a lot of things happening in his youth group." It is in the knowledge that we are justified before God, made and kept as His children by His grace through faith in Christ, that we obtain the necessary courage and strength to do battle. From such a Holy Spirit wrought faith God brings forth a life which meets and defeats the giants of

destruction. God's grace and His faithfulness is the strength of His people.

The giants are here, and they are many. They must be defeated or they will conquer. Parents, pastors, youth, please take a new look at the old truths contained in your Bible and catechisms and how you have used them. Often we suffer spiritual defeat because we neglect to go back and begin at the beginning and then hold to the fundamentals in the future.

May God bless you with the knowledge that His grace and faithfulness is your strength. Then you can go to battle, and the giants of destruction will fall.

Teams have been sent out now for four years. Training for the teams was first under the Bible School. However, since the team is not necessarily a singing team, but a teaching team, and because this ministry is very unique, the Youth Resource Director has been training them. In 1990, the Luther League Gospel team was called the Cornerstone. It will retain that name.

Next year the Cornerstone will probably not do any VBS, but will be available to travel through any given district, meeting with individual congregations. They will also be available for Bible Camp counseling. It is hoped that this newer approach will be valuable for local Luther Leagues.

A bi-monthly mailing, called "Contact," is being sent out to over 200 people. This mailing comes to you with ideas and thoughts on youth ministry. It is mailed to all pastors. If you wish to be added to the mailing list, please ask.

The effort has been made to provide Lutheran and biblical materials written by AFLC people. This will assure us that the material is just what we want.

A number of videos have been purchased and are available at a small rental, plus postage. The hymn book, "Youth's Favorite Songs," was printed. This was an effort to encourage youth groups to sing the traditional and Gospel songs. The book, "Good Counsel for Counselors" is now available for \$5.95.

A newly edited book will be printed soon. This is a revision of the Augustana Synod's book written by Dr. Wilton Bergstrand and his sister. Originally it was called, "Handbook for Better Luther Leaguers." It will now be called, "Leadership Helps for Youth Groups." This material is geared for the youth themselves. However, both adult leaders and youth leaders will find much help. Funding is now being looked for to print this book. My plans are to finish a Bible study on the first eight chapters of Romans. I also expect to finish a camp manual for retreats and Bible camps.

Under the direction of the annual conference, the Youth Board will be calling a full-time Youth Director. This will be done in a year or two. Funding will need to be provided at the 1992 Annual Conference.

Why go forward in this? The Youth Board and myself, together with the officers of the Luther League Federation, believe it is the time to call such a person.

This person would be more available to help meet the goals of the Youth Board. This person could share much of the responsibility for the Luther League Conventions and for the Luther League leadership schools.

It may also mean that some of the officers of the National Luther League Federation could be high school young people. He would be more available for retreats, camps and seminars. He would be more free to develop materials which can be used by local youth groups, and he would be an evangelist in youth ministry and more.

Youth work will never be self-supporting! We can call on the youth to do only so much. Their goal has been \$5,000 to be sent to the Luther League Federation treasurer. While we realize most send directly to the AFLC Headquarters, only a few congregations have supported this effort through their local youth groups.

In 1992, the Luther League Federation will be sending out one Free Lutheran Youth team to Brazil and one to Mexico. Applications are available at this time through World Missions or from Youth Directors.

As of September 1, Mr. Bob Halvorson began his work as Associate Youth Resource Director. Mr. Halvorson and myself will be available to speak at retreats, camps, seminars, leadership training events and peer counseling training. Bob and I welcome invitations to your local youth group or district.

Please remember to pray for your Youth Resource Directors and for the youth of our AFLC.

—Rev. Dennis Gray

**"Youth work
will never
be self-
supporting"**

Question and Answer

Q. What is the largest AFLC gathering ever?

A. The 1991 Luther League Convention held in Estes Park, Colorado, with approximately 900 in attendance.

As a Youth Board, we are thankful for the vision of our 1991 AFLC Annual Conference as the directive was given to call a full-time youth director within the coming year.

Our AFLC conference created the Friends of Youth Fellowship over a year ago to increase the financial and prayer support for youth ministry.

We have seen that youth ministry is an open "Window of Opportunity" for the AFLC. Are we ready to make the commitments necessary to meet the needs of our youth?

Are you ready to join with us as we work to assist youth, families, and

congregations in this vital area of ministry? Be a "Friend of Youth" by praying regularly for youth ministry and considering a commitment of \$5 a month to support the work of our AFLC Youth Ministries.

Will you stand with us?

"Friends of Youth Fellowship"
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, MN 55441



Sharing in the ground breaking ceremony for the new Administration Building on July 22 were the following: (L.-R.) Rev. Les Galland, AFLC President Richard Snipstead, Mr. Lloyd Carlson, Mr. Jim Bjorgan, Mr. Cliff Johnson, Mr. Jack Ovick, and Mr. Grant Heino.

Ground Broken for AFLC Administration Building

Monday, July 22, 1991, was a beautiful day at the AFLC Headquarters in Plymouth, Minnesota. Scattered clouds dotted the sky and a gentle breeze flowed across Medicine Lake. It truly was a day the Lord had made, and we had special

reason to rejoice and be glad in it. Ground was broken for the Administration Building!

Since 1964, the AFLC has owned the 21-acre site overlooking the eastern shore of Medicine Lake. The AFLC staff at headquarters has been working

in crowded conditions: small, shared offices, dormitory rooms being used for offices, and staff split between two buildings. With the completion of the Administration Building, the staff will not have to contend with these awkward conditions. Work will be done



Mr. Lloyd Carlson and President Snipstead display a sketch of the new building.



Part of the group attending the ceremony.

more efficiently so that we, the AFLC, can effectively share God's Word within our own congregations and in new neighborhoods throughout the world.

About 50 people attended the 3:30 p.m. ground breaking ceremony. This included the AFLC staff, the Coordinating Committee, the Rise Up and Build Committee, the Building Committee, Architect Jack Ovick and Pelletier Construction Company represented by Grant Heino. Members from area churches were also represented. Seven greetings were given between the singing of "To God be the Glory" and "How Great Thou Art." Rev. Les Galland, chairman of the Coordinating Committee, opened and closed the thirty-minute ceremony with prayer.

Ground breaking is a significant milestone in this project; however, there remains much work in order to complete the building in three to four months. There is a cost plus fixed fee contract with the construction contractor with a guaranteed maximum price of \$593,800. This means that any cost saving that can be implemented is passed on to the AFLC and not kept by the contractor. The Building Committee is reviewing each of the major elements of construction with the contractor to identify any potential cost savings that can be done without downgrading the quality of the building.

The Building Committee is also working with the contractor to set up a schedule for the use of volunteer laborers on specific projects. Some of these projects are: laying the sod; putting up the fence; building the dumpster enclosure; installing the suspended ceiling grids and the ceiling tiles; installing the cabinets and the windows; laying the ceramic tile, carpet and sidewalks; putting up the inside walls and sheetrocking; painting plus other jobs. Please consider how you may join those who have already volunteered. Contact Headquarters as soon as possible for more details. Perhaps a congregation may consider a project and supply the labor needed.

We praise God that 75 percent of the cost has been raised! Arrangements have been made to finance the remaining amount. This financial obligation

Those Evasive Statistics

One of the most difficult tasks to accomplish in the Association has been to get a complete statistical report. There have always been at least a few pastors who have not been willing to send in the requested form, giving the membership of the congregation. Perhaps it may be because they have felt that it was a threat to the freedom of the congregation to do so.

1991 has been the year to compile new statistics for the AFLC. There are still a few congregations from which no report has been received. But we are pleased that 95% of the congregations did respond. There are 210 congregations currently on our roster of congregations. Fifty-four congregations have been added to the AFLC in the last four years. That is a 34% growth rate. We thank God for that.

Based on the reports from reporting congregations, the AFLC now has a total of 27,621 baptized members, and 21,104 confirmed members. The confirmed membership of the AFLC increased by 62% in the last four years.

The district adding the most congregations in the last four years was the Minneapolis District. Fourteen congregations were added to that district. This may largely be because the Minneapolis District is one that covers an extensive geographical area. Other districts that added a substantial number in congregations were Illinois with 12, the Southwestern District with eight, South Dakota-Nebraska with seven and North Central Minnesota with five new congregations.

The honors for the largest numerical growth in confirmed members went to the Illinois District. The increase in four years was 90%. The increase in confirmed membership for the whole AFLC in the last four years was 37%.

In the period of the last four years, the AFLC added congregations in five states in which we previously have not had congregations. The states are California, Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Alabama. If we go back one more year, we can add Texas as a new state with AFLC congregations. It is most interesting to trace the direction of some of the new growth within the AFLC. It would surely seem that God is encouraging us to enlarge our vision. The unique emphasis of the AFLC is one that is desired by many people and congregations. The difficulty is that so many do not know about the AFLC.

Church growth is important. It enables a church to strengthen and enlarge its ministries. But more important than numerical growth is that spiritual growth be there. May God preserve us in the AFLC from ever becoming self-sufficient. We need to daily grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

For God to be able to refresh and strengthen us as individuals and as congregations for the tremendous challenges of this day, let us cry out to God in daily repentance for our sins. May our greatest desire be for renewal and revival that the beauty of Jesus may be seen in us.

— Rev. Richard Snipstead

will have to be paid in the future. Would it not be wonderful if the remaining 25 percent could be paid off by the time the building is completed?

Let us pray and work together as we look to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

— Lloyd Carlson,
Chairman of Building Committee
— Ray Engstrom,
Co-Chairman of
Finance Committee

(Other Building Committee members are: Al Campbell, Rev. Les Galland and Steve Nordvik.)



This was great! "It was one of the best weeks I've ever had!" "Can't we stay longer?" "Are there seconds?" "A real mountain top experience!" "Radical, man!" "Do we have to wear these wrist bands all the time?"

Those are comments from a few of the 850 young men and women who attended the 1991 National Luther

God at Work High in

League Convention in Estes Park, Colorado. So what was so special about the week of July 15-19? They came with a variety of expectations. Perhaps it was to meet that cute someone, to have fun or to simply see spectacular creation. By departure time, these leaguers had changed or clarified agendas. They were seeking to become men and women "After God's own heart."

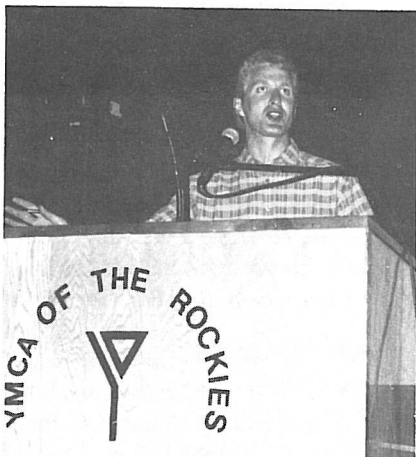
For those who came for some free time, there was ample supply. Volleyball, basketball, football, golf, horseback riding, swimming, and shopping filled the afternoons.

Some youth came to be challenged and inspired by the workshops (Missions, Lifestyle Evangelism, Worship, Sex, Dating and Marriage), the morning Bible study and the evening services.

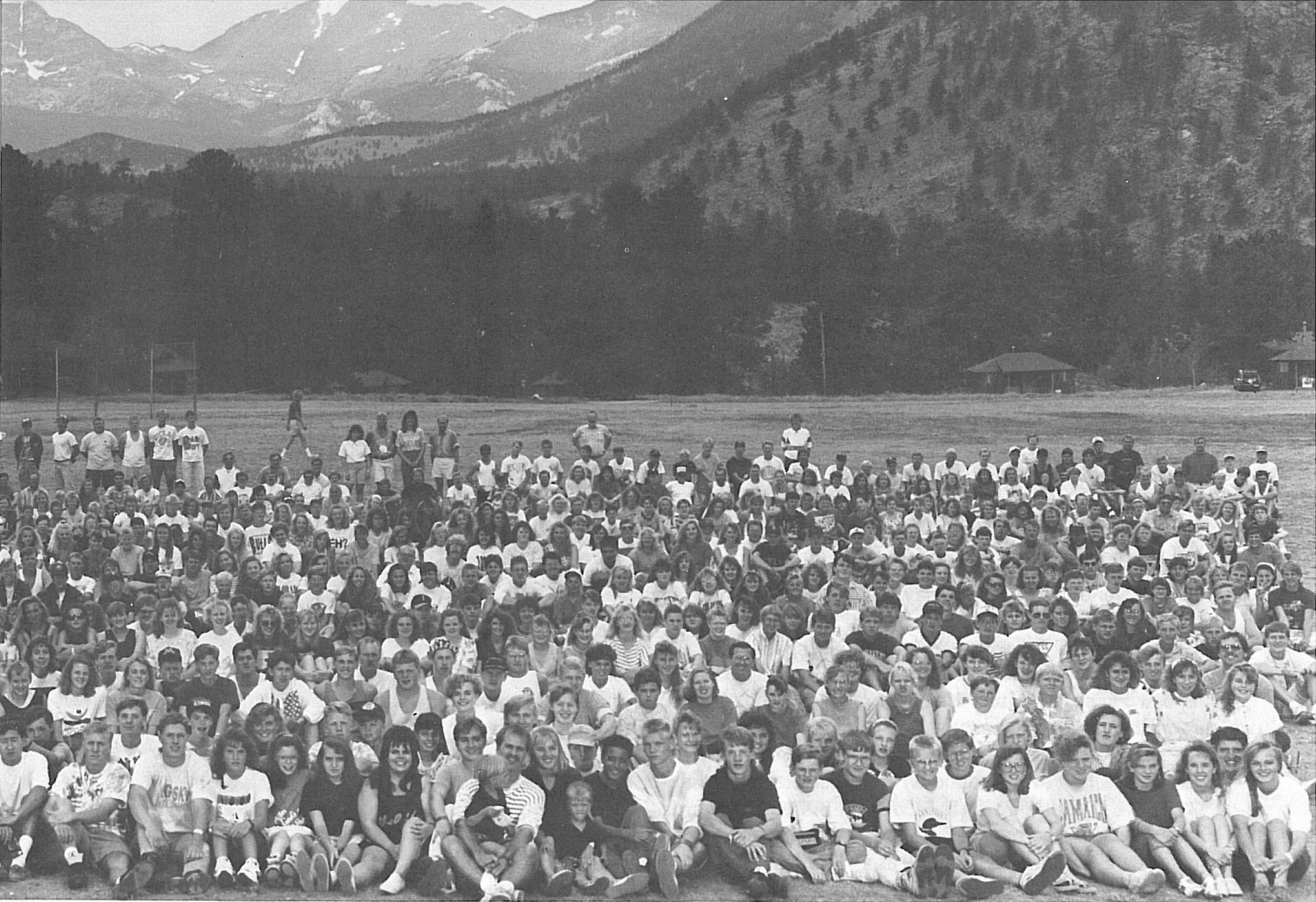
While it is impossible to discern

what brought each teen to Estes Park or to describe what God did in so many of their lives during the week, we do know that nearly 200 youth came to assurance of salvation during the convention. Many others left with a rekindled hunger to be a person "After God's own heart."

The Luther League Federation thanks each speaker, counselor, and other staff who played an important role throughout the week. We appreciate each teen who came. Several people have asked since the convention: "With 850 teens in one place, you must have had some major disturbance?" That was simply not the case. Even the YMCA staff and local residents could be heard talking about that "Lutheran group." "I can't remember when we've had a nicer group of kids," was a common remark from the local staff. Pas-



Rev. Terry Wold



the Rocky Mountains

The 1991 AFLC Luther League
Convention, Estes Park, Colorado

tors, parents, youth leaders, please make certain that your young people are congratulated for their behavior and especially their attentiveness to the Word of God.

Thank you all who prayed for months preceding and during the week that God would reach the hearts and lives of the teens and draw them unto Himself. The Lord answered your prayers. Please continue to pray for these leaguers that the good work begun in them would continue to be nurtured in their homes and congregations.

Above all — thank you, Lord, for what you have done!

—Rev. Terry Wold, LLF President
East Grand Forks, Minnesota

(Note: Oh, you may take off those wrist bands now.)



Facing the Financial Crisis for World Evangelization

Traditional church stewardship practices in one degree or another have hurt, hampered, or perverted the gospel mission of Christ's church. Giving approaches of the institutional church have created a major dysfunction of Christ's mission, being directed by law and legalistic perversions more than by grace. While the church, as an organization, has ordinarily raised enough money to maintain its minimum programs, it has failed to gain its real financial potential based on the full resources God has placed into the hands of all His people. Those who make their local and world mission goals may discover that their members corporately are giving only about three percent of their total income for God's work.

Do we recognize the disastrous stewardship and giving practices which have traditionally been used in most churches? J.B. Phillips once wrote: "The real danger to professing Christians lies not in the most glaring and grosser temptations and sins, but in a slow deterioration of vision, a slow death to daring, courage and willingness to adventure." Traditional church stewardship and giving has been one of the victims of such myopic vision, which sees only the need for money instead of the basic spiritual issues, and deals with symptoms, rather than the real problem, which has resulted in stunted Christians and stunted stewardship.

Do we have the courage to call a halt to the kind of leadership that is satisfied with church Christians who spontaneously respond to financial appeals by jumping through the institutional hoops?

Practices which have been found in most churches worldwide are budgetitis, needs-centered stewardship, all

kinds of pressure tactics, membership fees, quotas and allotments, tickets, luncheons with top tables for top givers, reading a list of delinquent givers in a worship service, stewardship scolding, second and third offerings, auctions, sales, bazaars, raffles, and loud legalistic rantings which have no relation to the grace of giving (II Corinthians 8-9). These practices are symptoms of cultic Christianity, having little relation to biblical giving principles. Jesus' Great Commission does not say, "Go, buy and sell, so the church can get money to fund the Savior's mission program," but "Go, make disciples ... baptizing ... teaching ..." Fund-raising schemes are not compatible with God's Word.

Many attempts are made to change people from the outside in rather than from the inside out. Commendable efforts are made in evangelism, but biblical stewardship and giving are orphans. This is a **knowledge problem** which calls for a radical educational program.

There is an inadequacy in addressing anything beyond the survival of church structures and forms that have been crutches far too long. An unrecognized and unattended stewardship paralysis or sickness has drained churches of spiritual vitality for the use of the full resources God has made available for world evangelism. Too many Christians do not know the difference between net worth and self worth. They are caught in the deluge of consumerism and materialism, the "me generation." They do not know what it means to be full-service Christians in a self-service world.

Churches need to recognize that the budget is a **spending guide, not a means to get money**. The budget is

not to be used to **fill** the treasury, but **empty** it. The stewardship and giving focus must change from the "traditional, maintenance, needs, and law" approach to the "grace, biblical, educational" approach. This means changing our giving and fund-raising approach; not to budgets and needs, but **from** what God gives; not our share of the budget, but God's share of our income; not leftovers, but first fruits.

God's plan of grace to be taught to all members are the following four biblical steps of giving:

1. Give to God first before buying food, clothes, car, and home. Jesus said: "Seek **first** the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things (food, drink, clothes) will be yours as well" (Matthew 6:33, NIV). Paul writes that we are to set aside a portion for God on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:2).

2. Give a generous part or percent of your income to God ("as God has prospered ...") I Corinthians 16:2). Old Testament believers were commanded to give a tenth or tithe. Jesus commended the tithe.

3. **Faith** sees the percentage set apart for Christ's kingdom. God tells us, "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful — full of faith" (I Corinthians 4:2).

4. Generous percentage giving is a grace or gift from God (II Corinthians 8:1). Christians should pray for that grace!

It is time to heed the motto of J. Hudson Taylor: "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply!" God has given His people all the spiritual and physical resources required to get the saving gospel of Jesus Christ to all people in the world in our lifetime. Not human ways of fund raising, but only God's grace will accomplish it!

—Waldo J. Werning

(Abridged from an article by the author in the 1991 winter edition of "Global Church Growth," and used by permission.)

Pastor's and Laymen's Stewardship Seminar

"Building Functional Christians and a Functional Church in a Disfunctional World"
with Dr. Waldo Werning, Fort Wayne, Indiana
September 20-21, 1991
at the ARC, Osceola, Wisconsin

25. What would cause us to magnify the trivial injuries done to us by others?
26. What methods might we be tempted to use to "pay back" someone who has hurt us?

A MARK OF THE CHRISTIAN: A FORGIVING SPIRIT

27. The Christian's attitude of forgiveness is actually a response of gratitude. How is this expressed in Ephesians 4:32 and Colossians 3:12-14?

28. Perhaps someone has done us a serious injustice or sinned against us and is not even sorry. What advice in Romans 12:14, 17, 19, 21, if followed, will enable us to drop our anger and bitterness, and our desire for retribution?

29. The petition in the Lord's Prayer in which we ask forgiveness for our sins also includes a promise or pledge on our part. What is it?

30. While this parable teaches the unlimited forgiveness of God, what somber warning is given to those with hard hearts towards others?

An indispensable condition of divine forgiveness is the recognition of personal guilt before God and a desperate need for mercy. An unforgiving spirit (a serious sin in itself) is a sign that these conditions are not present.

Next month we will study "FAITHFUL AND WATCHFUL SERVANTS."

HYMN SUGGESTION: "THERE'S A WIDENESS IN GOD'S MERCY"
(Concordia #259)

The Unmerciful Servant

"The kingdom of heaven is like..." Again by means of a parable, Jesus is teaching another aspect of what it means to be a child of God. He uses the illustration of a king to servant relationship, and a servant to fellow-servant relationship.

Debt was a major problem in first-century Palestine. This was not because of excessive consumer credit, as is the case in our day. It was because there were many poor people who lived a hand-to-mouth existence and often had to resort to borrowing just to survive. A crop failure or other mishap would find them unable to pay their debts; thus they were at the mercy of the money-lender.

It was perfectly legal for the creditor to order the poor man to be sold, together with his wife, his children, and all his possessions, in order to recover as much of the debt as possible. This was in accordance with Roman law and Jewish custom, and is exactly what happened in many such cases.

Read the parable in Matthew 18:21-35.

1. What question from Peter led to the telling of this parable?
2. Peter suggested a possible answer. What was it?
3. What was Jesus' answer to Peter's question?

To illustrate His answer, Jesus told this parable.

THE ENORMITY OF OUR DEBT

4. The king in the parable wished to settle his accounts. How large was the servant's debt? (A talent amounted to more than \$1,000 in today's currency.)

5. Since he was unable to pay, what were the king's orders?

THE PARABLES OF JESUS

6. How did the servant react? What was his plea?

7. His promise to pay was absurd. Why?

8. Who does the king represent?

The servant?

9. What is the nature of our debt to God? Psalm 51:4; Isaiah 59:2

How large is this debt? Psalm 38:4; Isaiah 59:12

10. Is it possible to repay God? With what would we pay?

THE IMMEASURABLE GRACE OF GOD

11. The servant's request was granted. What additional kindness was extended to him?

12. What motivated the king to such an action?

13. Is there any indication that the servant somehow or in some way merited the king's mercy?

14. Who bore the "cost" of the forgiven debt?

15. What motivates God to be merciful to unworthy sinners? Psalm 86:15; 103:13

16. How does forgiveness become ours personally? I John 1:9

17. What did it cost God to provide the means whereby sinful man could be forgiven? John 3:16; Romans 8:32

Christians live always by the grace of forgiveness, and in the state of forgiveness. "If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; Therefore you are feared" (Psalm 130:3, 4).

THE WAY OF THE WORLD: "YOU PAY WHAT YOU OWE!"

18. Compare the size of the second servant's debt with that of the first. (A denari is 1/60 of a talent.) Compare the possibility of repayment.

19. What words describe the manner in which demand for payment was made?

20. Compare the plea of the second servant with that of the first.

21. Compare the attitude and response of each creditor to his servant's plea.

22. Having so recently left the presence of his gracious and forgiving king, how could he treat his fellow-servant thus? Of what did he lack understanding?

The servant was acting within his "rights" in his treatment of his fellow-servant. He had received mercy. He gave only justice. Many things that are legal are neither moral nor Christian.

23. What is Jesus teaching us in His exaggeration of the two debts?

24. What is lacking in our relationship to God when we treat our fellow men harshly and unforgivingly?

New Missionaries to Brazil

The World Missions Committee of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations is pleased to announce that the Jonathan Abels have answered the call to serve as our missionaries to the nation of Brazil.

Please place Pastor Jonathan and Tamba Abel on your prayer list. Your loving concern is vital to them as they take a hold of this new challenge to serve the Lord in a foreign land.

Pastor Jonathan and Tamba count it a real joy and privilege to serve their Lord Jesus Christ in the country of Brazil. The Abels have chosen II Corinthians 5:14-15 as their mission verse: "For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore, all died; and He

died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf." Having spent their growing up years in Brazil, both Jonathan and Tamba are anxious to return to Brazil and to share the new life in Christ.

The Abels have the advantage of already having their permanent visas for Brazil. However, they must be back in the country before next summer for the visas to remain valid.

All gifts for the support of the

Abels should be sent directly to AFLC World Missions Department, 3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard, Minneapolis, MN 55441-3099. Indicate on your gift that it is for this need.

The World Missions Committee would like you to afford the Abels the opportunity to share in your church or organization. An itinerary is currently being set up that will include as many AFLC congregations as possible.

—Rev. Eugene W. Enderlein
World Missions director



Miriam Infant Home to Receive Assistance

Global Health Ministries Foundation (GHMF), an inter-Lutheran association of health care professionals, has selected the Miriam Infant Home, Campo Mourao, Brazil, as one of their projects. They plan to raise funds to assist in the completion of the building and to provide assistance in meeting the children's health care needs.

The GHMF Board includes two AFLC members: Dr. Dan Rose, a member of Christ the King, East Grand Forks, Minnesota; and Mrs. Peter (Judy) Dyrud, a member of Medicine Lake, Plymouth, Minnesota, who is the current secretary of the foundation.

Other health care projects funded by GHMF are in Bangladesh, Cameroon, India, Liberia, Madagascar, Namibia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Taiwan and Tanzania.

Canadian AFLC to Consider Brazil Projects

Steps are currently being considered to personalize the involvement of the AFLC-Canada in our Brazil missionary program.

Rev. Oseias Camara, president of the Brazil AFLC, recently received a letter from Rev. Eugene Enderlein on behalf of the World Missions Committee, requesting a list of projects that could be adopted by the Canadian churches for their direct support.

Canadian law requires that all charitable gifts channeled out of the country must go directly to the charitable organization and not through a third party if they are to be considered non-taxable. Therefore, all contributions from the AFLC-Canada for Brazil missions must be sent directly to the field and not through the U.S. offices.

DEPUTATION SCHEDULES

for Missionary Dan Giles

September 8, a.m. — Grace, DeKalb, Illinois
September 8, p.m. — Helmar, Newark, Illinois
September 10 — Fox River, Sheridan, Illinois
September 11 (1:30 p.m.) — St. Petrie, Baker, Illinois
September 11, p.m. —
September 12, noon — Bethlehem, Morris, Illinois
September 12, p.m. — Faith, Ottawa, Illinois
September 15, a.m. — West Lisbon, Newark, Illinois
September 22, p.m. — Living Word, Eagan, Minnesota
September 29 — Word of Life Free, Upsala, Minnesota

for Missionary Connely Dyrud

September 11 — Bethel, Minot, North Dakota
September 12 — Our Savior's, Stanley, North Dakota
September 15, a.m. — Beaver Creek, Ray, North Dakota
September 15, p.m. — Emmanuel, Williston, North Dakota
September 17 — Bethel, Culbertson, Montana
September 18 — Faith, Lake Alma, Sask., Canada
September 20 — Slim Buttes, Reva, South Dakota
September 24 — Grace, Aberdeen, South Dakota
September 25 — Calvary, Wallace, South Dakota
September 26 — Ortle, Ortle, South Dakota
September 29, a.m. — Zion & Grace, Valley City, North Dakota



Thief River Falls, Minnesota — Pictured are: (L.-R.) Rev. Del Palmer, host pastor, with Rev. Amos Dyrud and Rev. Connelly Dyrud, who were speakers at the Tenth Annual Missions Conference at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. During the May conference, an offering of \$5,290 was received for AFLC World Missions

Rev. D. Mark Antal, who serves as an Army chaplain in Brussels, Belgium, has a new military mailing address: CH D. Mark Antal, Chaplain/NSA, PSC 79 Box 003, APO AE 09724.

Fargo, North Dakota College and career-age young adults in the Fargo-Moorhead area are beginning a new group this fall called C-C-CLIMBERS (College and Career's Christian Lives in Mission, Bible Study, Evangelism, Refreshment, and Support). A kick-off meeting is scheduled for September 15, 5 p.m., at St. Paul's Free Lutheran Church, 1603 North 5th Street, Fargo.

Paul Kneeland, Tioga, North Dakota, who has served as the youth director at Zion Lutheran Church for the past two years, concluded his ministry there in August and plans to continue his education in California. Paul and his wife, Ruth (Quanbeck), are both graduates of AFLBS.

Mrs. Cecelia M. Berkas, Wallace, South Dakota, passed away on July 7, 1991, a few weeks away from celebrating her 101st birthday. Funeral services were held at Hauge Lutheran Church, Kenyon, Minnesota, where she was a life time member. Mrs. Berkas made her home for several years with her son and his wife, Rev. and Mrs. Ted Berkas, Wallace.

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations				
3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441				
AFLC Benevolences - July 31, 1991				
FUND	TOTAL BUDGET	REC'D IN JULY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	%* TOTAL
General Fund	\$ 276,830.00	\$15,118.39	\$91,699.47	33
Schools - (AFLTS) . .	151,900.00	6,821.94	37,020.72	24
(AFLBS) . .	193,950.00	11,353.39	55,392.97	29
Home Missions.	433,616.00	24,711.51	132,265.82	31
World Missions.	373,715.00	21,484.69	120,432.32	32
Capital Investment . .	25,000.00	1,045.97	13,080.87	52
Parish Education . . .	62,670.00	1,923.59	14,047.70	22
ARC	20,000.00	303.40	3,825.40	19
TOTALS	\$1,537,681.00	\$82,762.88	\$467,765.27	30
1990 - 1991	\$1,441,565.00	\$75,060.77	\$443,429.59	31
*Goal 50%				

Palmdale, California; London, Minnesota; Janesville, Wisconsin Three Home Mission congregations have new worship homes. Faith Lutheran Church, London, completed the construction of a new facility, and Shepherd of the Valley, Palmdale, remodeled an existing building, and both are already meeting in their churches. Trinity, Janesville, erected the shell of their first church home in only a few days and are currently finishing the interior, hoping to move in during September. David Molstre is the pastor at Palmdale, and Einar Unseth and Kenneth Thoreson serve at London and Janesville, respectively.

Rev. Paul Zietlow, Milford, Illinois, resigned as the pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, effective August 1.

Rev. John Skeie, Morris, Illinois, announced his resignation as pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church to accept a call from Medicine Lake Lutheran Church, Plymouth, Minnesota. He will begin his new ministry in October.

Wendy Hammer Kupser, Camarillo, California, has submitted her resignation as youth director of First Lutheran Church, effective December 1, in order to concentrate on increasing home and family duties.

(continued on page 16)

the focus of the present should especially be to train them for leadership and service in the future. The years of youth are basically a time of becoming, and the church that fails to teach and train in the present will reap the results in the future.

The 1991 National Luther League Convention, for a second time, set the record as the largest AFLC gathering in our history. Reports return to the local churches of solid Word-centered preaching and teaching, resulting in a warm response of faith and commitment from scores of young people. The LLF officers and staff, as well as the Youth Board, are to be commended for their careful arranging and administering of so large a convention. To God be all the glory.

May the focus of our AFLC youth ministry continue to be firmly anchored in the past, fully active in the present, and furnished adequately for the future!

WILL CONRADSON 1920-1991

Most of us hardly had a chance to get to know him. God gave him to us for such a short time. But "Connie" was not bashful, and his booming voice combined with a stature that made him a man who was hard to miss.

He was a military man and a soldier for Jesus Christ, coming to us wounded from battles for Biblical Lutheranism within his beloved synod, and after an unhappy interlude in another conservative Lutheran association. He rejoiced in our fellowship, grateful to God for bringing him to a church body where he found himself in harmony of both heart and mind.

Our pastors may remember him for a greeting from Dixie Land (and the response from "General" Lee) at his first pastors' conference with us a couple of years ago. Some will recall, too, his photos of the barn that was transformed into a church home for the Salem congregation, which he passed around like a proud grandparent. Delegates at the last annual conference heard him speak of a concern for clear Bible translations in basic English. Readers of *The Lutheran Ambassador* remember his article on "The Christian Citizen" in the recent (June 25) patriotic issue.

There was so much more we could have learned from him ... insights from the theological battlefields where he contended for the faith, from his years as a military chaplain and as a Home Mission pastor. But we praise God for the brief time that we did have together, as well as for his ministry among us, and pray that He will raise up others to take Pastor Conradson's place.

A CLERGY CRISIS

Pastors, is it getting harder to continue in your calling? A new book scheduled for publication this fall suggests that normal life does not appear to be possible for the families of Protestant pastors, which face the same stresses that other families do, but in unique circumstances that cause the pressure to be multiplied.

The news service to which this publication subscribes reports that a prominent evangelical pastor who has minis-

tered to thousands through his seminars and books recently resigned from his congregation after confessing to an eight-year-long adulterous relationship.

There's a battle raging for the bodies and souls of us all, and evidence indicates that the warfare is especially intense for those in spiritual leadership.

The pastors of the AFLC are not exempt from these encounters with the Enemy. I do not believe that there has ever been a time when I have been aware of so many discouraged brethren. More must be done to minister to the ministers. Sometimes it is not even possible to point to the exact problem ... perhaps a move to another parish is the answer, or a change to another profession. There are some who simply feel trapped, defeated by the knowledge that their congregations are disappointed in them, disappointed with themselves and perhaps even disappointed with God.

I can confirm the fact, returning to the parish ministry after over ten years in the classroom, that it is more difficult to be a pastor today than even a decade ago. The expectations of the people in our pews are high, and we feel ourselves compared (often unfavorably) to the pulpit personalities of Christian radio and television whose preaching skills make ours look so pathetic. There seems to be little difference these days, also, without or within the church in the disintegration of marriage and family ties, and the pressures on pastors to be successful in picking up the pieces is for most of us beyond the training level and time commitment required. Attendance figures and financial reports can rise or fall, and some see both as the pastor's responsibilities, either the fault of his mismanagement or the fruit of his ministry.

Have a heart for your pastor. We live in trying times, and he may bear heavier burdens than you know. Yes, some may rightly respond with stories of willful and stubborn shepherds, lazy preachers who possess more of the spirit of hirelings than of servants. But remember that both pastor and congregation once publicly confessed that God had called him to serve you. Promises were made to pray for him and to provide for his needs, to assist him in the work of ministry. Can you say before God that these promises are unbroken?

Pastor, you made some promises, too, before God and your congregation. Remember who you are in His eyes, and what He has called you to be. Rest in His grace and mercy, and resist the Enemy who would make a shipwreck of your ministry and use your own weaknesses as an ally to do so.

A clergy crisis is a call to prayer for all of God's people. Read the thirteenth chapter of Hebrews with an eye for what the Great Shepherd says to both pastor and congregation, and remember: "I will never leave you or forsake you."

PRAYER AND PRAISE BULLETIN:

Federal judge drops four of six charges against AFLC in the India Mission lawsuit, including one against The Lutheran Ambassador and Editor. A Minnesota state lawsuit instituted by Rev. B. Rao Dasari, himself, still remains to be settled.



Rev. Willard L. Conradson
1920-1991

Rev. Willard L. Conradson, 72, passed away at his desk on July 30, in his Salem, Alabama, home.

He was born May 8, 1920, at Taylor, North Dakota, to Alvin H. and Mary (Wilson) Conradson. His college education was received at Luther, Decorah, Iowa, and he graduated from Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1949. Ordained the same year, his parish ministry began at Fairfax, Minnesota, where he served Central and Our Savior Churches (ELC). His second parish was Grace, Fairmont, Minnesota, where he served from 1952 to 1956.

Rev. Conradson enlisted as an Air Force chaplain in 1956, and he ministered to military personnel at bases in Florida, Japan, and California, retiring from the reserve in 1976 with the rank of lieutenant colonel.

He accepted a call from the ALC in 1965 to organize a Home Mission congregation in Anaheim, California, where he served for 17 years. During his ministry there at Trinity Lutheran

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Second-Class

Church (presently a member of the WCLA), a Christian day school was also established and continues to prosper today.

In 1982, the Conradsons moved to their retirement home near Salem, Alabama. Previous contacts with a concerned Lutheran family in the area led to the organization of another new congregation, affiliated this time with the World Confessional Lutheran Association (WCLA), and the first service was held in October.

Rev. Conradson and the Salem congregation joined the AFLC earlier this year, and were officially welcomed at the annual conference in June.

Funeral services were held at Salem Lutheran Church on August 2, with two friends, Rev. Vince Will and Rev. Robert Giles, officiating. USAF Colonel (Retired) Nimrod McNair also participated in the service. "When Morning Gilds the Skies," "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing," and "A Mighty Fortress" were sung. Burial, with full military honors, took place at Fort Mitchell National Cemetery.

Rev. Conradson is survived by his wife of 49 years, Rebecca (Fosmark), who was his college classmate, as well as three children, five grandchildren, and one brother. He was preceded in death by his parents, one brother, and one sister.

The family has requested that memorials be directed to the Salem Lutheran Church or to "God's Word to the Nations" (NET) Bible project.

WMF Fall District Rallies Scheduled

Faith and Stillwater Churches, Kalispell, Montana, will host the Northwest District Rally on September 21. "Hold Fast, God is Faithful" (Hebrews 10:23) is the theme, and Pat Tuengel, Lake Stevens, Washington, will speak on her experiences as a short-term missionary in the Soviet Union.

The South Dakota-Nebraska District Rally is scheduled for September 14, at Calvary Church, Arlington, South Dakota. Mrs. Jane Emerson will be the guest speaker and vocalist.

Our Savior's Church, Dickinson, North Dakota, will host the Western North Dakota-Eastern Montana Rally on October 5. "Appears as Lights of the World Holding Fast the Word of Life" from Philippians 2:15-16 is the theme, and Mrs. Solveig Hjermstad will be the guest speaker.

Missionaries Dan and Debbie Giles will speak at four WMF District rallies. On October 1, they will be at Green Lake Lutheran, Spicer, for the SW Central Minnesota Rally. They will be at the North Central Minnesota Rally at Maple Bay Free Lutheran, Fertile, on October 5. On October 12, they will be in Greenbush for the NW Minnesota Rally. Finally, on October 19, the Giles family will be at the Minneapolis District Rally at Minnesota Valley Lutheran, Lakeville.

AFLBS 25th Anniversary Homecoming

October 11-13, 1991

"Living in the Light
of the Lord's Return"