

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

April 30, 2002



Exalted among the nations

Psalm 46:10



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April 30, 2002
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Editor: Rev. Craig Johnson

Assistant to the Editor: Ruth Gunderson

Editorial Board: Rev. John Mundfrom, Oryen Benrud, Rev. Jerry Moan, Rev. James L. Johnson.

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For editorial inquiries and information:

The Lutheran Ambassador, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441; 763-545-5631; fax 763-545-0079; e-mail craigj@teleport.com
ruthg@aflc.org

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

Coming to our senses

“**W**hen He came down from the moun-

tainside, large crowds followed Him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before Him and said, ‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.’ Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man” (Matthew 8:1-3a).

Most people like to be touched. That’s why it’s so pleasing to receive a hug from a friend or a pat on the back when you’ve done a good job. In fact, we have a need to be touched. Doctors say that newborn babies who are picked up and held regularly are much healthier than those where touch is neglected. This need continues throughout our lifetime. Touch has always been an intensely powerful mechanism for transmitting messages of feeling.

Touch is also a protective sense that delivers messages of pain. It tells you when you are close to danger, or in contact with something that could cause injury. You have thousands of tiny sense receptors scattered all over your skin, which is the largest sensory organ of the body. These receptors are buried beneath the thin uppermost layer of skin and when stimulated, rapidly send nerve impulses to the brain. The brain then tells you whether something is hard or soft, hot or cold, pleasant or painful.

Certain afflictions adversely affect one’s sense of touch. Leprosy is one such disease where nerve endings become damaged around the infected areas. It is easy for people who suffer from this condition to injure themselves because they cannot feel the warning sensations. I would guess that the man with leprosy in the above passage had many

injuries because of his inability to feel pain. When Jesus touched him, he may not have even felt the physical contact, but I’m sure he felt the touch. I’m sure he felt the message of feeling so freely and lovingly given by Jesus.

In the time of Christ, leprosy was not treated so much as a sickness but as uncleanness. Lepers even had to pronounce themselves “unclean” whenever someone came near. It was considered a detestable, repulsive disease that was incurable. It made people nauseated and sick to think of having these unclean beings even close to the city. Those with leprosy were banished from the community, shut out from the cities of Israel.

Sin is the leprosy of the soul. It shuts us out from communion with God. It is loathsome, disgusting and repugnant. It makes us “unclean.” Sin can also cause us to become insensitive to messages of pain. We become callous to that which can cause injury to the soul and to the messages that warn us of danger. Yet, if we cry out to the Great Physician and ask Him to make us clean, we can be confident of this: that Jesus Christ will reach out His hand and touch us. He can and will make us clean!

“I am willing,’ He said. ‘Be clean!’ Immediately he was cured of his leprosy” (Matthew 8:3b). Jesus wants to forgive you, restore you and make you ever so sensitive to His tender touch.



— Paul Kneeland
Youth Pastor
Faith & Stillwater
Free Lutheran
Kalispell, Mont.

SOUND BITES

If the Spirit is in the congregation, then differences in rank and pride of office are at an end. There is only one rank which has any worth; that is the rank of grace, and there is only one rank that is sought after, a godly, childlike heart.

— **Georg Sverdrup** (from *The Quest for Freedom* by **Loiell Dyrud**, *Ambassador Publications*)

To be with the majority would be much more comfortable than to be in the smaller fellowship we envision, if only the outward is considered. To be with the minority will be more satisfying to us if we feel that in so doing we are being true to ourselves and our understanding, which is also the result of much prayer and study, and this is, we trust, the spirit in which we take this course of action.

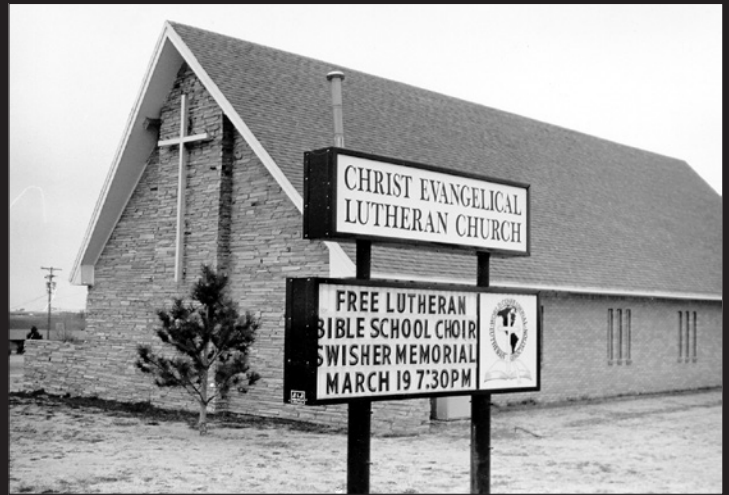
— **A Statement on the Historical Situation, presented to the formation conference of the AFLC in October 1962**

He (Sven Oftedal) characterized the annual meeting as “the great spiritual powerhouse,” ... the annually renewed source of spiritual strength, from which, under the Holy Spirit’s guidance, congregations and individual Christians were inspired to the self-sacrifice and unity of purpose necessary for the accomplishment of the LFC’s tasks.

— **Eugene Fevold** (*The Quest for Freedom*)

The annual convention of our church is not a legislative body It is ... taken for granted that the congregations will accept the decisions that are thus made and referred to them, though it is not legally or otherwise incumbent upon them to do so.

— **C. J. Carlsen** (*The Quest for Freedom*)



Clockwise, from top left: Immanuel Lutheran, Springfield, Mo.; Christ Evangelical, Tulia, Texas; Faith Lutheran, El Campo, Texas; Good Shepherd Lutheran, Pleasanton, Texas; First Lutheran, Oklahoma City, Okla.; Zion Lutheran, Silverhill, Ala.; Christ Lutheran, Wichita Falls, Texas; Faith Lutheran, Weslaco, Texas.



How the SOUTH began (in the AFLC)

My personal knowledge of the AFLC's South Central District does not really go back to the beginning. Prior to my arrival in Texas, there were two AFLC congregations already in the area. Faith Lutheran in Weslaco was formerly from the American Lutheran Church (ALC) but had joined the association under the leadership of longtime Pastor Norman Dornquist. On the other side of the state was the new mission congregation, Christ Lutheran in Wichita Falls, which was served by Chaplain Michael Crowell and later by Pastor Paul Nash, now Home Missions director.

These two congregations were part of the AFLC's Southern District, which spanned the entire southern United States, but only had congregations in Texas, California and Arizona.

I came to Pleasanton, Texas, in December 1988. At the time, I was on the clergy roster of the World Confessional Lutheran Association (WCLA), also known as Lutherans Alert. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church had formed as an independent Lutheran congregation from members of the local Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA) about a year and one-half prior. I was their first full-time pastor.

WCLA also had other congregations in what was their South Central District.

- Christ Lutheran in Tulia, Texas, was a union of a small, formerly Missouri Synod congregation with some who had left a local ALC congregation. They had a longtime association with Lutherans Alert. My good friend, Joe Schultz, was their pastor.

- There was also the historic First Lutheran, a mother church to Oklahoma City Lutherans, which had left the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) and joined WCLA. Their pastor, Jerry Petersen, had also left the LCA in accepting their call.

- Also, in Springfield, Mo., Pastor Vince Will served a congregation with long ties to Lutherans Alert. Called Immanuel Lutheran, the congregation had a strong missions emphasis.

- Over in Salem, Ala., retired Pastor "Connie"

Conradson, one of the founders of Lutherans Alert, had turned his barn into a church and was building Salem Lutheran Church.

- My closest sister congregation was the newly formed Faith Lutheran in El Campo, Texas. Pastor Clyde Grier, originally from Pleasanton, was their pastor at the time.

Over the next few years, all six of these congregations and their pastors would join the AFLC. Add to these Crown of Life Lutheran, Houston (Tomball), Texas, which came out of the Wisconsin Synod with Pastor Gordon Waterman, and you have the original nine congregations of the AFLC's South Central District. All are still active except for Salem Lutheran. We are all thankful for the patience and understanding of Pastor Richard Snipstead (AFLC president at the time) and the Coordinating Committee during this difficult transition.

The next few years were exciting times for the district, as we worked together to continue to build on our foundation. Family camps were started, at first on a shoestring and faith, but with great rewards. Efforts were made to start new congregations in such places as San Antonio and Amarillo, Texas. Bible school teams came and put on Vacation Bible Schools. The AFLBS choir toured. Some of our young people went to the youth conferences and some went on to AFLBS. Pastors left and others came and continued to build on the foundation of Jesus Christ. New congregations have joined. And this June, Faith Lutheran in El Campo will host our annual conference.

This is an unofficial account of the district. I am certain that I have left out things I should mention and I may not even remember everything correctly. What I remember most is the fellowship and growth as Jesus worked through our weakness to build living congregations. And the story has only just begun.

— *Pastor Don Voorhees*
St. Peder's Evangelical Lutheran
Dannebrog, Neb. 

Rethinking Hispanic m

Just more than a year ago a Hispanic Baptist congregation to whom we were renting space had some leadership power struggles and split. The main group found an alternative meeting place, and a breakaway group of about five families asked to continue renting space. They were without a pastor, so we suggested to them that they join our congregation as a Hispanic arm of our ministry, saving them considerable expense and providing pastoral care while opening the door for us to the Hispanic community. While their reaction was at first positive, they quickly decided they did not want to consider adopting Lutheran theology. This experience has caused me to think about what it might take to have an AFLC Hispanic ministry.

Though Spanish speakers have a common language, with variations in slang and jargon, there are quite a number of factors that differentiate one Spanish-speaking group from another. Officially, these people are known as *Hispanic*. Among themselves, there is pride and prejudice along national, geographic and socioeconomic lines. The term *Latino* is used to reference Central and South Americans, but not Brazilians who speak Portuguese. *Mexican* is used to reference people from Mexico. Latinos do not like to be called Mexicans. Most Latin Americans prefer to be known by their country of origin, i.e. Guatemalan, Costa Rican. There are also class distinctions among Hispanics. These distinctions find their roots in the degree of pure or mixed blood a particular person carries. Those of Spanish descent differentiate themselves from native — sometimes called *Indian* — descent.

Hispanics can be found across the socioeconomic spectrum, though a majority would probably fall in the lower ranges. The sheriff of Los Angeles County is Hispanic as is the field laborer at Scattaglia farms outside Palmdale. On the one hand are the Hispanic lawyers and business people, and on the other are the migrant workers and often-illegal immigrants who stand on the corner each morning hoping for a day job. Many Hispanics, because their families have lived in the United States for generations, do not speak Spanish.

Unlike most of the new congregations in the AFLC,

there is no breakaway group of Hispanics — unhappy with the contemporary direction of another Lutheran church body — to be a nucleus for a new congregation. A Hispanic ministry would have to begin from scratch. Such a move would require rethinking the whole process used to start new congregations. Resources — both human and financial — worship, education, families and doctrine would have to be considered.

Human and Financial Resources

Key to any church planting effort are the people and finances that will spearhead the work. The pastor must have a contagious Hispanic passion. He must be fluent in Spanish and have a keen understanding of Hispanic culture. A core of five to ten families to move into a community with the pastor would also be crucial. Church growth happens most by the connections that are made in the community. The most effective advertising tool is word-of-mouth. The greatest growth comes from the addition of large Hispanic families. Finances will also be needed for rent, administration and advertising. (Space in Palmdale is at a premium, and it is not uncommon for rent to be more than \$1500 per month.)

Worship

Hispanic worship is quite different from the norm in the white Midwest. Hispanic worship is full of passion and spirit. A piano player or organist may be all that is needed in a midwestern congregation. But the leadership of a Hispanic congregation should include a worship team of accomplished musicians vocally, on the guitar, drums and keyboard. Drums and keyboard could wait to be added later. A good guitar is essential, and a good vocal leader a real asset. A good amplification system helps. More than the musicians and instruments, however, is the need to enter the Hispanic musical mindset. While many white European hymns have been successfully translated into Spanish, they are not the music of the Hispanic people. Worship must be from the heart and so must the music.

Education

The Hispanic community is undergoing the same kinds of cultural transitions our European and Scandi-

ministry

navian grandparents underwent 100 years ago. The parents speak one language and the children speak another. Unlike the case of our grandparents, where the children were not taught and were in fact discouraged from speaking the mother tongue, Hispanic families are highly bilingual. This is truer of the children than it is of the parents. Most elementary education is in English, so the children speak English at school and Spanish at home. There is quite a bit of disparity, however, in educational levels — even within a single child. Because they must deal with two languages (and because they are often of lower economic status), Hispanic children often fall behind in American academic standards. They will also likely not be fluent Spanish readers and writers since their formal education is English. But because they speak mostly Spanish with their parents, their English fundamentals suffer. Christian education, i.e. Sunday school and vacation Bible school, must take these educational realities into consideration.

Family

Careful attention must also be given to the Hispanic family structure. While space does not allow for a thorough study of the Hispanic family, some generalities might help understand the complex nature of ministry to Hispanic families. Hispanic culture is often traditionally matriarchal, and the mother promotes most of the spiritual life in a family. Men, however, must not be slighted and should be encouraged into leadership positions. Teenagers are very vulnerable to world influences, particularly from gangs. While gangs may not necessarily be a community problem, the influence of Hispanic gangs is far reaching. Children, like their parents, are very passionate. In childhood this translates to active. Hispanic boys are generally given a great deal more freedom than are Caucasian boys. Hispanic girls are often given greater family responsibilities, particularly childcare, at an early age. All these factors will greatly influence how a Hispanic congregation operates.

Doctrine

If there is one unique item we in the AFLC have to offer it is our perspective on theology. A large segment of the Hispanic community has a strong Roman Catholic background. While former Roman Catholics make great Lutherans (they don't have to get over the idea of sacraments), much of Hispanic Roman Catholicism is cultural and folkloric. What Hispanic Christians want is a clear break from dead doctrines into a living relationship with God.

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Herein lies what may be the greatest challenge to the AFLC regardless of the nationality of the people we seek to serve. Whether it is our own white children or Hispanic families we might consider in future ministries, the question of the age is, "How do we show them the relevance of Lutheran doctrine?" Can we have a true emphasis on a personal relationship with Jesus while not discarding the truth about baptismal covenant and Christ's real presence? The answer must be "yes." But then how do we communicate this reality in a relevant way? We

reach them by emphasizing vibrant worship and family-friendly ministry and then effectively communicating our beliefs.

There is no question but that God has called us to be salt and light to our world. The more we know about our world, the more we must come face to face with the reality that much of our world is not like us. If we are to become obedient to the commission we have received from Jesus to go to all the ethnic groups of people around us, we will need to rethink the way we do ministry. We will need to make reaching the nations (*ethnos* or ethnic groups) a real resource priority.

— **Pastor J. Christian Andrews**
Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran
Palmdale, Calif.



Why should you care?

As I considered what I would share regarding the importance of the annual conference to the local congregation, I first thought of those things that are obvious: the importance of knowing the needs and victories that each of our common ministries have encountered in the last year; the opportunity to voice counsel to our AFLC corporations, boards, and directors; and the unique joy of fellowshiping together with like-minded brothers and sisters in Christ. All of these are valid and important motivations for attendance. However, as I prepared, I ran across the words of Pastor John Strand: "If the total work of the Association is not coordinated on behalf of all the congregations in freedom, one by one, the congregations will fall by the wayside." These are strong words from a man who experienced the "rebirth" of free and living congregations as our AFLC was raised by God from the rubble of the Lutheran Free Church. If we are to take Pastor Strand's words seriously, as I believe we ought, we must, with a fair degree of trepidation, seek to understand this vital bond between the free congregation and this united association.

Sven Oftedal, a father of free Lutheranism, referred to the annual conference as "the Great Spiritual Powerhouse." He spoke further of this meeting together as "the annually renewed source of spiritual strength, from which, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, congregations and individual Christians were inspired to the self-sacrifice and unity of purpose necessary for the accomplishment of the (AFLC's) tasks." This concept of a "spiritual powerhouse" is what we read of in Hebrews 10:23-25: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near."

As free and living congregations come together to unite in common work, we do so from common love of our Savior, common obedience to His Word, common love for His lost creation, common desire to edify one another, in common response to His great commission

and in common submission to His will.

The annual conference of the AFLC is the natural result of the desire of right-minded congregations that the world may know their Savior. Consider the following portions of AFLC Fundamental Principles seven and eight: "A free congregation gladly accepts the mutual assistance which congregations can give one another in the work of the advancement of the Kingdom of God ... through conferences ... whereby congregations are mutually edified ... for the accomplishment of such tasks as exceed the ability of the individual congregation."

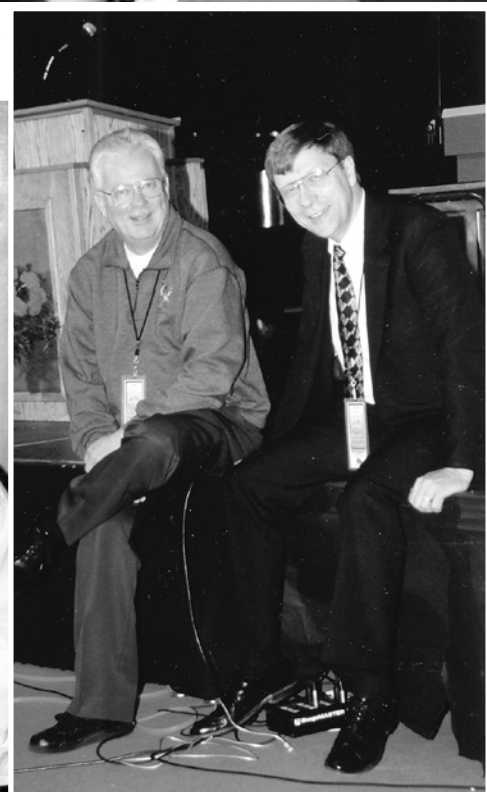
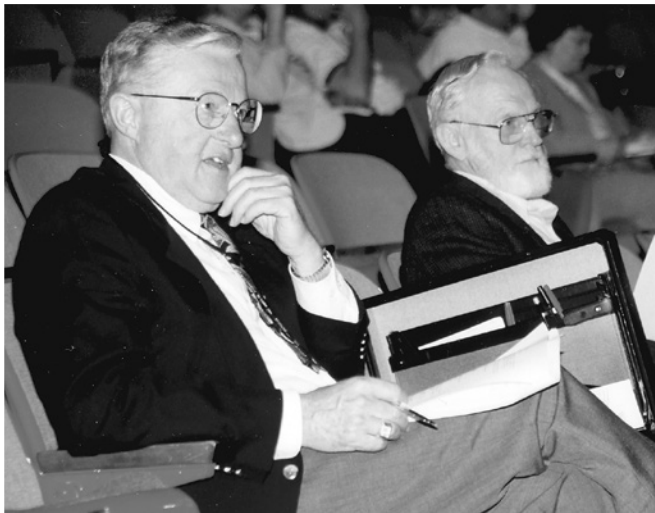
Our annual conference is not, and may it never be, simply a parade of reports and statistics or a platform from which various departments may seek the support of our people. It is, and should always remain, a unified submission to the will of Almighty God as we join together in worship and earnest petition that God might guide and bless His church as He has promised. We join, not in legislative forum, but in free association; not that we might direct the congregations, but that we might together be directed by the Spirit of God.

This is the reason for the warning voiced by Pastor Strand to our fledgling association a generation ago. It is a warning that rings as true today as it did in those early years. The true spirit of common mission bids us to come together that the name of Jesus be glorified and His church may be edified. Do we place our congregation in jeopardy by failing to gather in this free association as Pastor Strand says? Each of us must examine our own hearts in this area. Perhaps apathy toward common mission is not a cause of falling to the wayside as much as it is a symptom of the same. If we lack desire for the fellowship of believers and for those works that must be accomplished jointly, we must then examine the spiritual order of our own houses. If indeed the annual conference is "The Great Spiritual Powerhouse," those "born of the Spirit" will truly hunger for it.

Why is the annual conference important to the local congregation? Because it is a vital part of the ministry of the local congregation. It is a vehicle through which we may minister and through which we also may be ministered to. The Free Lutheran movement has been rightly called a "venture of faith" and "an experiment in extreme ecclesiastical democracy" (B.M. Christensen). As we gather each year, we do so not to direct these principles of freedom, but to celebrate them. We celebrate them as individuals, as free congregations, and as an association.

— *Tim Berntson*
Grace Free Lutheran
Valley City, N.D.





CALL TO ORDER

In 1863, a 25-year-old Army engineering officer, active in church and civic affairs, was asked to preside over a church meeting. He knew nothing about conducting a meeting, but feared the worst thing he could do was to decline. He accepted the invitation. As written in the introduction of the ninth edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* he writes, "My embarrassment was supreme. I plunged in trusting to Providence that the assembly would behave itself. But with the plunge went the determination that I would never attend another meeting until I knew something of ... parliamentary law."

This young man was Henry Martyn Robert, the original author of *Robert's Rules of Order*, the short title for *Pocket Manual of Rules of Order for Deliberative Assemblies*, published in February 1876. The size of the book today can hardly be called a pocket manual.

In the Word of God, we read: "But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way" (I Corinthians 14: 4, NIV).

This Bible text gives us the reason for having parliamentary rules. Apparently, Robert found himself in an assembly of chaos. I believe the main objective of any meeting is to be fair and consistent. The need is to "protect" the minority from the majority and vice versa. Generally, the majority rules. But at times, a small minority can use maneuvers that could handcuff the majority.

Some common courtesies are the basis for having good meetings. To make a motion one should be recognized by the chair; a main motion should have a second and then discussion can follow. A speaker should not normally be interrupted, but there are exceptions. Seconds are not needed for motions such as in making nomi-

nations, calling for a division of assembly (an actual count), a point of order, a question of privilege, to make parliamentary inquiry, etc. Certain motions are in order when someone else has the floor: to rise to a point of order, to voice objection to consideration of the question, to request information that requires an immediate answer, etc. A speaker should not be interrupted unless the need is important enough to justify it.

It would be difficult to know all the procedures. We make mistakes. But, in most cases, there are rules for correcting mistakes. Where our errors can't be corrected, we need to be charitable. The Apostle Paul says in Philippians 1:27, "Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ," and in Colossians 3:13, "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievance you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

And we read in Psalm 133:1, "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity."

From what I have read about Henry Martyn Robert, he was a Christian man and, I believe, developed his rules of order from that viewpoint. Thanks be to God for His Word, our ultimate guide.

— **Roland Meyer**
St. John's Lutheran
Milford, Ill.

Note: Meyer served as parliamentarian at past annual conferences.



Congregation sends welcome from Texas

Area offers variety of extracurricular activities

Grace, mercy and peace be yours in Christ Jesus our Lord. Or maybe you expected: HOWDY, Y'ALL!

With truly Texan braggadocio and distinct honor, I invite and welcome you to "The Pearl of the Prairie": El Campo, Texas.

The preparations are proceeding on schedule, most of the housing problems have been corrected and we anxiously await your arrival for the 40th Annual Conference of the AFLC. The congregants of Faith Lutheran Church will extend every courtesy possible to be certain that your attendance at the conference is enjoyable and beneficial.

I encourage you to consider complementing the experience of the conference with a tour of the Texas Gulf Coast, an agricultural tour featuring a look at horse and cattle ranching and farming of rice, cotton, grain sorghum, corn and soybeans. Aquaculture features you may enjoy include catfish, shrimp, oyster and crawdad (crayfish) farming. Within a three-hour drive, family entertainment available includes Six Flags theme parks, Johnson Space Center, Sea World, Fiesta Texas theme park, the Alamo, the San Antonio Mission Trail and numerous water parks. At trip to Brazos Bend State Park presents walking trails through a bayou habitat featuring birds, small game and alligators. The educational and recreational options are most diverse.

As these last two months before the conference pass, I ask you to pray for the conference even if you will not be able to attend. The congregation and I covet those prayers that all who attend may be spiritually renewed and the influence of the conference may provide a deep and abiding impact of the Spirit of Christ on the peoples of our area.

God be with you 'till we meet again.

For the members of Faith Lutheran, El Campo,

— *Pastor Clyde Grier*



OUR PRESIDENT WRITES

Exalted Among the Nations Psalm 46:10

Our theme for this upcoming annual conference could be misunderstood. This is a year of celebration for the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, marking the 40th anniversary of our 1962 organizational conference. We are thrilled when looking back with amazement to four decades of progress, and looking forward with confidence to expansion in every area of ministry. The AFLC has grown from a handful of Midwestern congregations to a nationwide fellowship with partner churches around the world.



Yet, let us be very clear that we do not exalt ourselves at this anniversary conference. It is the Lord God Almighty who will be exalted among the nations, and this is a statement of fact as well as a promise. He invites us to be His fellow workers, and He commands us to cease the exhausting labor of church work that exists solely due to our own efforts. "Know that I am God," He declares, to know Him is life eternal.

Welcome to the 40th Annual Conference of the AFLC. Make the special effort required to travel to El Campo, Texas, for our first national gathering in this great southern state. There will be a delegation present from our Mexican churches, making this the first bilingual conference. There will be reports and resolutions to study, as well as votes to be counted. Past decisions must be evaluated as future ones are pondered. The purpose for the conference, however, is primarily a spiritual one: to know the Lord and to make Him known.

Come, let us exalt His name together.

— *Robert L. Lee*

AFLC 40th Annual Conference

Exalted Among the Nations — Psalm 46:10

Circle one

Name _____ Pastor/Visiting pastor/Lay delegate/Lay visitor

Spouse (if attending) _____ Pastor/Visiting pastor/Lay delegate/Lay visitor

Address _____

City/state/zip _____

Phone (day) () _____ (evening) () _____

June 12-16, 2002

El Campo Civic Center

2350 N. Mechanic

El Campo, TX 77437

(979) 541-5092

Host congregation:

Faith Lutheran

2103 N. Mechanic

El Campo, TX 77437

(979) 543-1842

Pastor Clyde Grier

Congregation _____

Registration fee(s):

Single @ \$30 (with one copy of Annual Report) \$ _____

Couple @ \$40 (with one copy of Annual Report) \$ _____

Total (meals and registration) \$ _____

Make checks payable to: AFLC and send to 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN, 55441. Registrations received after June 1 must add a \$5 late fee.

To ensure meal availability, we ask that you register before June 1 with your meal selections marked on this form.

WMF REGISTRATION

Please send separately to
Faith Lutheran in El Campo.

Name _____

Address _____

City/state/zip _____

Phone () _____

Congregation _____

Registration Cost: \$7

Wednesday luncheon: \$7

Wednesday banquet: \$9

TOTAL _____

MEAL	COST	#	TOTAL
Wednesday			
Lunch	\$7		\$
Thursday			
Vision 2004 breakfast	\$5		\$
Lunch	\$7		\$
Builder's Fellowship lunch	\$7		\$
Chaplains' lunch	\$7		\$
Schools Corporation dinner	\$9		\$
Friday			
Missions Corporation breakfast	\$5		\$
Lunch	\$7		\$
ARC Corporation lunch	\$7		\$
Christian Education lunch	\$7		\$
Old Fashioned Texas BBQ dinner	\$9		\$
Pastor's banquet	\$9		\$
Saturday			
Lunch	\$7		\$
AFLC Foundation lunch	\$7		\$
Youth banquet	\$9		\$
Meals total			\$

Women's Missionary Federation Annual Convention

Raise a Banner for the Nations

Isaiah 62:10

Wednesday, June 12, El Campo Civic Center

Y'all coming to the WMF Convention? We've planned a day with you in mind!

Please pre-register on the form (see page 12) and mail it (along with the fee) to:

Faith Lutheran Church
2103 North Mechanic
El Campo, Texas 77437
Vacation Bible School and a babies

nursery will be available.

Call the church at (979) 543-1842 for crib reservations.

Here's a fun assignment for you — Do you remember the tune to "Deep In The Heart of Texas?" Well, sing it to these words:

"The con-ven-tion
is a comin' soon
deep in the heart of Texas.

I'll meet with you on the twelfth of June deep in the heart of Texas."

I know you can think of even better words than these. Make up a verse of your own and you may win a prize at the WMF luncheon.

— Cheryl Skordahl
WMF National President

WMF National Convention program schedule

Wednesday, June 12

8-8:45 a.m. — Registration

8:45 a.m. — Praise and worship

Led by Pastor Rodger and Helene Olson

Devotions and prayer time

Sharon Volden

Memorial Service

Pam Grier

Business meeting

Bible teaching

Pastor Todd Schierkolk, missionary to Mexico

Offering

Introduction to the 2003 WMF Bible study

Lori Crowell

Noon luncheon

Emcee Barbara Elmquist, II vice president

Dramatic presentation

Vicki Johnson

Meetings from 1:40 to 2:20 p.m. and 2:40 to 3:15 p.m.

Choose TWO of the following afternoon options:

1. "Deep Calls Unto Deep — The Art of Intimate Communion with God"

Debbie Giles, missionary to Mexico

2. "Assisting Women in Fulfilling the Great Commission"

Faith Nelson, Women's Outreach Coordinator

3. "How to Love Your Husband"

Mary Pollestad

3:30 p.m. — Wrap-Up

Erna Jochum, first vice president

5:15 p.m. — Banquet

Executive Secretary Cheryl Aakre as emcee

Speaker: Missionary Debbie Giles

Vocal Selections: Missionary Barb Schierkolk

Thursday, June 13

7:15 p.m. — Mission Festival Service

(see Annual Conference schedule)

Program

7:15 p.m. — Service of Praise & Worship

Pastor Rodger and Helene Olson

Installation of new officers

Musical Selections by the Mexico Missionary

Quartet (the Giles and Schierkolks)

Message

Pastor Dan Giles, missionary to Mexico

Offering

Fortieth Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

June 12-16, 2002
El Campo Civic Center
El Campo, Texas

"EXALTED AMONG THE NATIONS" Psalm 46:10

Wednesday, June 12

9:00 a.m. The conference committees meet for devotions, instructions and room assignments.
7:00 p.m. Concert of Prayer
8:00 p.m. The opening service of the conference with the sermon on the text by Rev. Del Palmer, Shakopee, Minn. The service leader is Rev. Kenneth Moland, Kirkland, Wash. AFLC President Rev. Robert Lee will open the conference and appoint necessary committees.

Thursday, June 13

7:30 a.m. Vision 2004 Breakfast
9:00 a.m. Devotions
Report of the Credentials Committee
Adoption of the Conference Agenda
Election of the Nominating Committee for the 2003 conference
The President's Report
Report of the Chairman of the Coordinating Committee, Rev. Kenneth Moland, Kirkland, Wash.
Report of the AFLC Foundation Secretary
Rev. Les Galland, Everett, Wash.
Reports of Chaplaincy Ministries
Rev. Kerwin Sletto, Ottawa, Ill.
Rev. Tim Skramstad, Eagan, Minn.
Report of the Director of the ARC
Mr. Eric Westlake, Osceola, Wis.
Financial Report, AFLC Bookkeeper
Mr. Andrew Anderson, New Hope, Minn.
Report of the Family Bible Camps
Lake Bronson — Treasurer, Mrs. Don Balmer, Thief River Falls, Minn.
Wilderness — Treasurer, Mr. Don Olson, Fargo, N.D.
Report of the Budget Analysis Committee
Report of the Nominating Committee,

always in order
Election of nominees for the Missions, Schools and ARC Corporations
Report of Committee #1 (Administration)
11:30 a.m. Prayer Hour Leader: Rev. Oliver Olson, Murrieta, Calif.
Noon Builders Fellowship Luncheon
Chaplains Luncheon
(Institutional, military, police & fire)
1:30 p.m. Devotions
Report of Credentials Committee
Election Procedures
Elections
Vice President — 1 year term
Secretary — 1 year term
Selection of nominees to the Home Missions Committee — 1 layman; World Missions Committee — 1 pastor; Board of Trustees — 1 layman; ARC Board — 1 pastor
Continuing discussion of Committee #1
Election of nominees to the Coordinating Committee — 2 laymen
Election of Committee #1 for the 2003 Conference
Report of the Chairman of the World Missions Committee, Mr. Vernon Russum, Grafton, N.D.
Report of the Director of World Missions, Rev. Eugene Enderlein, Plymouth, Minn.
Report of Partners in Mission Outreach Board, Rev. Stephen Snipstead, President
Report of the Chairman of the Home Missions Committee, Rev. Allen Monson, Lakeville, Minn.
Report of the Director of Home Missions, Rev. Paul Nash, Brooklyn Park, Minn.
Report of F.L.A.P.S. Executive Director, Mr. Lavon Bohling, Golden Valley, Minn.

5:30 p.m. Schools Corporation Annual Meeting
 7:15 p.m. Mission Festival Service conducted by the
 Women's Missionary Federation
 Speaker: Rev. Dan Giles, Jerez, Mexico

Friday, June 14

7:00 a.m. Missions Corporation Annual Meeting
 9:00 a.m. Devotions
 Report of the Credentials Committee
 Report of the Chairman of the Commission
 on Evangelism, Mr. Gene Quist,
 Bloomington, Minn.
 Report of the Director of Evangelism, Rev.
 James Rasmussen, Maple Grove, Minn.
 Report of Committee #3 (Missions and
 Evangelism)
 Report of Missions Corporation Annual
 Meeting
 Election of member to the Commission on
 Evangelism — 1 layman
 Election of Committee #3 for the 2003
 Conference
 Report of the Chairman of the Board
 of Publications and Parish Education,
 Rev. Martin Horn, Fosston, Minn.
 Report of the Director of Parish Education,
 Mrs. Marian Christopherson, Crystal,
 Minn.
 Report of the Chairman of the Christian
 Academic Ed. Board, Rev. Brian
 Davidson, Hopkins, Minn.
 Report of the Chairman of the Youth Board,
 Rev. Lloyd Quanbeck, Minot, N.D.
 Report of the President of the Free Lutheran
 Youth, Rev. Jason Holt, Fergus Falls, Minn.
 Report of Youth Ministries Director,
 Rev. Kevin Olson, Savage, Minn.
 11:30 a.m. Prayer Hour — Rev. Oliver Olson
 Noon The ARC Corporation Annual Meeting
 Christian Educators' Luncheon
 1:30 p.m. Devotions
 Report of the Credentials Committee
 Report of Committee #4 (Publications,
 Parish Education and Youth Work)
 Election of member to the Board of
 Publications and Parish Education — 1
 layman
 Election of members to the Christian
 Academic Education Board — 1 pastor and
 1 layman
 Election of member to the Youth Board — 1
 pastor
 Election of Committee #4 for the 2003
 Conference
 4:30 p.m. Partners in Mission Outreach
 annual meeting
 5:30 p.m. Pastors' Banquet
 8:00 p.m. Laymen's Service

Saturday, June 15

9:00 a.m. Devotions
 Report of the Credentials Committee
 Report of the Chairman of the Stewardship
 Board, Rev. Mark Antal, Leeds, N.D.
 Report of the Chairman of the Board of
 Pensions, Rev. Lynn Wilson, Roslyn, S.D.
 Report of Committee #5 (Stewardship &
 Pensions)
 Election of member to the Stewardship
 Board — 1 layman
 Election of member to the Board of Pensions
 — 1 layman
 Election of Committee #5 for the 2003
 Conference
 Report of the Chairman of the Board of
 Trustees, Dr. Dan Mundfrom,
 Greeley, Colo.
 Report of the Dean of the Seminary, Dr.
 Francis Monseth, Rogers, Minn.
 11:30 a.m. Prayer Hour — Rev. Oliver Olson
 Noon AFLC Foundation Lunch
 1:30 p.m. Devotions
 Report of Credentials Committee
 Report of the Dean of the Bible School,
 Rev. James L. Johnson, Plymouth, Minn.
 Report of Vision 2004
 Report of Committee #2 (Schools)
 Election of Committee #2 for the 2003
 Conference
 Report of Schools Corporation Annual
 Meeting
 Report of the Secretary of the Colloquy
 Committee
 Election of Colloquy Committee for the 2003
 Conference
 Report of special committees
 Election of 1 member to the Budget Analysis
 Committee — 3 year term
 Report of Committee #1 as the Committee on
 General Resolutions
 Other Reports
 5:30 p.m. Youth Banquet
 8:00 p.m. Youth Night at the Conference

Sunday, June 16

8:00 a.m. Communion Service
 Speaker: Rev. Todd Schierkolk, Jerez,
 Mexico
 10:30 a.m. Worship Service
 Leader: Rev. Clyde Grier, El Campo,
 Texas
 Speaker: Rev. James Rasmussen, Maple
 Grove, Minn.

— *Conference Committee*
Rev. Robert Lee, President
Rev. Brian Davidson, Secretary

Nominating Committee

Arne Berge, Binford, N.D. — Eastern North Dakota
 Bruce Wolla, Minot, N.D. — Western North Dakota/Eastern Montana
 Tom Fugleberg, Roseau, Minn. — Northwestern Minnesota
 Roger Tollefson, Beltrami, Minn. — North Central Minnesota
 Harold Erickson, New York Mills, Minn. — Southwest Central Minnesota
 Kevin Hoops, Byron, Neb. — Nebraska/Colorado
 Pastor Thomas Olson, Cloquet, Minn. — Lake Superior
 Kermit Nash, Plymouth, Minn. — Minneapolis
 Bonnie Handsaker, Radcliffe, Iowa — Central Tri-state
 Pastor Thomas Schierkolk, Eben Junction, Mich. — Northern Michigan
 Pastor Gary Jorgenson, Durant, Okla. — South Central
 Kenn Graham, Camarillo, Calif. — Southwestern
 Duane Lindell, Ferndale, Wash. — Pacific Northwest
 Pastor James Molstre, Pittsburgh, Pa. — Eastern
 Merv Mathison, DeKalb, Ill. — Illinois
 Nathan Dalager, Brookings, S.D. — South Dakota

Housing information

Best Western Executive Inn
 1022 Bypass 59 West
 El Campo, TX 77437
 Phone: (979) 543-7033
 Fax: (979) 543-9495

El Campo Inn
 210 Highway 59
 El Campo, TX 77437
 Phone: (979) 543-1110
 Fax: (979) 543-4318

Shoney's Inn & Suites
 310 W. Highway 59
 El Campo, TX 77437
 Phone: (979) 543-1666
 Fax: (979) 543-1183

White Lodge
 1403 E. Jackson
 El Campo, TX 77437
 Phone: (979) 543-3358

United Enterprises
 1415 E. Jackson
 El Campo, TX 77437
 Phone: (979) 543-1941
 Fax: (979) 543-1044

Moonlight Bay Bed & Breakfast
 506 South Bay Blvd.
 Palacios, TX 1-877-461-7070

15-minute drive
 Inns of Texas
 Wharton, Texas
 (979) 532-0301

Country Hearth Inn
 Wharton, Texas
 (979) 532-1152

45-minute drive
 Holiday Inn Express
 Columbus, Texas
 (979) 733-9300

Columbus Inn
 Columbus, Texas
 (979) 732-5723

Country Hearth Inn
 Columbus, Texas
 (979) 732-6293

Bay City Inn
 Bay City, Texas
 (979) 245-0985

Traveler's Inn & Suites
 Rosenberg
 (281) 342-7721

Nominees presented by the 2002 Nominating Committee

Executive Officers

(Nominations made during annual conference) Incumbents:

Pastor Elden Nelson, Vice President
 Pastor Brian Davidson, Secretary

Coordinating Committee

(Two laymen, five-year term — positions now held by James Boe, Ottawa, Ill., and Ralph Peterson, Portland, N.D.)

Wayne Floan, Plymouth, Minn.
 Three additional nominees needed

AFLC Schools Board of Trustees

(One layman, five-year term — incumbent Larry Behne)

Kent Quanbeck, McVile, N.D.
 One additional nominee needed

World Missions Committee

(One pastor, five-year term — incumbent Pastor Steven Odegard)

Pastor Steven Odegard, , Snohomish, Wash.
 Pastor Dale Finstrom, Glyndon, Minn.

Home Missions Committee

(One layman, five-year term — position now held by Robert Christian, Newark, Ill.)

Paul Slaamot, Stanley, N.D.
 Loren Tungseth, Fergus Falls, Minn.

ARC Board

(One pastor, five-year term — incumbent Pastor Tonnes Pollestad)

Pastor Tonnes Pollestad, Andover, Minn.
 Pastor Tim Carlson, Grafton, N.D.

Partners In Mission Outreach Board

(Nominations come during PIMO annual meeting (see conference schedule) Terms expiring:

Clark Berg, Kalispell, Mont.
 Kenneth Sletton, Duluth, Minn.
 Pastor Stephen Snipstead, Kalispell, Mont.

Stewardship Board

(One layman, five-year term — incumbent Arnold Johnson)

Arnold Johnson, Larimore, N.D.
 Duane Kinnoin, Stanley, N.D.

Board of Publications and Parish Education

(One layman, five-year term — position now held by Avis

Dyrud, Newfolden, Minn.)

Nathan Dalager, Brookings, S.D.

One additional nominee needed

Youth Board

(One pastor, five-year term — incumbent Pastor Lloyd Quanbeck)

Pastor Lloyd Quanbeck, Minot, N.D.

Pastor Todd Erickson, Lakeville, Minn.

Pension Board

(One layman, five-year term — incumbent Jon Galland)

Jon Galland, Everett, Wash.

Gerald Kuster, Grand Forks, N.D.

Commission on Evangelism

(One pastor, five-year term — position now held by Pastor Irvin Schmitke, Thief River Falls, Minn.)

Two nominees needed

Missions Corporation

(20 terms of five years each, incumbents in italics)

Sylvia Armen, Bethel Park, Pa.

Richard Carr, Plymouth, Minn.

Pastor Michael Crowell, Lake Stevens, Wash.

James Denney, Duluth, Minn.

Steve Goodfellow, Bruce, S.D.

Pastor Larry Haagenson, Loveland, Colo.

Joe Iverson, Williston, N.D.

Jim Keller, Wallace, S.D.

Harold Kilness, Faith, S.D.

Dr. Robert Kohl, Brookings, S.D.

Pastor Steven Lombardo, Morris, Ill.

Pastor Jerry Moan, Hamel, Minn.

Pastor Henry Mohagen, South Naknek, Alaska

Kenneth Nash, Colfax, N.D.

Timothy Rolf, McIntosh, Minn.

Vernon Russum, Grafton, N.D.

Pastor David Skordahl, Fergus Falls, Minn.

Pastor Tony Stockman, Brandon, Minn.

Oliver Sampson, Edmore, N.D.

Marlene Barrington, Buckley, Wash.

Pastor Richard Larson, Fairbury, Neb.

John Heylens, Bruce, S.D.

Ron Spooner, Camarillo, Calif.

Marlow Nash, Abercrombie, N.D.

Kenn Graham, Camarillo, Calif.

Kevin Hoops, Deshler, Neb.

Edwin Stensland, Kenyon, Minn.

Jonas Walker, Kenyon, Minn.

Pastor Tom Olson, Cloquet, Minn.

Pastor Tim Johnson, Beltrami, Minn.

Tom Johnson, Bloomington, Minn.

Al Hoidel, Minneapolis, Minn.

Pastor Christian Andrews, Palmdale, Calif.

Pastor Mark Homp, Ponca City, Okla.

Pastor Gary Schram, Northwood, N.D.

Pastor Richard Gunderson, Cambridge, Minn.

Pat Finstrom, Binford, N.D.

Donovan Edlund, Crookston, Minn.

Les Miller, Richfield, Minn.

Pastor Paul Wigtil, East Grand Forks, Minn.

Schools Corporation

(10 terms of five years each, incumbents in italics)

Anne Erickson, Badger, Minn.

Pastor Dennis Gray, Newfolden, Minn.

Pastor Martin Horn, Fosston, Minn.

Dr. Dan Mundfrom, Greeley, Colo.

Pastor Mark Olson, Tioga, N.D.

John Presteng, Grafton, N.D.

Kent Quanbeck, McVile, N.D.

Mark Quanbeck, McVile, N.D.

James Rolf, Brandon, Minn.

Gerald Twedt, McHenry, N.D.

Tim Berntson, Valley City, N.D.

Darrell Haugen, Binford, N.D.

Jim Green, Grand Forks, N.D.

Dr. Lyle Westrom, Crookston, Minn.

Matthew Olson, Minneapolis, Minn.

Arden Jacobson, Champlin, Minn.

David Blake, Ontonagon, Mich.

Julie Walker, Kenyon, Minn.

Pastor Todd Erickson, Lakeville, Minn.

Dana Coyle, Ottawa, Ill.

ARC Corporation

(10 terms of five years each, incumbents in italics)

Pastor Brian Davidson, Minneapolis, Minn.

Reuben Emberson, Valley City, N.D.

Pastor Philip Featherstone, Osceola, Wis.

Cliffsord Holm, Menahga, Minn.

Dennis Jacobsen, Burlington, N.D.

Larry Johnson, Amery, Wis.

Pastor Todd Klemme, Starbuck, Minn.

Erling Langness, Ishpeming, Mich.

Bob Rudebusch, Lakeville, Minn.

Steve Lehman, Milford, Ill.

Tim Lehman, Milford, Ill.

Pastor Marlyn Kruse, Mankato, Minn.

Dave Fimright, St. Joseph, Minn.

Glenn Mork, Bloomington, Minn.

Eric Rasmussen, Robbinsdale, Minn.

Pastor Steve Carlson, Dalton, Minn.

Pastor Earl Korhonen, Cumberland, Wis.

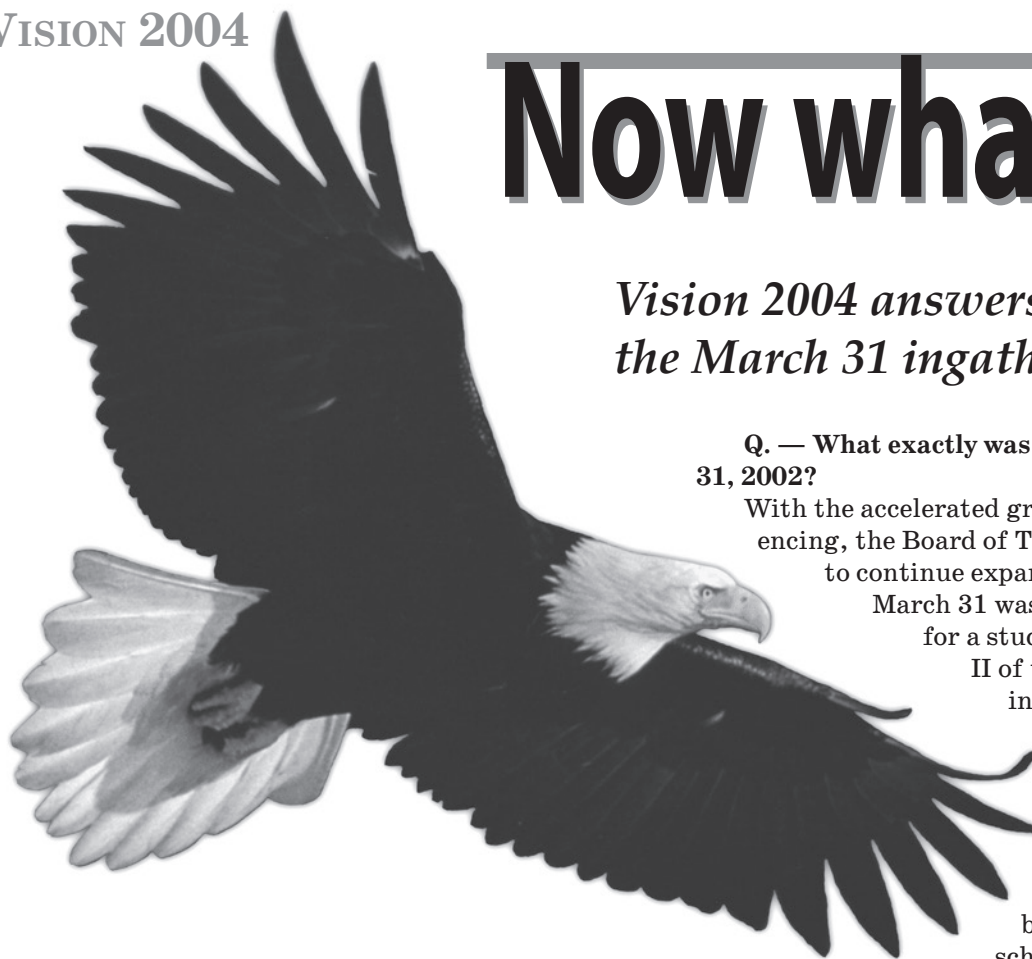
Ron Jensen, Barronet, Wis.

Bob Halvorson, Otsego, Minn.

Bill Johnson, Esko, Minn.

Now what?

Vision 2004 answers questions about the March 31 ingathering deadline



Q. — What exactly was the ingathering date, March 31, 2002?

With the accelerated growth our schools are experiencing, the Board of Trustees felt a sense of urgency to continue expansion plans for our schools.

March 31 was set as an ingathering of funds for a student center, considered Phase II of the building project. From this ingathering, the members of the board and Schools Corporation will assess and make decisions for the building project — Vision 2004. It is important to remember that this date is not a deadline but, rather, a beginning for our schools' next building phase.

Q. — How much was raised for this?

As of April 12, there is approximately \$927,187 in gifts — \$664,340 in cash and \$262,847 in pledges. Since Vision 2004's beginning, there have been 122 pledged gifts with 81 currently outstanding. (At last summer's annual conference, Vision 2004 reported having approximately \$400,000 in cash and pledges. Since then, more than \$500,000 has been added.)

Q. — What kind of decision(s) will the Schools Corporation and Board of Trustees be considering?

The Schools Corporation has determined that 80 percent of the funds must be in cash before beginning construction of Phase II. Any changes to this decision would require further action.

Building the student center will solve crowded classroom conditions, cafeteria space problems, music and library issues, but will not add additional living space for current or future students.

Building a new dormitory would solve living space problems, but would not address the classroom space or cafeteria issues. Questions have been asked about the possibility of a combination dormitory/classroom that would address both problems. Because this is not a city-approved plan, it would need to be brought before the Plymouth City Council once again for approval.

Q. — How much money is needed for both a student center and dormitory?

The cost for Phase II, the student center, has been projected at \$3 million. The cost for a new dormitory was projected at \$1.6 million. So the projected total for both is around \$4.6 million. However, there is the possibility with reduced construction costs that these figures may actually be lower than what was originally projected.

Q. — What can we do to get this going?

Share with others the needs of our schools. Share with others that raising the dollars for this is very achievable. If 5,000 individuals gave gifts of \$100 a year, it would total \$500,000. If they would match their gifts to make them \$200 it would be a \$1 million, and if they would consider pledging those gifts over three years, we would have \$3 million dollars.

Over the years, there have been 174 graduates from AFLTS and about 2,000 graduates from AFLBS. Have they made a difference in our world for Christ?

Foremost, pray that the Lord will touch people's hearts. "Pray the Lord of harvest to send forth laborers" (Luke 10:2). Laborers are needed not only in sharing the gospel, but also in being faithful to provide training places for them through the building project of Vision 2004.



Vision of Glory

13200 Highway 55
Plymouth, MN 55441
Phone: (763) 559-4222
Web site: www.vogchurch.com

Note: Vision of Glory was received by the AFLC Coordinating Committee on Feb. 25. Served by Pastor Mark Herringshaw, the church formerly belonged to the ELCA.



Vision of Glory Congregation, Plymouth, Minn., was officially organized on Nov. 16, 1961. Pastor Irving Stangland, called to form a mission congregation in Plymouth, gathered weekly with his flock at Beacon Heights School, one-half mile east of the current location. A few months later, the growing congregation bought a field on the edge of farmland. They built and were worshipping in their own sanctuary the last Sunday in December 1962. An addition was built in 1963.

After Pastor Stangland's resignation in 1967, Pastor Daniel Vinge served as interim pastor for a year. With a heart for youth and family, Pastor Lee Evenson came to Vision of Glory in June 1968. The first full-time staff member he hired was a youth director. During Evenson's 27 years as senior pastor, the staff grew from three to 12, and membership increased to about 1200. During his tenure, a new sanctuary, fellowship hall and educational wing were built.

In 1995, when Evenson decided

to step into the associate pastor position, Pastor Tom Parrish was called as senior pastor, serving until June 2000. The Lord called Pastor Bob Ross out of retirement to bless us and help us through the transition. Pastor Mark Herringshaw now serves as senior pastor.

In the early years, Vision of Glory was known by those passing by as the church with the leaning cross.



The leaning cross with the crown mounted perfectly horizontally around it, supported the two wings of the sign that could be read by those passing by in either direction. The sign was eventually removed for the addition of the expanded fellowship hall and the Evenson Learning Center. The cross and the crown are currently located on the outside wall near the bell tower.

The leaning cross reminds us of

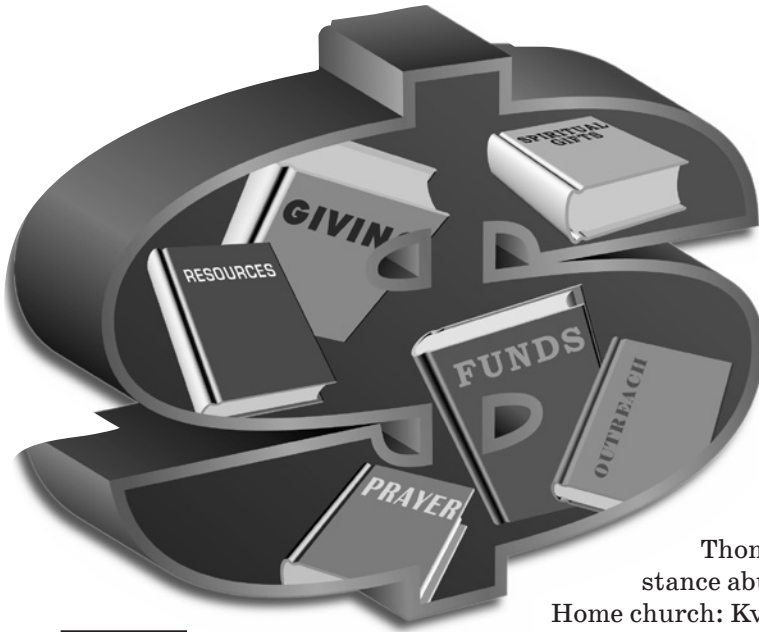
the supreme sacrifice Jesus paid for all mankind 2000 years ago. The crown looks forward to His second coming with great power and glory (Matthew 24:30). We have come this far in our journey between the cross and the crown by faith. God has been faithful. If we willingly surrender our all to Jesus, the potential of our mission is limitless.

Our average attendance is about 470 on a Sunday morning, with about 200 in Discipleship Zone, our Sunday school program for kids ages 2 through sixth grade. Project 72, our student ministry for junior and senior high school students, meets on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings, with up to 100 youths attending. The senior high also meets on Sunday nights. We have a Wednesday night program called Oasis, a time for midweek refreshment where we come together for a meal, a short informal worship service and class opportunities for all.

Vision of Glory helps to support 13 of our own missionaries in addition to seven others and several other mission agencies.

— **Joe and Peggy Berglund**
Vision of Glory
Plymouth, Minn.





PROVIDING RESOURCE DIRECTION

Secretary:

Pastor James Fugleberg, St. Paul Free Lutheran, Fargo, N.D.

Member: LaVern

Thompson, retired substance abuse counselor.

Home church: Kvam Free Lutheran, Ashby, Minn.

Member: Dr. Arnold Johnson:

associate professor, University of North Dakota, School of Engineering, Grand Forks. Home church: Living Faith Free Lutheran, Larimore, N.D.

The Stewardship Board sets forth these goals and objectives through these methods:

GOAL

To expedite the use of God-given spiritual gifts of the membership of the AFLC to further the kingdom work here on Earth. To support, encourage and assist in the gathering of the funds for each department.

OBJECTIVES

- To arouse within the membership of the AFLC an awareness of their individual spiritual gifts.
- To win the lost to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- To financially seek the support of all AFLC congregations.
- To fund all departments and staff, and establish and maintain the necessary buildings and materials.

METHODS

- Pray daily for each department, asking God to bless their staff, training, education, administration and service to reach the lost.

• Write articles monthly in *The Lutheran Ambassador* to the membership, keeping them aware of the needs of the departments of the AFLC.

• Educate the membership on the methods of being good stewards of their resources, and how to implement the same.

• Make available tracts and materials that promote Christ-centered giving and saving.

• Share prayer needs with the AFLC membership.

As a board, we know that these goals, objectives and methods are impossible to achieve in our own strength. We are volunteers in this ministry. We call upon our loving, merciful and gracious Heavenly Father to meet the needs of our church body. We seek the Lord to call us all to an attitude of daily confession and repentance for sin. We seek the Lord to help us live out the example of Christ. May God richly bless your home church, pastor, leadership and members. May the Lord richly provide for the mutual needs and responsibilities of our AFLC.

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” declares the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. ... Then all nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the Lord Almighty” (Malachi 3: 10, 12).

— **Pastor Mark Antal**

Chairman

AFLC Stewardship Board

Park River, N.D.

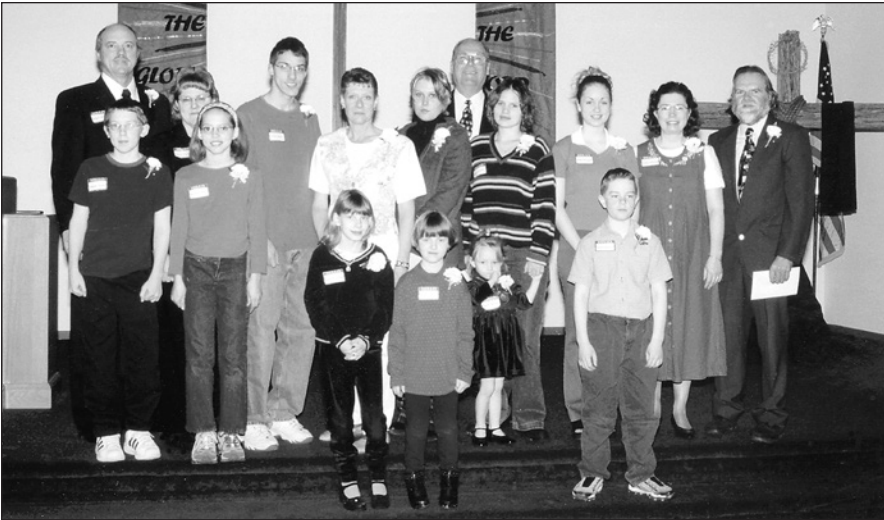


The AFLC is comprised of many congregations associated for the purpose of encouragement, fellowship and mutual ministry opportunities. Several boards and committees give guidance and direction to the local congregations. This guidance is not binding on the local congregation. We cannot demand offerings or pledges to meet the needs of the “home office” or any of our national workers. To meet the mutual financial needs, the AFLC relies upon the generous giving of our sister congregations as well as concerned individuals.

The AFLC Stewardship Board was created at the 1962 Organizational Conference of the AFLC. On the board are two ministers and three laymen who are elected at the annual conference for a term of three years. We meet on a quarterly basis. Current members include:

Chairman: Pastor Mark Antal, Victory Free Lutheran, Park River, N.D.; Grace Free Lutheran, Edinburg, N.D.; chaplain, North Dakota Army National Guard.

Vice Chairman: David Bjornson, district representative, Lutheran Brotherhood. Home church: Grace Free Lutheran, Valley City, N.D.



Abiding Faith Free Lutheran, Ortonville, Minn., welcomed 16 new members on March 17. The congregation, served by Pastor David Hinrichs, has received 33 new members in the last six months.

ARC to hosts work weekend

Camp hosts prepare for busy summer schedule

The ARC will host a work weekend May 31-June 1 for anyone that is interested in doing lots of outdoor lawn work and painting. Volunteers should come in their work clothes. Good food and beds will be the reward. Please call the ARC directly to make arrangements at 1-800-294-2877. We welcome youth groups, Bible study groups, anyone of cheerful heart and able-bodied.

Is your youth group looking for income? AAL has monies that are available through Helping Hands project. Check with your local chapter. This work weekend might not only help the ARC, but your group as well.

ARC in need of prayer, financial support

Praise the Lord for the growth and all individuals from the AFLC who have prayed for this ministry! Debt reduction has started after the last seven years of massive building and remodeling projects. Many people have responded to our need for prayer and financial support. We are still in need of more monthly support over the next two years, as well as people who would like to invest money at 5 percent or 6 percent. This money will be used to pay off short-term debt that is at a higher interest rate. Please pray and ask the Lord which level of involvement you could have in this ministry. Thank you for all of your help and support!

Youth Ministries sponsors leadership conference

We all remember the children's story of the "Three Little Pigs." The houses made of straw and sticks didn't stand up to the furry of the enemy wolf. But the house made of bricks stood the test of time against the big bad wolf.

What about the many church youth groups? Does your youth group have the stamina to endure such testing? Would you bring your friend to your youth group? Would

they feel welcome? Could your youth group be stronger? How could you reach your school for Christ?

These are just some of the tough questions that need to be answered in order to work toward and achieve a solid foundation in youth groups that honor the Lord and draw people unto Jesus.

Bring your youth group this summer and build on foundations for life!

**AFLC Youth Ministries
Leadership Training Conference
July 15-20, 2002
Association Retreat Center
Osceola, Wis.
Theme: "Foundation for Life"
I Corinthians 3:11**

**Hands-on opportunities * Small groups * Sonlife Foundations * Super recreation * Afterglows * Great food * Great speakers *
Awesome worship * Beautiful location**

For: all 7-12th graders & adult youth workers

Cost: \$225 per student (see brochure for other rates)

Mail in registrations with a \$50 non-refundable deposit to: YLC 2002,
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd, Plymouth, MN 55441.

Questions? Contact youthmin@aflc.org or call (763) 545-5631

Pastor Del Palmer, Shakopee, Minn., has accepted a call to be acting director of AFLC World Missions. This will be a quarter-time position, and he will continue to serve as pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, Shakopee. Palmer, a 1983 graduate of Free Lutheran Seminary, previously served parishes in Everett, Wash., and Thief River Falls, Minn. He is married to Karen (Pederson), who is employed by AFLC Parish Education, and they are the parents of two daughters, Rebecca and Esther, and a son, Nathan.

Seminarian Dana Coyle, who is currently completing his internship at Lake Stevens, Wash., has accepted a call to serve Freedom Lutheran Church, Ottawa, Ill., and St. Petrie Lutheran Church, Baker, Illinois.

Pastor Roy Warwick, Mason, Wis., has announced his retirement as pastor of Our Savior's and Drummond Lutheran Churches.

Members of **Maranatha Free Lutheran**, Glyndon, Minn., will dedicate their new church building on May 5. The day includes Sunday school at 9:45 a.m., worship at 10:45 a.m. and a dinner and fellowship time following. A dedication service begins at 2 p.m.

Mexico congregation uses donated rebuilt computer

Donations needed to pay for cost

One of the advantages in today's world is rapid communication. AFLC World Missions has been working to establish this kind of communication with all areas of our foreign mission work through computers.

There remains one area where we do not have this kind of communication. This need was recently shared with Pastor Brian Davidson, who rebuilt and upgraded an older computer no longer used on the campus. The computer was delivered to Celaya when Partners in Missions Outreach bus took its most recent tour into Central Mexico.

The computer will also serve the congregation in Celaya where Pastor Milton Flores serves. If you would wish to have a part in meeting this need, please send your gift, designated "Mexico Computer," to the AFLC World Missions Office. The total cost is \$350.

WMF memorials January-March

Eldon Jameson, Wallace, S.D.
Albin Johnson, Wallace
Vernetta Jameson, Wallace
Leona Stockman, Tioga, N.D.
Mabel Buhler, Webster, S.D.
Evelyn Benson, Kenyon, Minn.
Ida Wicks, Faith, S.D.
Christ Derheim, Valley City, N.D.
Martin Bjornson, Valley City
Caroline Jacobson, Springfield, Mo.
Gladys Ruud, McVile, N.D.
Agnes Nelson, McVile
June Dobler, McVile
Marie Thompson, McVile
Franz Wostruba, McVile
Ragna Stoddard, McVile
Mabel Jorstad, Freeman, S.D.
Marceen Svartolen, Freeman
Dorothy Jorgensen, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Edna Anderson, Morris, Ill.
Helen Overland, Fertile, Minn.

AFLC memorials March

Department given to ...

In memory of...

Vision 2004

*Leona Stockman
Harold Kratochvil
Anna Crawford
Albin Holmquist*

Home Missions

*Gladys Ruud, Leif Gylland
Mrs. Edwin Hersel, Joe Flaa*

AFLBS

*Joseph Sandquist
Earl Rugland
Lillian Seeds* *Bob Howard*

AFLTS

*Delbert Zeller
Lois Schneider*

Evangelism

*Beatrice Rasmussen
Roy Rasmussen
Ruby Swenson
Alfred Swenson
Myrtle Dyrud
Sheldon Mortrud
Grace Christianson
Eugene Becker
David Jacobson
Jace Wiertzema*

World Missions

*Gladys Ruud, Ruth Hector,
Arnold Bengtson*

Legacy...

All Departments

Lucille Fischer

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (3 months) – January 1 - March 31, 2002

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN MARCH	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$268,060.00	\$17,004.30	\$59,633.21	22
Seminary	118,938.00	15,988.29	43,327.71	36
Bible School	217,227.00	28,384.46	64,580.04	30
Home Missions.	278,872.00	13,845.66	50,932.07	18
World Missions.	199,994.00	14,638.96	61,706.23	31
Youth Ministries	55,413.00	2,268.44	12,838.27	23
Parish Education	71,687.00	3,934.87	13,397.16	19
Church Extension	23,093.00	500.12	7,408.78	32
TOTALS	\$1,233,284.00	\$96,565.10	\$313,868.47	25
TOTALS 2001	\$1,119,759.00	\$95,886.47	\$311,619.96	28
Goal 25%				

The Evangelism Department received \$7,037.71 in March.

Does it make a difference if I go?

My team won the game I played in at a recent high school alumni basketball tournament — but I know it wasn't because I was there. Others scored the points. I took up space on the bench and, for a while, on the court.

The way I felt at the basketball game is the way others occasionally feel at business meetings of our congregations and at AFLC annual conferences. They wonder if their presence makes a difference. They ask themselves, "Does it matter if I go?" They figure "the team" would do just as well without them.

It does matter if people come to meetings or not. Proverbs 27:17 says, "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." We become more effective servants of God as we interact with each other. "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24, 25, NIV).

It is unfortunate that business meetings are sometimes approached with the attitude: it's a dirty job but somebody has got to do it. They should be times of spurring one another on. They are opportunities to consider the ways God has gifted and called the various members of the body, and to then seek direction as to how God can best use those gifts. Meetings, instead of being things we dread because we fear conflict will arise, should be times we look forward to because we anticipate we will receive encouragement.

The AFLC annual conferences have a unique structure that should lead to each member knowing their participation is important. Our conferences do not operate under a delegate system. Every member of each AFLC congregation is allowed to vote at the conference and participate in the sessions. Everyone is encouraged to come. The input of each one is valued.

It may seem this type of open system could create the potential for all kinds of problems. People could organize and pull in voters and try to push through certain candidates or agendas. It would appear to be not that difficult to "pack the conference" with people who think a certain way.

In spite of these potential dangers I believe it is good for us to continue to resist the idea of a delegate system. Even if a group attempts to sway a conference a certain way, the conference has limited power over the corporations and con-

gregations of our church body. Resolutions that are passed are more recommendations than commands. And more importantly, we do not rely on our structure to keep us from going astray. Our confidence is in the Lord.

The business sessions of the conference are a time when the boards and committees of our association receive input and direction from the members of the congregations, and the congregations share with one another. Thus, receiving input from those attending is a central part of the conference and should be encouraged. We should work to create increased opportunities for this to happen. We must take care that our conferences and meetings do not become simply a time when boards,

directors and others in leadership present their programs and plans and then expect those listening to go forth and promote what is going on. I would like to see more resolutions proposed to the conference — coming from the conference committees and the boards — that are presented for the purpose of generating discussion and seeking direction from the congregations as to their desires.

I encourage committees to not meet during conference business

sessions unless absolutely necessary. I know time is limited and there is much work to do. However, when a committee meets while a session is going on, they are in effect saying they do not regard as important what is happening on the conference floor.

I also encourage boards to work hard at attempting to seek conference input and approval for major decisions. This may seem inefficient and is not technically necessary in our free congregation structure, but it is good to remember Proverbs 15:22: "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." One recent example that concerns me was the purchase of a plane last year by the Free Lutheran Association of Pilot Supporters. Those attending the conference were invited to the dedication of the plane but the matter was not brought before the conference floor for discussion. The plane may prove to be a useful tool for us to have, but I hope future purchases of this magnitude are brought before the conference for input.

Conferences and congregational business meetings are a time for leaders to present their vision, and also a time for them to listen to the members. Much can be learned as we listen to one another, and together seek the Lord.

— *Pastor Craig Johnson*

It does matter if people come to meetings or not.

THE ASSOCIATION RETREAT CENTER

Overwhelmed by prayer

Why should I be surprised when the Lord answers prayer? Seven years ago, the ARC Board prayed that the Lord would bring more campers to our facility. Five times as many people will visit the ARC this year as compared to seven years ago. All praise and glory and honor to our Lord and Savior!

If the Lord can bring people to a camp, why can't He bring more people to our churches? I believe it is because we do not directly pray for it. Please don't get me wrong; I do not believe that more people mean a better church. Rather, the more people at our churches the more people who will hear the Word of God, go out into the harvest and, Lord willing, the more people who will make decisions for Jesus Christ.

The Word of God tells us that He "desires all to be saved." Knowing this, we need to pray for opportunities to step out in faith, out of our comfort zones, and share Jesus Christ with our neighbors.

Sometimes stepping out in faith requires us to rethink our traditions. Let us never forget who we are working for and what He asks us to do. During Jesus' ministry, He annoyed and infuriated the religious leaders because He had no regard for many of their beloved traditions. The Gospel writer Matthew describes a scene where Jesus is eating at his house

with all kinds of "undesirables." The Pharisees could not believe that Jesus would associate with those sorts of people. When they questioned Jesus about it, do you know how He responded? He told them, "Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'"

The Hebrew word for mercy can also be translated "love." The word can refer to love for God, for people or for both. In light of the rest of this passage, Jesus seems to be stressing love for each other as human beings and particularly for those who are really "down and out." That kind of love does not come naturally to any of us. So often we are afraid of getting involved with those "undesirables" because we know it will require us to give our time, money and energy. A little later in that same passage Matthew tells us that "Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness." Wow, that must have worn Him out! We don't have it in us to act with the kind of love that Jesus did. That's where prayer comes in.

Our Father knows much better than we do how inadequate we are for this task, but He still asks us to do it. In that same passage in Matthew Jesus tells His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." In addition to asking God

to send the willing people to go, God wants us to ask him to change our hearts as individuals so that *we* become the workers He desires us to be. Workers who see the needs of people all around us. Workers who are willing to jump into the "labor force" of His kingdom to make a difference by living out lives that are overflowing with love for those who need it so desperately. Workers who are more loyal to their Savior than to their comfort, status or traditions. We really need God's transforming power to help us lead that kind of life.

I've been amazed at the opportunities that God has given me since I asked Him to make me a willing worker. Why should I be surprised when the Lord answers prayer?

At the ARC, we have set forth a mission statement: "To be a facility where people can come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior." Maybe your church hasn't experienced much growth lately. Maybe you aren't seeing many of those so called "undesirables" pass through your doors. If not, begin to pray that the Lord would allow your church to be a place where people will meet Jesus Christ, and that He would use you to reach out with His love. You, like me, will be amazed how the Lord can take prayer with faith as tiny as a mustard seed, and turn it into something great.

— *Eric Westlake*
Director

Association Retreat Center