

The Lutheran AMBASSADOR

29

April 7, 1997

Where the *Spirit*
of the
Lord
is
there is
liberty.



Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

— II Corinthians 3:17

The free congregation:
Is it good for the AFLC? p. 4

Is your congregation
free and living? p. 5

Plan now to
participate in the
35th Annual Conference
of the AFLC p. 8

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

April 29, 1997
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Flying together

Have you ever wondered why the Canadian geese fly in the V formation? For years specialists in aerodynamics wondered the same thing. Two engineers calibrated what happened in a wind tunnel with such a V formation. Each goose in flapping its wings, creates an upward lift for the goose that follows. When all the geese do their part in V formation, the whole flock has a 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew alone. Each depends upon the other to get to its destination. Another interesting characteristic of the goose is when one begins to lag behind, the others "honk" it back into place.

The church can learn from God's animal creation. Is it possible that we need to be like the geese in that we fly in a spiritual V formation, and if some begin to lag behind, we "honk" them back into formation by spurring them on toward love and good deeds? The writer to the Hebrews exhorts us with these words: *"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"* (10:25-26).

Apparently those receiving this epistle were withdrawing from the fellowship of the whole congregation in favor of their mini-flock. The word "spur" in the above passage comes from a Greek word which suggests that believers "must sharply confront" one another with their responsibility. If such encouragement is to take place, Christians need to meet together on a regular basis. A Christian cannot profit from the gifts of others unless they fel-

AN ENCOURAGING WORD

lowship together. One would think it would be at least 71 percent easier to live the faith Christian life flying with the flock as opposed to going it alone. We really do need one another!

Do you think it grieves God as He looks at His church today and sees its fragmentation? Jesus prayed to the Father for the Church with these words: *"May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me"* (John 17:23b). Jesus makes clear the importance of being in unity in order for the world to know God's love. Will the lost ever come to know the love God has for them and come to know Jesus as their Savior if we as the Church do not fly together?

A blind man was discovered sitting at the corner of a city street with a lantern beside him. When he was asked why the lantern was there since light and darkness were the same to him, he replied, "I have it so that no one may stumble over me." May we in the AFLC hold our lantern high that those in darkness will not stumble over us, or worse yet, that we stumble over one another. What a message for Christians who have the light! Every person is important to the Church. God loves each one equally. He has gifted each with a variety of gifts which the Church needs.

Let's fly together.



— Pastor
David Skordahl
Dalton,
Minnesota

sound bites

1 "The church must have more dreamers. What God wants every church to become must start as a compelling dream for an on-site dreamer. Let's remember that every ministry started as someone's dream ... I love to dream about my part in the ministry of Jesus in the world. It is exciting to think that right this minute the Holy Spirit may be igniting a fantastic new expression of ministry in my heart or yours."

— H. B. London

"When evangelistic efforts are not integrated with the local church, they run the grave danger of being out of the will of God. For the

4 Great Commission by definition involves baptism and disciple making, and this can only be done in the context of a local confessing congregation."

— Charles Colson

6 "The Church, of course, was never intended by Christ to be a technique-driven institution. His call was for believers to band together in ways that built a unified family of saints dedicated to becoming more like Him."

— George Barna

2 "The church is the glue that keeps us together when we disagree. It is the gasoline that keeps us going during the tough times. It is the guts that enables us to take risks when we need to."

— Mary Nelson

3 "Whenever we place a higher priority on solving our problems than on pursuing God, we are immoral."

— Larry Crabb

"Our life as a family in God's household is critical to our going to the world. ... it is the unique nature of this life together that makes us light in the world. ... as we allow ourselves to be scattered into the world, our need for one another becomes a matter of life and death. We will need like never before the care and support of our brothers and sisters."

— Jim Petersen

It is good for the AFLC when the local congregation is free

The very name *Association of Free Lutheran Congregations* almost belabors the conviction that the local churches are free from outward human domination. The **free** is obvious. **Association** does not connote tight organization, but a fellowship of units or individuals having common interests and purposes. **Congregations** brings the focus to the local group, not to a large central organization.

But how does the larger fellowship, the AFLC, benefit from the freedom of the local congregations? First, from the fact that the congregations have associated voluntarily. They did so of their own volition, not under coercion, and it is hoped, after prayer for the Lord's guidance. They remain in the fellowship only as they feel that they are in God's will in doing so. The compulsion is only that of love and mutual dependency. Things always go best when people are where they want to be, not because they feel bound by the desires of others.

Second, the AFLC churches are led by the Word and the Spirit of God. The congregations in their constitutions acknowl-

edge these authorities. We speak of them as two, but in reality they are one and the same. They do not contradict each other, but speak with one voice.

Their authority is absolute. This is what Georg Sverdrup wrote about when he discussed on the *Fundamental Principles* (No. 5) of the AFLC: "And so absolute is this authority (of Word and Spirit) that the congregation is no longer a congregation when it tears itself from it, and just as long is a congregation a congregation when it follows this authority."

The AFLC rejoices that the local churches are under this control. They share this commitment. How, then, will the guidance of the Word and Spirit be determined? Primarily by being in the Word, the Bible. Largely because of Luther and, we hope, subsequently through practice, Lutherans are known as a people of the Word. We are to look into this Word for God's direction and leading. This must be done in a spirit of dependence on the Holy Spirit, who works through the Word, helping us to understand the Word and hence the will of God.

People and churches which are guided by the Word and the Spirit will not go off on tangents or be led astray, but will be steadfast in the work of being God's light and salt in the earth. The AFLC takes courage from this and is glad.

In the third place, the Association gains strength from the fact that the affil-



— Pastor
Raynard Huglen
Newfolden,
Minnesota



The 25th Annual Conference of the AFLC was held in Thief River Falls, Minnesota, in June of 1987.



The late Olve Willand and the late Pastor J. G. Erickson at the '73 conference in Ferndale, Washington.

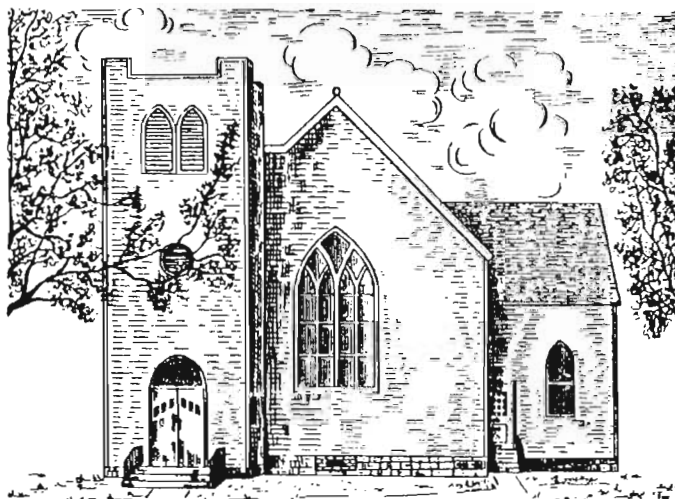
iating congregations prayerfully seek to determine how and to what extent they will support the decisions which have been made by conferences, boards, and committees. They are not legally bound to give support, but they view all things from the desire to advance God's work in the world. And when they are convinced that such and such an action will do so, they enter into the task with willing hearts.

The larger fellowship, the AFLC, takes heart from the freedom of the local congregations knowing that their participation in what we call the common work (or work together) is done not through constraint, but out of a Spirit-motivated desire. It was such a spirit which Nehemiah found when the walls of Jerusalem were to be re-built: *The people had a mind to work* (4:6). And Paul wrote of it to the Corinthians concerning the churches of Macedonia: *For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will* (II Corinthians 8:3).

For soon 35 years the AFLC has found the principle of voluntary association to work well. There can be no claim that all of God's expectations for us have been met. Far from it. Spiritual life can always be deeper and broader. The larger fellowship, as we have called it, gains new life from the willing local congregations and will be the agent of greater effectiveness for the Lord as our congregations permit themselves to be molded ever more and more by the Word and Spirit of God.



The late Leonard and Mae Swanson, Nogales, Arizona, and Gabriel Mercado, Mexico, at the 1973 conference.



Minnesota Lutheran. Startuck. Minnesota

The **CONGREGATION** God's Kingdom on Earth

Few phrases are more dear to the people of the AFLC than the phrase "free and living congregations." We teach the concept of free and living congregations in our seminary and Bible school. It repeatedly appears in the pages of the *Lutheran Ambassador*. Yet, after having served in four different districts of our AFLC in the last four years, I am concerned that many of our people may not grasp the significance of the words, "free and living."

It is now as necessary as ever for us as a church body to be reminded of the heritage which is ours through the work of men like Georg Sverdrup and Sven Oftedal and our predecessor church body, the Lutheran Free Church. I believe we need a steady infusion of the "free church spirit" and of "free church men."

One way we can keep the spirit of the free church alive is to look closely at our local congregations to see if the principles we espouse are at work in them. If we are truly a free church movement, then the proof will be seen in places like Bagley, Minnesota, Kalispell, Montana, and Milford, Illinois even more so than at the AFLC headquarters or at district gatherings.

What is it then that makes a local congregation a free and living congregation? What do you look for to see evidence of (continued on next page)



— by Pastor
Brian Davidson
Mizpah and Hope
Lutheran
Northome,
Minnesota

these qualities? What will ensure that these principles will continue to be taught and practiced in the years to come? I would like to suggest two criteria to guide in this examination.

The free and living congregation is **autonomous**. That word is defined as: 1. Not controlled by others or by outside forces; independent. 2. Independent in mind or judgment; self-directed. 3. a. Independent of the laws of another state or government; self-governing. b. Of or relating to a self-governing entity. c. Self-governing with respect to local or internal affairs (American Heritage Dictionary).

At a congregational meeting people are not elected to lead another congregation. The members of a congregation place themselves willingly under the authority of their local church councils and boards in order that the leadership of the congregation might be able to do the work to which they were called. They are not required to submit to the authority of ones elected by a different body.

The congregations of the AFLC look upon the boards and committees of the AFLC as joint endeavors and cooperative ventures, not as higher bodies to which they are forced to submit. Support of these endeavors is conditional, since these endeavors may not always fulfill

the vision of the local congregation.

The free and living congregation is complete. That word is defined as: 1. Having all necessary or normal parts, components or steps; entire. 2. Having come to an end; concluded. 3. Absolute; total. 4. a. Skilled; accomplished. b. Thorough; consummate (American Heritage Dictionary).

In God's wisdom and through the work of His Spirit, He gives to His Church all the gifts that She needs. "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues" (I Corinthians 12:27,28, NIV).

Is there a gift missing in your local congregation that is necessary for it to be a healthy and living congregation? According to Scripture, no gift is lacking in any gathering of His people. Gifts are distributed among the various members of your congregation so that no one can say, "I have no need of you." These gifts make us dependent upon each other. They also make us sufficient to be free and living congregations, doing the work of building up the kingdom of God in our communities.



— Glenn Espe
Our Saviour's Lutheran
Thief River Falls, Minnesota

Benefits of a free and open

High in a pine tree above the prayer chapel at Warm Beach, Washington, a majestic bald eagle was perched looking out over the Puget Sound early one morning during the 1996 annual AFLC conference. A flap of its wings and it soared effortlessly out over the sound searching for a morning meal.

Our AFLC free and open annual conferences remind me of that awesome bald eagle: "Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not get weary" (Isaiah 40:31).

The uniqueness of the AFLC annual conference is the fact that they rotate from place to place throughout the United

States. This gives congregations an outstanding opportunity to share in planning for a conference of this magnitude. With the conference in various places, those who cannot travel long distances may have an opportunity to participate.

When AFLC members take the time to attend a conference and the opening session begins, it is like the eagle soaring over the Puget Sound. The goal is for conference attendees to mount up like eagles' wings and gain new strength to continue the path the Lord has chosen for them when they return home.

The prayer sessions are the solid basis for the whole spiritual atmosphere of each conference. This along with the music contributes to a sense of togetherness

Dear Members of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations,
Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father,
and the Lord Jesus Christ. — (I Thessalonians 1:1).

Greetings from Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Thief River Falls, Minnesota, and a warm welcome to the AFLC's 35th Annual Conference. We are proud to be hosting this year's conference.

The conference will be held at Northland Community and Technical College. This is a beautiful facility on the east side of the city with all the amenities necessary for a comfortable, successful, and Spirit-filled conference. The area where the conference will be held is air conditioned.

There are a number of fine motels in the area. We encourage you to make your reservations early. There is also a campsite available and a number of homes will

also be open. If you are planning to dine away from the conference site, there are many good restaurants to choose from.

We encourage everyone to come to the conference and participate in the many sessions planned. We trust your time spent in Thief River Falls will be pleasant.

Remember to pray for the Annual Conference as well as for those preparing for the event. We pray also that the Holy Spirit will be ever present throughout the entire duration of the conference and that those who attend will be richly blessed.

— *David Rodahl, Chairman*
Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

conference

that helps unite the AFLC throughout the world.

God's Word is the centerpiece of each evening service as we pray for Spirit-filled messages in which the Scripture is presented in power and truth.

I find the quality of music during the conference to be truly inspirational. The gospel songs of the ages are sung with a unique understanding and zest. One can only be there to experience the full impact.

Business meetings are conducted in a manner that everyone attending may participate in. Everyone who registers and is a member of an AFLC congregation is a voting delegate. This is unlike a synod where only a select few are delegates and may speak and vote. The leadership of

our AFLC maintains an openness throughout the business meetings that makes everyone feel welcome.

Though I am a layman, I had the privilege to attend the Pastors' Banquet at the 1996 conference. This evening of fellowship, music and the Word inspired all to leave refreshed and challenged to proclaim the good news of Christ anew. I discovered that not only can pastors preach, some of them can sing too!

Times of fellowship give us wonderful opportunities to share what God is doing in our lives and congregations. Old acquaintances are rekindled and new friendships are made.

June 11-15 is approaching. Like the eagle searching for its morning meal, plan early to join with us and feast on the Word that the Lord has prepared for all who come.



Thirty-fifth Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

June 11-15, 1997

Northland Community and Technical College

Thief River Falls, Minnesota

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. — II Corinthians 3:17

Schedule

Wednesday, June 11

- 9 a.m. The conference committees meet for devotions, instructions and room assignments.
- 6:30 p.m. Concert of Prayer, Rev. James Fugleberg, Fargo, ND, leader
- 8 p.m. Opening Service — Rev. Raynard Huglen, Newfolden, MN, leader
Rev. Bruce Dalager, Grand Forks, ND, speaker
AFLC President Robert Lee will open the conference and appoint necessary committees.

11:30 a.m. Prayer Hour, Dr. Francis Monseth, Rogers, MN, leader

- 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 1998 Conference
Report of the Chairman of the Board of Publications and Parish Education, Rev. Philip Haugen, Culbertson, MT
Report of the Director of Parish Education, Mrs. Marian Christopherson, New Hope, MN
Report of the Chairman of the Christian Academic Education Board, Rev. Brian Davidson, Northome, MN
Report of the Chairman of the Youth Board, Rev. Lloyd Quanbeck, Minot, ND
Report of the President of the Free Lutheran Youth, Rev. James L. Johnson, Plymouth, MN
Report of the Youth Ministries Director, Rev. Kevin Olson, Savage, MN
Report of Committee #4 (Publications, Parish Education and Youth Work)

Thursday, June 12

- 9 a.m. Devotions
Report of the Credentials Committee
Adoption of the Conference Agenda
Election of the Nominating Committee for the 1998 Conference
The President's Report
Report of the Chairman of the Coordinating Committee, Rev. Terry Olson, Dickinson, ND
Report of the Director of Development, Mr. Ernest Miedema, Valley City, ND
Report of the Director of Institutional Chaplaincy, Rev. Kerwin Sletto, Ottawa, IL
Report of the Director of the ARC, Mr. Eric Westlake, Osceola, WI
Financial Report of the ARC
Financial Report, Marlene Unverzagt, Minneapolis, MN, Bookkeeper
Report of the Family Bible Camps Lake Bronson, MN, treasurer
Wilderness, Mr. Don Olson, Fargo, ND
Report of the Budget Analysis Committee
Report of the Nominating Committee, always in order
Election of nominees for the Missions Corporation, Schools Corporation and ARC Corporation
Report of Committee #1 (Administration)

5:30 p.m. The Schools' Corporation Annual Meeting

8:00 p.m. The Mission Festival Service conducted by the Women's Missionary Federation, Rev. Dan Giles, speaker

Friday, June 13

- 7:00 a.m. The Missions Corporation Annual Meeting
- 9:00 a.m. Devotions
Report of the Credentials Committee
Election of members to the Board of Publications and Parish Education — 2 laymen
Election of members to the Christian Academic Education Board — 1 layman and 2 pastors
Election of member to the Youth Board — 1 pastor
Election of Committee #4 for the 1998 Conference
Report of the Chairman of the Stewardship Board, Rev. Mark Antal, Leeds, ND
Report of the Chairman of the Board of Pensions, Mr. Tony Onnen, Cokato, MN
Report of Committee #5 (Stewardship and 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 1998 Conference
- 11:30 a.m. Prayer Hour — Dr. Francis Monseth
- 12:00 noon The ARC Corporation Annual Meeting
Christian Educator's Luncheon
- 1:30 p.m. Devotions
Report of the Credentials Committee
Report of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, Cokato, MN
Report of the Dean of the Seminary, Dr. Francis Monseth, Rogers, MN
Report of the Dean of the Bible School, Rev. James L. Johnson, Plymouth, MN
Report of the AFLBS Alumni President, Mr. Kermit Nash, Golden Valley, MN
Report of Committee #2 (Schools)
- 5:30 p.m. Pastors' Banquet
- 8:00 p.m. Laymen's Service, Mr. Emory Flaten, Newfolden, MN, leader, Mr. Ralph Peterson, Portland, ND, speaker

Saturday, June 14

- 9 a.m. Devotions
Report of the Credentials Committee
Continuing discussion of Committee #2
Election of Committee #2 for the 1998 Conference

- Report of Schools' Corporation Annual Meeting
Report of the Chairman of the World Missions Committee, Mr. Ken Williams, Ishpeming, MI
Report of the Director of World Missions, Rev. Eugene Enderlein, Plymouth, MN
Report of Partners in Mission Outreach Board
Report of the Chairman of the Home Missions Committee, Rev. Allen Monson, Lakeville, MN
Report of the Director of Home Missions, Rev. Paul Nash, Brooklyn Park, MN
- 11:30 a.m. Prayer Hour — Dr. Francis Monseth
- 1:30 p.m. Devotions
Report of Credentials Committee
Report of the Commission on Evangelism, Rev. James Rasmussen, Park River, ND
Report of Committee #3 (Missions and Evangelism)
Continuing discussion of Committee #3
Report of Missions Corporation Annual Meeting
Election of members to the Commission on Evangelism — 2 layman
Election of Committee #3 for the 1998 Conference
Report of the Chairman of the Colloquy Committee, Rev. Del Palmer, Shakopee, MN
Election of Colloquy Committee for the 1998 Conference
Report of special committees
Election of 2 members to the Budget Analysis Committee — 3-year terms
Report of Committee #1 as the Committee on General Resolutions
Other Reports
- 8 p.m. Youth Night at the Conference

Sunday, June 15

- 8 a.m. Communion Service, Pastor Randy Moe, Thief River Falls, MN, leader, Pastor Gene Sundby, Outlook, Sask., speaker
- 10:30 a.m. Worship Service, Rev. James Rasmussen, Park River, ND, leader
Rev. Terry Olson, Dickinson, ND, speaker

— Conference Committee
Rev. Robert Lee, President
Rev. Bruce Dalager, Secretary

Missions Corporation

Term expires 1997

Rev. Herbert Franz, Dollar Bay, MI
Rev. Ray Klug, Blackduck, MN
Mark Knutson, Newfolden, MN
*Pastor Henry Mohagen, Towner, ND
Kenneth Nash, Colfax, ND
Timothy Rolf, McIntosh, MN
**Vernon Russum, Grafton, ND
Dr. Wayne Sletten, Faith, SD
*Rev. Tony Stockman, Brandon, MN
Judith Wold, Thief River Falls, MN

Term expires 1998

Rev. Mark Antal, Leeds, ND
Rev. James Asp, Morris, IL
*Robert Christian, Newark, IL
Rev. Peter Franz, Cloquet, MN
Rev. Philip Haugen, Culbertson, MT
Carol Knapp, Willmar, MN
Clifford Nelson, Cannon Falls, MN
Tom Schierkolk, Valley City, ND
Grace Syverson, Tioga, ND
Rev. Einar Unseth, Glenville, MN

Term expires 1999

**Kermit Berge, Larimore, ND
**Rev. Ted Berkas, Wallace, SD
Rev. Alvin Grothe, Astoria, OR
Lester Hinderaker, Story City, IA
Arden Jacobson, Champlin, MN
Phil Jensen, Sioux Falls, SD
Karen Knudsvig, Buxton, ND
Jerry Olson, Newfolden, MN
Rev. John Skeie, New Hope, MN
**Rev. Jeff Swanson, Newark, IL

Term expires 2000

Dr. Peter Dyrud, Plymouth, MN
Phil Grothe, Thief River Falls, MN
Arley Hartsoch, Ray, ND
**Rev. Ted Kennedy, Nogales, AZ
Dr. Lyle Mattson, Greenbush, MN
Rev. Steve Odegaard, Tioga, ND
**Randy Sommer, Sparland, IL
*Rev. Harris Van Someren, Winger, MN
Eunice Will, Springfield, MO
**Ken Williams, Ishpeming, MI

Term expires 2001

Robert Dietsche, Osceola, WI
Rev. Amos Dyrud, Crystal, MN
*Halvor Knapp, Kandiyohi, MN
Rev. Dale Mellgren, McIntosh, MN
*Rev. Allen Monson, Lakeville, MN
*Rev. Stephen Mundfrom, Sebeka, MN
Aini Myking, New Hope, MN
Rev. Tom Tuura, St. James, MN
Eldwyn VanBruggen, Valley City, ND
Marilyn Gray, Greenbush, MN
*Member of Home Missions Committee
**Member of World Missions Committee

Conference elections

Officers

Vice President — 1-year term
Rev. Elden Nelson has served two terms.
Secretary — 1-year term
Rev. Bruce Dalager has served four terms.

Elected by Corporation

Coordinating Committee — 2 laymen, 5-year terms.

Mr. Jim Boe and Mr. Ralph Peterson have each served one 5-year term and are eligible for re-election.

Board of Trustees — 1 layman, 5-year term.

Mr. Tim Jones has served one 5-year term and is eligible for re-election.

World Missions Committee — 1 pastor, 5-year term.

Rev. Ted Berkas has served two consecutive terms and is ineligible for re-election.

Home Missions Committee — 1 layman, 5-year term.

Mr. Robert Christian has served one 5-year term and is eligible for re-election.

ARC Board — 1 pastor, 5-year term.

Rev. Tonnes Pollestad was elected in 1993 to fill out a five-year term. He is eligible for re-election.

Elected by Conference

Stewardship Board — 1 layman, 5-year term.

Mr. Joel Rogenes has served one 5-year term and is eligible for re-election.

Board of Publications and Parish Education — 1 layman, 5-year term; 1 layman, 2-year term.

Mrs. Linda Mohagen, whose term is up this year, recently resigned from the Parish Education Board. Mrs. Barbara Stueland resigned with 3 years of her term remaining. Mrs. Avis Dyrud was appointed to serve until conference election.

Christian Academic Education Board — 1 pastor, 5-year term; 1 layman, 2-year term.

Rev. Brian Davidson has served one 5-year term and is eligible for re-election. Mrs. Avis Dyrud was elected in 1995 to fill out the remaining 2 years of a 5-year term. Rev. James Johnson was elected at the annual conference to a 2-year term, but declined to serve. Rev. Michael Peterson was appointed to serve until annual conference. He is eligible for election.

Youth Board — 1 pastor, 5-year term.

Rev. Lloyd Quanbeck was elected in 1993 to fill out a five-year term. He is eligible for re-election.

Board of Pensions — 1 layman, 5-year term.

Mr. Rodney Kjersten was elected in 1993 to fill out a five-year term. He is eligible for re-election.

Commission on Evangelism — 1 layman, 5-year term; 1 layman, 2-year term.

Pastor Irvin Schmitke has served one 5-year term and is eligible for re-election. Mr. Gene Quist was appointed to serve until the conference election in the term of Mr. Clifford Johnson who resigned.

Schools Corporation

Term expires 1997

Clifford Dyrud, Moorhead, MN
Anne Erickson, Badger, MN
Pastor Dean Franz, Chassell, MI
Rev. Dennis Gray, Greenbush, MN
Rev. Martin Horn, Astoria, OR
Clifford Johnson, Esko, MN
Rev. Paul Nash, Brooklyn Park, MN
Kent Quanbeck, McVillie, ND
James Rolf, Brandon, MN
Pastor Rodney Stueland, Roseau, MN

Term expires 1998

Rev. Jon Benson, Ortleigh, SD
Arne Berge, Binford, ND
Rev. Scott Gray, Cedar Rapids, IA
Rev. Craig Johnson, Eugene, OR
Rev. James L. Johnson, Plymouth, MN
*Rev. Gary Jorgenson, Ottawa, IL
Norman Chase, Lake Itasca, MN
Rev. James Molstre, Pittsburgh, PA
Ralph Peterson, Portland, ND

Term expires 1999

Joel Erickson, Grand Forks, ND
*Emory Flaten, Newfolden, MN
*Wayne Floan, Fertile, MN
David Fugleberg, Lakeville, MN
Rev. Les Galland, Everett, WA
James Peterson, Colfax, WI
Roger Johnson, Dickinson, ND
Randy Pederson, Tioga, ND
Paul Strand, Kenyon, MN
Bruce Wolla, Minot, ND

Term expires 2000

Rev. Emerson Anderson, Cloquet, MN
Bob Bilden, Bagley, MN
*David Borg, Cokato, MN
Loiell Dyrud, Thief River Falls, MN
Rev. Dan Klug, East Grand Forks, MN
*Rev. Lyndon Korhonen, Cokato, MN
Rev. Kenneth Moland, Kirkland, WA
*Rev. Rodger Olson, Fergus Falls, MN
Kenneth Rolf, McIntosh, MN
Rev. Reuben Unseth, Radcliffe, IA

Term Expires 2001

Larry Behne, Wheatland, IA
Tony Bundy, Marysville, WA
Dr. Philip Dyrud, Middle River, MN
Rev. Harvey Jackson, Hatton, ND
*Tim Jones, Wyndmere, ND
Rev. Lynn Kinneberg, McVillie, ND
Rev. Terry Olson, Dickinson, ND
Roger Peterson, Thief River Falls, MN
Rev. James Ritter, Bloomington, MN
Rev. Steve Snipstead, Kalispell, MN
*Member of the Board of Trustees

OUR PRESIDENT WRITES

A heritage and a mission

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

— II Corinthians 3:17

The 35th Annual Conference of the AFLC will meet on June 11-15 in Thief River Falls, Minnesota, hosted by Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. This is a milestone conference for our fellowship, since we are returning to the community where our organizational meeting was held in 1962.

It was a surprise to me that the theme for this year has not been used at one of the past conferences, since this Scripture verse is used on our AFLC logo. An emphasis on free and living Lutheran congregations finds its wellspring here in the words of the Apostle Paul. Genuine freedom and life are not found in polity or programs but in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit of God. This is our heritage and our mission.

Another milestone for the AFLC is to be noted this year, since it is the centennial year for the Lutheran Free Church, our predecessor church body; born one hundred years ago this month during a decade of spiritual awakening. Our immigrant forefathers carried a living tradition of spiritual freedom in their hearts, which they prayed might be transplanted to the New World. It was their firm conviction that freedom in the Spirit would flourish best of all in a fellowship that acknowledged no churchly authority above the local congregation.

New conference attendance records were reached ten years ago when we last met in Thief River Falls. This should happen again, so all are encouraged to make reservations early. Yet a more important part of our conference planning is the prayer preparation. Let us seek the Lord together, asking Him to prepare the hearts of all who will attend, binding us together in a spirit of one accord to know His will and to do it.

The annual conference is a unique blessing, different from the convention experiences of those who have come to us from other church backgrounds. Our purpose is not primarily legislative but devotional, with the goal that those who attend might be both informed and inspired as they return to their home congregations. All voting members of AFLC congregations may have voting and speaking privileges, which is one of the unique characteristics that the founders of our free church movement passed on to us. Our goal is that every congregation would be represented. Your participation will help to make this goal a reality.

Prepare in prayer, and plan to attend. I believe that God is opening wonderful new doors of opportunity for the AFLC, and you are welcome to be a part of what He is doing. May the principles entrusted to us become your personal heritage and mission.

— Pastor Robert L. Lee

Association Retreat Center Corporation

Term expires 1997

Rev. Brian Davidson, Northome, MN
Glen Hodnefield, Radcliffe, IA
Clifford Holm, Menahga, MN
Dennis Jacobsen, Burlington, ND
Arden Jacobson, Champlin, MN
Larry Johnson, Amery, WI
*Rev. Todd Klemme, Wadena, MN
Halvor Knapp, Kandiyohi, MN
Dave Osland, DeKalb, IL
Victor Parsons, St. Paul, MN

Term expires 1998

Arne Anderson, Dassel, MN
*Dale Bentley, Mounds View, MN
Kurt Bjorgaard, Argyle, MN
Harlan Clark, Amery, WI
Merle Jacobson, Deer Park, WI
Howard Johnson, Upsala, MN
Steve Johnson, Upsala, MN
Rev. Joel Rolf, Valley City, ND
*Cliff Seldal, DeKalb, IL
Pastor Ken Thoreson, Argyle, MN

Term expires 1999

*Allen Anderson, Clear Lake, WI
David Jacobson, Binford, ND
Martin Johnson, Badger, MN
Rev. Rodney Johnson, Stanley, ND
Rev. Roy Johnson, Wichita Falls, TX
Rev. Robert Koepp, Colfax, WI
Ellis Olson, Eden Prairie, MN
Pastor Paul Pillman, Menomonie, WI
Rev. Alvin Pinno, Eagan, MN
Brian Rice, Balsam Lake, WI

Term expires 2000

Oryen Benrud, Goodhue, MN
Don Berge, Fargo, ND
Ralph Beyer, Osceola, WI
Rev. Tim Carlson, Wheatland, IA
Rev. David Keippella, Stacy, MN
Kevin Nessa, Garden City, IA
*Rev. Tonnes Pollestad, Andover, MN
Roger Quanbeck, McVie, ND
Lee Schierkolk, Prairie Farm, WI
Peter Ward, Zumbrota, MN

Term expires 2001

Ivar Berge, Fargo, ND
Rev. Clyde Grier, Milford, IL
Dennis Holmquist, Maple Grove, MN
Rev. James Johnson, Brooklyn Park, MN
Ralph Johnson, Upsala, MN
Mel Meyer, Amery, WI
Ernest Miedema, Valley City, ND
Kermit Nash, Golden Valley, MN
Jim Ray, Cloquet, MN
Rev. Jonathan Unverzagt, DeKalb, IL

*Member of the ARC Board

Committees to the 1997

Nominating Committee

Arne Berge, Binford, ND
Dennis Jacobson, Minot, ND
Mike McCarlson, Webster, SD
Wayne Peterson,
Thief River Falls, MN
Kenneth Rolf, McIntosh, MN
Ralph Johnson, Upsala, MN
Dan Mundfrom, Loveland, CO
Peter Hill, Cloquet, MN
James Galland, Lakeville, MN
Rev. Tim Skramstad, Zumbrota, MN
Rev. Merle Knutson, Ishpeming, MI
Rev. Vince Will, Springfield, MO
Dean Crouthers, Nogales, AZ
Rev. Rick Long, Arlington, WA
Rev. James Molstre, Bethel Park, PA
Stan Dale, Ottawa, IL

District

Eastern North Dakota
W. North Dakota/E. Montana
South Dakota
NW Minnesota
N. Central Minnesota
SW Central Minnesota
Nebraska/Kansas/Colorado
Lake Superior
Minneapolis
Central Tri-State
Northern Michigan
South Central
Southwestern
West Coast
Eastern
Illinois



A 1976 AFLC Annual Conference resolutions committee. The delegates met at Suomi College in Hancock, Michigan. Conferences have been held as far south as DeKalb, Illinois, and as far northwest as Ferndale, Washington.

Annual Conference

Committee No. 1 (Administration)

Albin Haugen, Fargo, ND
Rev. Wesley Langaas, Thief River Falls, MN
Anders Macy, Fertile, MN
Clifford Johnson, Esko, MN
Rev. Rick Long, Arlington, WA

Committee No. 2 (Schools)

Roger Peterson, Thief River Falls, MN
Rev. Tim Johnson, Beltrami, MN
Rev. Tim Skramstad, Zumbrota, MN
Todd Morey, Nogales, AZ
Rorie Iverson, Sisseton, SD

Committee No. 3 (Missions & Evangelism)

Steven Dahl, Plummer, MN
Jacob Schaffhauser, Strandquist, MN
Bud Haugen, Snohomish, WA
Rev. Brian Pearson, Montgomery, IL
Rev. Wayne Hjermstad, Faith, SD

Committee #4 (Publications, Parish Ed & Youth)

Rev. James Rasmussen, Park River, ND
Rev. Tonnes Pollestad, Andover, MN
LaVern Thompson, Fergus Falls, MN
Robert Kohl, Brookings, SD
Blair Johnson, Badger, MN

Committee #5 (Stewardship & Pension)

Pastor Alvin Sather, Greenbush, MN
John Morris, Bothell, WA
George Hartman, Dalton, MN
Rev. Larry Haagenon, Loveland, CO
Mark Hiepler, Camarillo, CA

Colloquy Committee

Rev. Tim Skramstad, Zumbrota, MN
Rev. James Fugleberg, Fargo, ND
Rev. Del Palmer, Shakopee, MN
Rev. John Dennis, Bethel Park, PA
Rev. Mark Olson, Arlington, SD

Budget Analysis Committee

Richard Rasmussen, Monticello, MN
Pastor Dale Finstrom, Glyndon, MN
John Schlenk, Brooklyn Park, MN
Joel Quanbeck, Fargo, ND
Eldwyn VanBruggen, Valley City, ND

Term Expires

1997
1997
1998
1998
1999

Conference housing information

You will need to make your own reservations. Tell the motel your group name (Association of Free Lutheran Congregations), as rooms have been blocked off, but not reserved. Since rooms are limited, make your reservation now. The rooms in Thief River Falls will be blocked only through May 15, 1997. AAA and AARP discounts are available at most sites.

In Thief River Falls

C'Mon Inn 1 (218) 681-3000; \$45-68; 34 rooms available June 11-12 only; indoor pool and game room; free continental breakfast.

Super 8 1 (218) 681-6205; \$40-50; 23 rooms available June 11-14; free continental breakfast.

Best Western 1 (218) 681-7555; \$44-70; 77 rooms available June 11-12, 57 rooms June 11-13, and 20 rooms June 11-14; family restaurant; indoor pool, sauna, game room; (some of the convention banquets will be held here). Call the Best Western directly. Do not use STAR toll free reservations as they will show all rooms booked.

Hartwood Motel 1 (218) 681-2640; \$33-38; 25 rooms available.

Campus Court 1 (218) 681-2341 (Ted and Denise Davidson) 3 single-\$75; 4 single-\$100 per night.

Thief River Falls Tourist Park (camp-site) 16 full hook-ups \$12; 48 electric only hook-ups \$8; Reservations are not taken. For questions contact Park and Recreation Dept. 1 (218) 681-2519.

Out of town (no pre-blocked rooms)

Crookston 39 miles west of Thief River Falls.

Northland Inn 1 (800) 423-7541 or 1 (218) 281-5210; \$53-60; 74 rooms available; restaurant; indoor pool; hot tub.

Grand Forks, ND 55 miles west of Thief River Falls — major airport.

C'Mon Inn 1 (800) 255-2323

Comfort Inn 1 (800) 228-5150

Days Inn 1 (800) 325-2525

Holiday Inn 1 (800) 465-4329

Ramada Inn 1 (800) 570-3951

Super 8 1 (800) 800-8000

Town House Best Western 1 (800) 867-9797

35th Annual Convention of the Women's Missionary Federation

Sunny blue skies, warm breezes, the return of green grass, shade trees and multicolored blossoms — it's finally June in Minnesota! We're eagerly anticipating the North's version of balmy weather and the celebration of the 35th Annual Convention of the Women's Missionary Federation, June 11-12 at Northland Community College, Thief River Falls, Minnesota.

"Shine for Jesus" is our theme this year from Matthew 5:16. *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."* WMF Board members are planning a workshop for district representatives to start things off on Tuesday evening. This will be a special time for updates on recent events in WMF and for questions, answers and exchanging ideas.

Missionaries Connely and Carolyn Dyrud, Campo Mourão, Brazil, will speak at the Wednesday morning session. After the luncheon, we'll be blessed to hear from Debbie Giles, Aguascalientes, Mexico. Times of prayer, praise and special music selections are being prepared for our worship together. We hope to have an update on the Mission House project and let you know how your generous gifts have been put to use for our missionary families.

Thursday morning will be time again for the Women's Prayer Breakfast and some informal sharing. Please join us! Pre-registration for the WMF luncheon and breakfast is requested. Use the same form as the AFLC Conference printed in this *Ambassador*.

The offerings received at Wednesday's WMF Convention will go to Home Missions and the General Fund.

Pastor Dan Giles, missionary to Aguascalientes, Mexico, will speak at the Mission Festival Service on Thursday evening. The offering at this service will go to World Missions.

Join us now in prayer for the convention and come expecting a blessing.

— Rosalie Paulson
National WMF Secretary

* Please note the change in sponsorship of the annual conference coffee breaks. The WMF is no longer responsible for them. Instead, send monetary gifts to the AFLC Bookkeeper at 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441 and designate your gift "For Conference Coffee Breaks." This year you may also donate food items such as cheese, fruit, crackers, cookies or bars to help defray costs.



Answering questions and discussing those answers to our WMF Bible Study is only part of our lesson. Unless one shares with others, the study is really incomplete. The lesson for May is "Come to Jesus for Hope." Each of us meets daily those who are discouraged — sometimes it's because of the weather, or it may be due to health or personal problems. Our words of encouragement can confirm to others that Jesus is our reason for hope.

The words of the hymn "The Solid Rock" best describe my feelings with regard to my hope:

*My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and
righteousness.*

*I dare not trust the sweetest
frame,*

But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

On Christ, the Solid Rock

I stand;

All other ground is sinking sand!

I reside in a small community in northern Minnesota. I am married, with two grown children and taught elementary school

Special note for WMF Convention day

Ladies, think about a name for the new Missionary Furlough Home at the ARC! Write your suggestion down with its biblical meaning and submit it at the WMF Convention in Thief River Falls on June 11.

◀ Missionaries Dan and Debbie Giles with students attending World Mission Prayer League Bible school in Mazatlan, from Springs of Living Water congregation in Aguascalientes, Mexico.

Sharing Jesus — our hope



for 38 years. I love children and young people. The Lord became very real to me when, in my early teens, I was born again. He has continued to lead and guide me. "For Thou art my hope; O Lord God, Thou art my confidence from my youth" (Psalm 71:5-6).

In the world, we seem to see a false hope, or no hope at all. Think of the suicide cases among the youth, the drug and crime scenes along with the diseases which cripple and take lives of so many people today. Hope is gone for many. But as Christians, we must share the hope as we find it in I Peter 3:15: "But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence."

The Lord has given me many opportunities to be an example to others — as a teacher and now as a sub-teacher, working in Bible camps, Sunday school, VBS, and with the youth. I have prayed that the Lord could use me to lead or point others unto Him. Many times, He has had to disci-

pline, correct and teach me how to grow.

God has been very good to me and my family. He has given hope no matter what the situation has been. When our daughter was born, for whom we had prayed many years, I was afflicted with Bell's palsy which prevented me from feeding her or holding her in my arms. God saw me through it. This past October, I suffered a stroke and again, He was very near to me and brought me back to a normal life, for which I praise His name. It was as if he was saying: "I am not finished with you yet, there is more for you to do."

Hope for the future; how could we ever live victoriously with it? Hope is to anticipate with confidence. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Romans 8:24-25 puts it this way: "For in this hope we are saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently."

God calls each of us who are Christians to witness for Him, while it is yet day, and give hope to a dying world.

Romans 12:12 admonishes us: "Let us rejoice in hope, persevering in tribulation, and devoted to prayer."

The greatest hope of eternal life is well stated in Titus 3:7 where we read, "That being justified by His grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." We do not want anyone to miss out on this living hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. Let's go on praying and sharing.



— Marlys Bilden
Bagley, Minnesota



At the Miriam Infant Home

Pictured are Missionary Sonja Dahl with Dr. Nanci at the orphanage in Campo Mourao, Brazil. Dr. Nanci volunteers her services for the orphanage and is willing to see the children almost anytime. At the time of this picture, several children were sick so Dr. Nanci came to the orphanage herself rather than Sonja bringing them to the doctor's office in town.

1997 AFLC Annual Conference

Northland Community and Technical College

Thief River Falls, Minnesota

June 11-15

Information and Registration Form

Pre-register by June 2, 1997. Full refund for cancellations through June 6.

Send registration to: AFLC Annual Conference

P.O. Box 269

Thief River Falls, MN 56701

(218) 681-4643

Name _____

Spouse's Name (if registering) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Congregation _____

check one

___ Lay Person

___ Lay Visitor

___ Pastor

___ Pastor Visitor

This registration form should be used to register for the conference and the special events listed below. Please indicate the number of persons to attend each event and the total cost.

Conference Registration (Single \$20, Couple \$30)

\$ _____

(WMF \$2)

Conference Events

**Number
of persons**

**Cost
for one**

Total Cost

WMF Luncheon	Wednesday noon	_____	\$6.25	\$ _____
WMF Breakfast	Thursday, 7 a.m.	_____	3.75	_____
ARC Corporation	Friday noon	_____	4.75	_____
Schools Corp.	Thursday 5:30 p.m.	_____	6.50	_____
Missions Corp.	Friday 7 a.m.	_____	3.75	_____
Pastors' Banquet	Friday 5:30 p.m.	_____	11.00	_____

Conference Meals (Note: some above events are at the same times as meals below.)

Breakfast	Thurs. June 12	_____	\$3.50	\$ _____
Lunch	Thurs. June 12	_____	4.75	_____
Breakfast	Friday, June 13	_____	3.50	_____
Lunch	Friday, June 13	_____	4.75	_____
Breakfast	Saturday, June 14	_____	3.50	_____
Lunch	Saturday, June 14	_____	4.75	_____

Total Conference Cost

\$ _____

(Make checks payable to Our Saviour's Lutheran.)

Nursery service will be available.

Please inquire at registration desk when you arrive.

When you are in Thief River Falls

When you are in Thief River Falls, Minnesota, in June for the annual conference you will want to visit Our Saviour's Lutheran Church on the city's east side, a five-minute drive from the conference site. That was where the organizing conference of the AFLC began on October 25, 1962.

A large crowd gathered that night and heard Pastor Harold Schafer preach on the theme, "Press on unto Salvation."

Pastor Fritjof Monseth served as temporary chairman the next morning. Pastor John Strand, who would become our first president, gave the keynote address, "The Church We Seek," based on Matthew 28:16-20. The two statements, "The Historical Situation" and "Declaration of Faith" were read at that session.

By the end of the morning it was evident that the crowd had grown too large to continue in the church sanctuary and further sessions would be held in the auditorium of Knox Public School, hardly a block to the east.

It was there that the *Funda-*

mental Principles were discussed paragraph by paragraph. Pastor Strand preached that night on "Press on unto Sanctification." At Knox, resolutions on seminary and doctrine, publications and parish education, youth and missions were adopted, all of them forerunners of what has happened since.

A number of young people conducted the service Saturday night. Among them was Robert L. Lee, a student at Augsburg College, who would one day become the third president of the AFLC.

The 278 people who were registered for the conference came away under the name **The Lutheran Free Church — Not Merged.** That name later had to be given up under court injunction and the present name was adopted.

The conference closed with three sessions on Sunday and, thus, was born the AFLC.

The 1966 and 1974 Annual Conferences were also held in that neighborhood in Thief River Falls. In 1966 Knox School was utilized for all business and wor-

ship services except the Sunday morning Communion service. By 1974, Our Saviour's Church had been enlarged and the conference could be held there, but it was packed to capacity. The 25th Annual Conference was held in 1987 at the local high school auditorium with the largest attendance up to that time.

The 1966 Conference at Knox School was historical. The conference concurred with the intention of the Seminary Board to begin a Bible school in the fall. Association Free Lutheran Bible School did start in September of that year in Minneapolis with 13 students.

On Sunday afternoon of that year, a standing room only audience heard the choir from St. Paul's Lutheran in Cloquet, Minnesota, sing the missionary cantata, "Let the Earth Hear His Voice" and Pastor Herbert Franz preached the sermon.

Knox School is no more. It was razed a couple of years ago. The area where it stood is a playground and park. Walk over to it from the church and remember the historical developments in our association which occurred there.

The building of Our Saviour's Lutheran congregation has changed much since 1962. Additions have been made to both the east and west ends. The place where you will best find the "old church" is in the basement dining room. It is planned that in a year or two the building will no longer serve the congregation as a new church is to be built in another part of the city. Time marches on. Best now to visit these two special places when you are in Thief River Falls in June.

— Pastor Raynard Huglen
Editor,

The Lutheran Ambassador,
1963-90



The 1974 Annual Conference at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church.

PARISH EDUCATION

Kindergarten curriculum is being printed

Pictured is the cover to the new *Ambassador* Kindergarten series. A sample lesson from "Tell Me the Story of Jesus," will be placed in each 1997 Annual Conference packet. The First Quarter is currently being printed and will be available for Sunday schools by the fall of 1997!

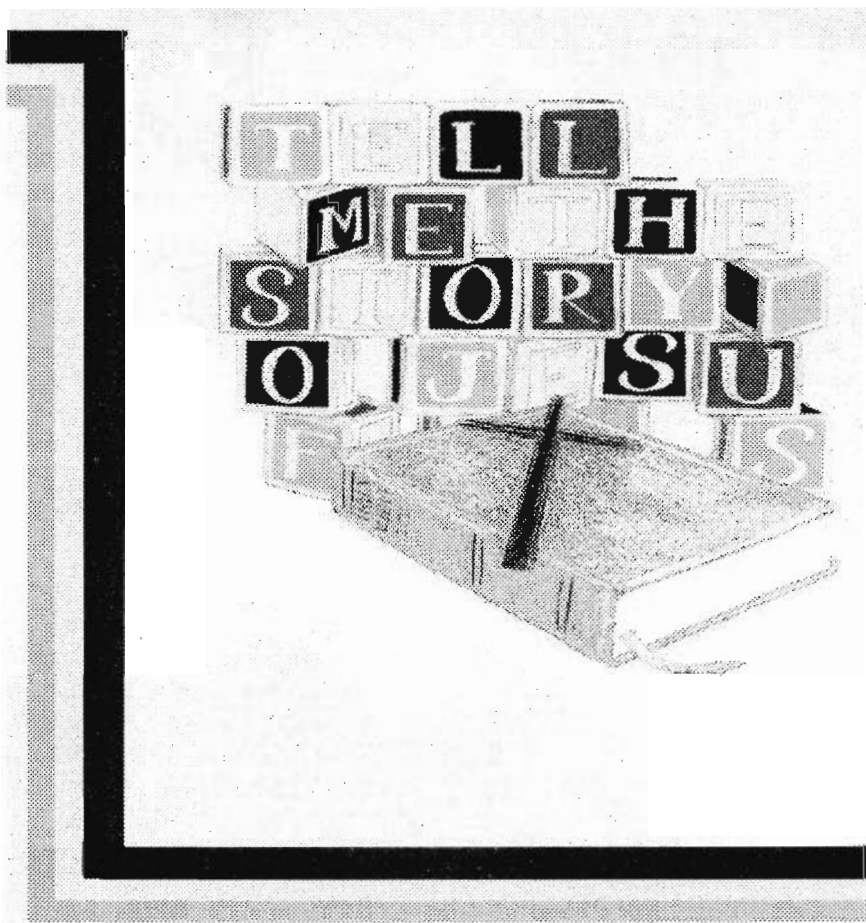
Come and visit our new display area

The Parish Education Department has a new display area in the AFLC headquarters just outside our offices. We have many of our books and resources visibly displayed so that visitors can come and browse through our materials like a bookstore. This has been made possible through a portion of a recent gift from the WMF. We invite you to stop by when you come to visit our campus!

Karen Palmer, the Parish Education secretary, is shown holding the classic daily devotional, *God's Word for Today*, by Ole Hallesby. It is now available through Parish Education for \$8.99.

Ingrid Trobisch wrote in the foreword: "(It's a) timeless book written by a godly man whose teaching brought renewal to the Lutheran church of Norway. Dr. Hallesby has the gift of expressing deep truths in a simple way so that both adults and children can understand."

We highly recommend this book for personal and family devotions or as a confirmation gift, high school or college graduation gift, or welcome gift to new members in your congregation. It has daily readings for the entire year.



Celebrate 100 years of grace

One hundred years ago this June in Minneapolis, the Lutheran Free Church was born. After four years of debate and struggle, the Friends of Augsburg, a small group of dissenters from the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America, decided to begin a church body to support Augsburg Seminary and its ideals of freedom in the gospel.

Georg Sverdrup and Sven Oftedal led the Friends of Augsburg and a small church body began. No constitution was adopted, only twelve guiding principles. Those who attended the annual meeting were to be in sympathy of those principles before they could vote; the chief one of the principles being the congregation is the right form of the kingdom of God on earth.

Celebrations of the Lutheran Free Church beginnings include:

Joshua Skogerboe, Minneapolis, Minnesota, will be a full-time staff member at Emmaus Lutheran Church in Bloomington, as worship leader and in music ministry. He has served part time in that capacity and assumes his new position this summer.

June 8, 1997 — Congregations with a Lutheran Free Church heritage may remember their history in a commemorative service by using the suggestions for worship in a program already mailed to those congregations who were LFC before 1962. (Copies are available at the AFLC Headquarters.)

Festival Weekends: September 14, 1997 — Premier of The English version of *Bound and Free*, an opera by Egil Hovland on the life of Hans Nielsen Hauge, will be at Calvary Lutheran Church in Willmar, Minnesota.

September 19-20, 1997 — A gala celebration at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, will occur, remembering the LFC and its legacy of living Christianity, in living congregations, centered in a warm and personal faith in Jesus Christ.

Pastor Dennis O'Neil, Lena, Wisconsin, has accepted the call to St. Peter Lutheran Church of Metz, near Posen, Michigan. Pastor O'Neil has been teaching at a Christian school in recent years and expects to begin his new ministry next August.

Seminarian Gary Haug will begin his internship in June at Emmaus Lutheran in Bloomington, Minnesota.

Seminarian Jason Holt will begin his internship in June at Helmar Lutheran in Newark, Illinois.

Dalton, Minnesota — Kvam Free Lutheran held an organ concert and hymn sing on January 19, 1997 with organist Daniel Aune of Underwood, Minnesota. The organ was built by George Kilgen and son, St. Louis, Missouri in 1925 for a church in Horton, Kansas. Luther Melby of Dalton purchased the organ in January 1995, made the necessary repairs and installed it at Kvam Church in time for Christmas, 1996. Luther Melby, Box 557, Dalton, MN 56324 welcomes any inquiries you may have concerning pipe organs.

Kenyon, Minnesota — Emmanuel Lutheran held special meetings during April 6-9, with Pastor Tom Tuura, St. James, Minnesota, as the guest speaker. Hauge Lutheran hosted the Tri-State District Spring Rally on April 12.

Pastor Edwin Kjos, Pelican Rapids, Minnesota, was removed from the AFLC clergy roster by recent action of the Coordinating Committee.

Congregations to receive free book at conference

The reprinting of the two Rose-nius books available through Parish Education was made possible by special gifts. *A Faithful Guide to Peace with God* was reprinted through a grant from Lutheran Brotherhood. As recipients of this grant, we are to give each congregation a free copy of this book for its library. These will be made available at the con-

ference in June. We suggest a representative from each congregation stop by our display table to pick one up. Last summer, *The Believer Free from the Law* was also reprinted. This was funded by an individual gift designated specifically for the reprinting of this book, not through regular contributions. Both are available through Parish Ed for \$4.95 each.

Aid to go for flood relief

The West Coast District along with the direction of the AFLC Coordinating Committee are encouraging congregations and individuals to take a special offering for those who are experiencing the devastating floods throughout the U.S. Send your offering to the AFLC Headquarters at 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441 and indicate "for flood victims."

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Grant for evangelism from Lutheran Brotherhood

The AFLC has been blessed with \$26,800 in a grant from Lutheran Brotherhood to distribute to AFLC congregations to be used for evangelism. The

Mesa-Apache Junction, Arizona — On the evening of April 6, Home Missions Director Paul Nash conducted a Communion service for AFLC friends. Earlier, Pastor Nash and Eldwyn and Bonnie VanBruggen traveled to Cottonwood, Arizona, where they met with the Verde Valley Lutheran Mission.

Spring Lake Park, Minnesota — Maranatha Free Lutheran hosted the "Living Relationships Seminar" conducted by Pastor Paul Nash, April 20-23.

Vision 2100 — The Home Missions Department, with Pastor Andy Anderson, conducted a Vision 2100 seminar in Loveland, Colorado, April 11-13. Pastors Anderson and Paul Nash will be leading a similar seminar at Prince of Peace Lutheran in Beulah, North Dakota, May 2-3, 1997.

Lutheran Brotherhood grant to Home Missions

AFLC Home Missions Director Paul Nash, along with Pastor Allen Monson, Home Missions Board chairman, met with Lutheran Brotherhood representatives Joel Nelson and Joel Vaughn at AFLC Headquarters on March 21, 1997 to take delivery of a check for \$13,200 in grant money designated for development of new churches. AFLC Home Missions gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Lutheran Brotherhood in the work of building congregations through Church Extension.

AFLC Commission on Evangelism has the responsibility to allocate the grant monies. It is to be applied to specific evangelism programs, focusing on outreach, in the local congregation. Priority will be given to evangelistic programs, training and crusades that reach out to the lost in a way that is stretching the congregation to new levels. The deadline for grant applications is July 1, 1997. The Commission on Evangelism, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441, may be contacted for further information.

Everett, Washington — The West Coast District Bible Conference and WMF Rally was hosted by Calvary Lutheran, March 14-16. The WMF met on Friday with the theme, "Living Relationships" from I John 3:16. Pastor Paul and Laurie Nash were the guest speakers. The Bible conference began in the evening on Friday and continued through the Sunday worship service. Pastor Nash was the speaker for the conference. He also preached at Our Redeemer Lutheran in Kirkland on March 9.

Volunteers needed to build church

Willmar, Minnesota — Maranatha Free Lutheran plans to hold groundbreaking ceremonies for a new building on May 4, 1997. The young home missions congregation has been renting worship facilities in this central Minnesota city. The AFLC Home Missions Department is encouraging volunteer craftsmen and laborers from throughout the nation to join with Maranatha in building their church. Camper facilities are available, local housing and even transportation from the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport will be arranged. Following is a partial list of the proposed construction schedule. For more information, call Pastor Elden Nelson at (320) 235-0487 or (320) 382-6550, or the Home Missions office at (612) 545-5632.

Excavate, footing, block foundation — May 15-23

Plumbing rough-in, heat ducts, pour floors — May 26-June 7

Frame walls, install trusses, sheet roof/walls, shingle roof, install windows, exterior doors/siding — June 16-28

Exterior concrete — July 3-4

Electric wiring, plumbing, and heating — July 3-8

Insulation and plastic — July 9-11

Sheet rock — July 14-17

Tape, paint, spray ceiling/walls — July 18-26

Stain/finish doors, windows, and trim — July 28-31

Electric and plumbing finishing — August 1-5

Heating vents — August 7-8

Miscellaneous hardware, etc. — August 7-16

Landscaping — August 7-16

Heavy snow destroys South Dakota camp chapel

Pickeral Lake Lutheran Bible Camp chapel collapsed under heavy snow. Plans are to rebuild the chapel before the camping season begins in July. The pews, benches and chapel furniture needs to be replaced. Volunteers and donations are welcome. Call Luverne Storley at (605) 486-4335.

During a Schools' Corporation meeting in a downstairs room under the Warm Beach, Washington Conference Center cafeteria last June, a corporation member stood up to speak.

The member, Pastor Paul Nash, explained that, as a member of another board, he had experienced a two-day prayer and planning retreat. His board had taken 18 hours to pray, talk, read Scripture, and share visions, as part of long-term planning. Using Pastor Richard Anderson to help guide their discussion, "the Lord began to move," Nash said. "It was a turning point. He began to unite us and give us goals."

"I think the school board and the deans should do the same thing," he said.

The corporation agreed. A motion was passed. During the summer, the board planned a retreat for February 17-18, 1997, at the ARC in Osceola, Wisconsin.

The retreat had a significant impact — beyond the board's expectations. The peace of Jesus prevailed. Members studied the Word and prayed. God began to move. "Something happened when we set aside the details of running our schools," said Pastor Johnson, the AFLBS dean. "We began to listen."

Pastor Anderson explained the importance of letting the Lord control our vision, mission and goals. He asked us to outline what

School Board retreat enhances vision



The possible site of the new student center is between the present dorms.

we felt was our "Ministry Calling." In the Monday afternoon session, each member was asked to write a letter to someone, dated February 17, 2004, describing what life was like on the campus of AFLBS and AFLTS. Later, as the trustees and deans read the letters aloud, a list of ideals and goals was compiled. It was amazing to see what kind of unity and goals we had, board members said afterward. "As we talked, the Lord gave us a peace to move forward on a few of them at this time," said Johnson. As a result of that list and much prayer, further discussion led to Vision 2004.

Explained Dr. Monseth: "Even as we united in joyful agreement on these goals for our schools, we came away with a sense of deep dependence upon the Lord as we

proceed. There was the firm conviction that whatever improvements and additions are made to our facilities and programs would only enhance our mission of preparing men and women to serve the Lord as humble and effective soul-winners and disciple-makers. We remain true to our original charter. Our foundation remains in Christ and in His inerrant Word."

Dave Borg, the trustee member who submitted the complete report, adds: "I want to thank the Schools Corporation and Pastor Anderson for their insight and direction in allowing us to focus our energy and ideas into formulating Vision 2004. We know there will be much work ahead of us in bringing this vision to reality. We continue to see the need for young people to be trained and educated to stand up for truth and for Jesus. We ask that each of you pray for Vision 2004. Prayerfully consider becoming a part of Vision 2004 and consider the future impact these young people will have in our communities. We welcome suggestions, insights, ideas and cautions. Our plan is to have some preliminary models that we can unveil at the Annual Conference in Thief River Falls in June."

— Pastor James L. Johnson

Vision 2004

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. Spring, 1998 | Groundbreaking ceremonies for a new Student Center (including a gymnasium, locker rooms, classrooms, and music/choir facility). |
| 2. Fall, 1999 | Classes to begin in these new facilities. |
| 3. Spring, 2000 | Chapel conversion to seminary classrooms/library/offices. |
| 4. Spring, 2002 | Dorm renovation; convert present classroom to dorm rooms, possibility of adding another floor to each dorm. |
| 5. Spring, 2004 | Seminary housing project on campus. |

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Confidence Rightly Placed

I was describing how things operate in the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations to a friend of mine whose father was a pastor in a denomination where much authority rests in the central office. I told how our church body could not guarantee that I would receive a call as pastor. It was dependent on whether a congregation felt led to call me. No official dictates how long the pastor stays at a certain place. That is between the pastor and the local congregation and the leading of the Spirit of God. The various departments of the association do not assess dues nor do they receive guaranteed pledges of financial support. They operate solely on the basis of what congregations and individuals feel called by God to give. At the annual conference of the association any member of a congregation that belongs to the association can vote, and yet the resolutions passed at the conference are not binding upon the congregations but are only recommendations.

To my friend it sounded like the kind of group that would be appealing to those who say they have problems with "organized religion." It seemed to him to be barely a step above chaos.

All kinds of things can go wrong in the free congregation type of system under which we operate. Some of the departments of the church body may not receive the financial support they believe they need. A good pastor who the association's leadership believes in may not receive a call. A pastor who the leadership does not support may receive a call from a member congregation. A local congregation may decide they do not want to support a certain area of the work, or any area of the work, and they can still remain a member of the association. A group from one large congregation may come to conference and dominate the sessions and cause all the voting to go their way. All those things and worse may happen — if the Spirit of God is not present and in control.

Our system of free congregations is deliberately set up without safeguards. The hope is that we are caused to be increasingly dependent on the Lord. Apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5). If no spiritual life exists and God is not present, directing our affairs, it will all fall apart. It is a ridiculous system to operate under if we are looking for that which is, to the human mind, most efficient and

safe. Our system only works if God shows up and is in control. Otherwise it is chaos and foolishness. Our structure, or lack thereof, is designed to lead us to trust not in the structure but in God.

Yes, bad things can happen under our system; but we trust God they won't. We operate by faith in God, not in a humanly created organization for governing the work of the church.

A circus trapeze artist was commenting how having a net underneath kept them from breaking their necks, but also kept them from falling. "Imagine there is no net. We would be so nervous that we would be more likely to miss and fall. If there wasn't a net, we would not dare to do some of the things we do."

We are in need of a safety net as an association, as congregations and as individuals. Failures are inevitable. It is crucial to know they will not be fatal. When we know we have a net to catch us, we have courage to take bold steps.

It is necessary to have a safety net that is secure. Safety and security is not found in our wisdom or abilities or in some man-made system. It is found in God alone. He is the only One who can protect us from evil and keep us walking in the truth. When our trust is in Him, even though potential dangers and snares lurk all around, we

confidently say, "I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38,39, NIV).

We are free as individuals and as congregations from having to trust in ourselves or in any other mere mortal for our salvation. We are free from having to depend on ourselves or some other human or some humanly devised structure or program for our safety. Our hope rests not in what we or some other person can do, but in what God has done and will do.

Other safety nets are stripped away so that we are led to trust in the true safety net for life, which is Christ. We have nothing else to trust in, and we need nothing else. We are free to depend on the One who is truly dependable.

— Pastor Craig Johnson

"When we know we have a net to catch us, we have courage to take bold steps."

Men's Retreat is a time of renewal

An annual men's retreat took place at The ARC near Osceola, Wisconsin, on March 7-8, 1997. According to Don Pelkey of Spring Lake Park, Minnesota, "The annual gathering at The ARC becomes a time of renewal of faith in that it is a powerful reminder that we must always keep our eyes upon Jesus."

Friday evening found the men gathering and sharing testimonies. Pastor Lyndon Korhonen led the session after which many enjoyed a late night pizza at a nearby restaurant.

The Saturday morning session was led by Pastor Tonnes Pollestad. The topic was "Fixing Our Eyes On Jesus" in our personal life, marriage, parenting, our churches and in witnessing.

Following an afternoon of work in the Missionary Furlough Home, Pastor Mel Meyer led a discussion on mentoring using Barnabas and Paul as an example.

Jim Drew of Spring Lake Park said this of the weekend: "In this setting one is somewhat isolated from worldly distractions. A closeness to God is present that is hard to describe. It seems He is right there, tugging at your heart, pulling you to Him. I would encourage each to prayerfully consider attending the retreat in 1998."



Looking ahead at the ARC

Summer Prep Fest (not
Memorial Weekend!)

May 15-18

Family Camp (note the
new date and days!)

July 5-11

Youth Camp (for grades 4-7)

July 27-August 2

Singles Retreat (changed
to fall — watch for it!)

Date unconfirmed

Seniors Fall Retreat

October 3-5

Fall Family Retreat

October 24-26

You can help us!

As we gear up for another full season of camps and retreats, we have some special needs that perhaps you can help us find or even give to us.

Canoes

Commercial rice cooker

Life jackets

Thick pot holders

Sports equipment

Fabric shower curtains

Large inner tubes

Small waste baskets

Lawn care equipment

Quilts

Gospel chorus books

Christian videos

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