

The Lutheran AMBASSADOR

April 6, 1999



Finding the right way to go

eth-ics: 1. a discipline dealing with good and evil and with moral duty; 2. moral principles or practice

— Merriam-Webster's Desk Dictionary

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

April 6, 1999
Volume 37, Number 5



The magazine of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441. (612) 545-5631

Editor: Rev. Craig Johnson
Assistant to the Editor: Solveig Hjermstad
Editorial Board: Rev. John Mundfrom, Oryen Benrud, Rev. Jerry Moan.

CONTENTS

- Pietism is a positive thing** p. 4
- Making the right call: grappling with those gray areas** p. 6
- What's ethics, Daddy?** p. 8
- Groundbreaking for seminary housing** p. 12

The Lutheran Ambassador
(USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413)
is published every three weeks except monthly in June and July (16 issues per year) by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

For editorial inquiries and information:
The Lutheran Ambassador, Box 446,
Bruce, SD 57220-0446; 605-627-5188;
fax 605-627-9254;
e-mail craigj@teleport.com
wshjerm@brookings.net

For subscription changes and information: *The Lutheran Ambassador*, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441. 612-545-5631.

Subscriptions rates:

- \$15.00 a year, Group Rate, U. S.
- \$16.00 a year, Individual, U. S.
- \$18.00 a year, International

Periodicals postage paid at Minneapolis, MN and additional mailing office.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *The Lutheran Ambassador*, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441

AN ENCOURAGING WORD

No Condemnation

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:11).

No condemnation. What a beautiful statement! Those who walk with Jesus have been made perfect in Him. There is

no condemnation for those who have confessed their sin and, with God's help, are walking away from that sin. These are people who do not have to be concerned about their eternal destiny. They know heaven awaits!

God will not and cannot condemn the forgiven sinner, because of the blood that Jesus shed. It's like a pardon. As believers, we stand before the great Judge, guilty but holding a full pardon, signed by the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

We've just celebrated the anniversary of the greatest event in history: Easter. In His resurrection, Jesus finished the work of redemption. He overcame Satan, death and the grave. Because he has risen from the dead, we have the hope of rising as He did.

I remember the Watergate scandal of the '70s. President Nixon resigned before he could be impeached. Shortly after Gerald Ford became president, he pardoned Nixon. Because of that pardon, President Nixon never had to be concerned about being tried for any Watergate offenses.

This is a picture every believer should ponder. In Christ Jesus we have been 100 percent

pardoned — released from any possible penalty for our sin. What great news that is for all who have been born again to a living hope in Jesus!

Julia H. Johnston sums it up in the hymn, "Grace Greater Than Our Sin" (*AMBASSADOR HYMNAL* #522).

Dark is the stain that we
cannot hide,
What can avail to wash it away?
Look! there is flowing a
crimson tide —
Whiter than snow you may be
today.

Grace, Grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and
cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than
all our sin!

Are you pardoned through
the sacrifice of Jesus? You can
be!



— **Pastor James Rasmussen**
*AFLC Director of
Evangelism/Evangelist*

sound bites

1 Even if you could do much more good than all believers, not a single one of your deeds is pleasing to God as long as they do not spring from this evangelical faith and love. As long as the Law rules in the conscience, it spoils everything you do.

— C. O. Rosenius

While we are not perfect in this life, even after becoming Christians, yet through moment-by-moment faith in the finished work of Christ

4 on the cross, beautiful human relationships can and do come forth. There must be orthodox doctrine, true, but there must also be orthodox practice of those doctrines, including orthodoxy in the human relationships.

— Francis Schaeffer

6

Moral failure is rarely the result of a blowout; almost always, it's the result of a slow leak.

— Gary Oliver

2 Christ reaches into the depths of our heart to cleanse the secret desires and evil motives. With a new spirit ruling within the outward conduct will be accordingly.

— A. W. Knock

The shocked conscience is today a minority phenomenon; indeed, it is lampooned and caricatured. Decency is placed on the defensive; dogged determination to “do the right thing” is flouted as a trait less enviable than prudish. Our generation not only flaunts its iniquities before men; it actually approves those who delight in them.

— Carl F. H. Henry

You hear the Word of God. This is good. But it is not enough that your ear hears it. Do you let it penetrate inwardly into your heart and allow the heavenly food to be digested there, so that you get the benefit of its vitality and power, or does it go in one ear and out the other?

— Philip Spener

5

Pietism is a positive thing

— from *"Pietism and Lutheran Evangelism"*
by Carl F. Wisloff

The following is an excerpt from the chapter *"Pietism and Lutheran Evangelism"* from the book *"Do the Work of an Evangelist."* It was written by Carl F. Wisloff and edited by Pastor Robert Lee and Dr. Francis Monseth; AFLC Seminary Press, 1990. *"Do the Work of an Evangelist"* is available from the AFLC Parish Education office. For ordering information contact the office at 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441; phone 612-545-5631.

**"Do not
be conformed
to this world,
but be trans-
formed
by the renewing
of your mind."**

— Romans 12:2

The real conflict between Orthodoxy and Pietism did not occur until the beginning of the 18th century, rooted in a bitter quarrel between the pietist Joachim Lange (1670-1744) and the orthodox Valentin Ernst Loescher (1673-1749). Lange represented a pietism that was indifferent to Lutheran doctrine and had unionistic tendencies. His distorted Pietism also made one certain pattern of conversion a necessity, teaching that one must be converted in a special way and then persevere for a long time before claiming to be a believer. Lange's position was a caricature of Pietism. The Pietism of (Johann) Arndt cautioned believers not to be friends of the world lest they become enemies of God. The Pietism of Lange, however, created a form of inquisition, concentrating with eagle eye on what other Christians considered permissible. Such a Pietism is no precious heritage. ...

But faithful pastors like Johann Arndt realized that all the restrictions and commandments and regulations from the church hierarchy — as useful as they might be in themselves — were not sufficient to create true Christianity. Good conduct is one thing; a new heart is something else. And so we see a new emphasis on the Law/Gospel process. There must be genuine repentance, for God demands a new heart. ...

... When Pietism is debated, the key word often seems to be "adiaphora." What about playing cards, going to the theater, reading novels, etc. Are these things sinful? Should Christians shun such activities?

There is no doubt that the attitude of some pietists has been rigid. Mads Wefring,



who was a Haugean lay preacher before becoming a pastor, told the following story. One of the Haugean brethren in Stavanger once said to him, "You walk like a worldly man. Look at John Haugvoldstad, and there you can see how a Christian believer ought to walk, humbly, the head down on one shoulder, and with a sorrowful countenance." Wefring followed this advice, apparently too well, for the brother spoke to him again and told him to start walking naturally! It has been said that Professor Gisle Johnson never smiled. A pious lady was horrified one day when she actually heard him laughing, but she found comfort in the thought that maybe this was the kind of laughing mentioned in Psalm 2.

There has been a type of Pietism that is overly interested in other people's behavior. These "pietistic Puritans" try to be the conscience for other Christians, condemning them for things that are not condemned in the Word of God.



Yes, these pietists were often too rigid. But what about today? I am afraid that we

have moved to the opposite extreme.

The Bible says: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). The latter part of the verse is important, the main thing is the transformation of the mind, or, we might say, a new birth or a new heart. This has previously been stated. Then let us not forget the first part of this Bible verse — do not be conformed to the world. ...

It cannot be doubted that we need a pietistic willingness to renounce the world. The Bible says: "Do not love the world nor the things of the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boast-

ful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world" (I John 2:15-16). This is not often heard in the church of today.

Modern life is becoming more and more complicated. We can pick and choose, when our forefathers were thankful if they had the basic necessities of life. Shouldn't we think, and admonish young Christians to think, that we ought to be careful not to lose our Christian identity? We need to be careful not to be influenced by the mind of the world and to open ourselves to temptation. When I was a young man, our Christian leaders were very careful, and a visit to the theater was frowned upon. Today there are theaters in everyone's living room, and the things that are viewed there are certainly much worse than the Charlie Chaplin films of the 1920s!



Is there enough evidence to charge you "guilty" of being a Christian?

... A pietist is not a very nice name to have, in the opinion of most people. This is certainly the case in Norway. A pietist is accused of being a narrow-minded person, bearing gloom and darkness to all that is beautiful.

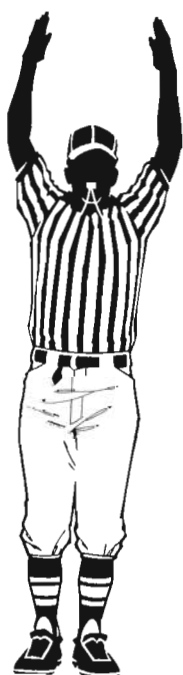
Once after I had spoken on these things I was asked if I considered myself a pietist. I answered, "I am afraid that I do not have the right to such a high claim." But the man responded, "No, you are a pietist all right." I replied, "Thank you very much indeed."



Making the right call: grappling with those gray areas



— by Pastor Jerry Moan
AFLC Schools' professor
Minneapolis, Minnesota



The clock grinds down at a turtle pace. Coach Mobley paces the floor. Winning the final home game of the season would be a sweet victory for the AFLBS men. Full court pressure only adds to the intensity of the battle. Decibels build as the ball is hurried up the court. A shot is forced hoopward. The contact seems obvious. So where's the whistle?

Making the right call seems so much easier from the bleachers. Having refereed only one basketball game in my entire life, I vowed I would never do it again. I'm positive Dale Carnegie never suggested refereeing as one of the top ten ways to win friends and influence people. But somebody has to make the tough calls. And in real life, that somebody is you. Unfortunately, things aren't always black and white as we might like them to be. There are times when sincere Christians disagree over which call is indeed the right one.

Why is that? The fact of the matter is that the Bible simply does not address every specific question or issue directly. When Scripture is silent on some particular point, how do we go about "making the call," determining what is right?

In the study of Christian ethics, these matters in which the Bible gives no specific guidance are referred to as *adiaphora*, a Greek word meaning "indifferent." We should not conclude, however, that God does not care about these matters, or that they are unimportant, or that the Word has nothing to offer by way of guidance in making the tough calls we face. Rather, I would maintain that **God's Word is the believer's basis for guidance even in the "gray areas" where Scripture is silent.** But we must be careful not to misuse the Bible, twisting it to say only what we want to hear.

It's like the couple who, in the midst of an exceedingly stormy courtship, came for counsel as to whether they should get married. The pastor urged caution, but a week later they returned with the announcement that

God had revealed they should be married.

"We asked God to show us in the Bible reasons why we should not be married by the end of the week, and if He didn't, we would know it was His will for us to be married," they said.

"Fleeing" God in this way is akin to wrongfully testing Him as Jesus warns Satan in Matthew 4:7. We ultimately deceive ourselves when we read into Scripture whatever we wish it to say. Our eagerness for scriptural backing does not give us license to wrench a passage of the Word of God from its context in order to force it into the grid of our own opinion.

For example, when Paul urges us to "abstain from all appearance of evil" in I Thessalonians 5:22 (King James Version) he's admonishing us to avoid any kind of evil — in whatever form it appears, wherever and whenever it appears. It's not simply what might resemble or look like evil in someone's opinion. Here is another case where proper **interpretation** is the best safeguard against improper **application**.

Christ-honoring convictions blossom as believers learn to make the tough calls of life. So where do I start? In a pamphlet entitled "Finding God's Will," by Viggo Olsen there is a helpful listing of such guiding principles which may apply to any number of gray areas. **Ask yourself:**

1. Could I do this in Christ's name? (Colossians 3:17)
2. Can I imagine Jesus doing this or deciding this way? (1 John 2:6)
3. Will this action bring any glory to God? (1 Corinthians 10:31)
4. Would I want to be found doing this when the Lord returns? (1 John 2:28)
5. Will this action bring impurity or useless harm to my body, which is the temple of God's Spirit? (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
6. Will this activity be a hindrance that will hamper my spiritual progress? (Hebrews 12:1)
7. Will my following this decision offend another Christian, cause that person to stumble, or make him or her weak? (Romans 14:21)
8. Will this action be a help or a hindrance to non-Christians around me? (Matthew 6:16)

Add to this a prayerful study of Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8-10. It will help you to sharpen your spiritual vision for making the right call — even in those gray areas!



Using fairy tales to teach virtue

Vigen Guroian is a Professor of Theology and Ethics at Loyola College in Baltimore, Maryland. He approached his daughter's fourth grade English teacher with the idea of bringing his college class on children's literature into her classroom. Both classes would read the original text of *Pinocchio* (translated by N. J. Perella). The college students then came to the fourth grade classroom where they shared conversation, poster drawings of episodes from the story, and concluded by breaking into small groups to rehearse dramatic enactments of some episodes to perform as skits.

At the next class the college students confessed how struck they were by the detail that the fourth graders remembered and the surprisingly "sophisticated" lessons that they drew from what they had read. The college students were embarrassed to admit that the fourth graders seemed to better understand the nature and source of *Pinocchio*'s temptations and backsliding, and were also much less ready to excuse him for his behavior and the grief he caused his father.

Children are born with a God-given conscience that is sensitive to being reinforced by scriptural teaching or dulled by materialistic philosophy. There is no substitute for family devotions with children of all ages. On this we probably all agree. However, there is an additional area that can reinforce the scriptural instruction and that is stories with moral lessons. Fairy tales written by good Christian authors can accomplish much.

Fairy tales spark the imagination. They allow children to explore worlds and situations in a way that can help to develop their consciences.

While reading the tales of Hans Christian Anderson children at a young age will inevitably ask if a character is "good" or "bad" as they are introduced into the story. Their minds are keen and they can

often grasp more than we give them credit for.

Have you ever wondered why God provided His Word as a compilation of historical accounts, parables, songs, and prophecies as contrasted to the philosophical format of the books of world religions? Since He made us, He knew the format in which we would best learn His truths. Authors of literature also know this, for good and for bad. As parents and grandparents we need to seek out children's literature written by committed Christian authors to read to and be read by our children.

More and more families are realizing this truth, which may attest to the popularity of the compilation: "A Children's Book of Virtues" by William Bennett. Many are aware of the Narnia series by C.S. Lewis but we should be including L.W. Kingsland's translations of the works of Hans Christian Anderson's, "The Ugly Duckling," "The Snow Queen," and "The Little Mermaid." One should include "The Trumpet of the Swan" and "Charlotte's Web" by Elwyn Brooks White and "Little Daylight" and "The Princess and the Goblin" by George MacDonald.

I would also suggest two cautions. First, avoid the Disney versions as they are generally cleansed of their religious analogies and embellished with Hollywood's version of love. This is also evident when reading the original "Bambi" by Felix Salten (translated by W. Chambers) which is a story of mentorship by the Old Stag to prepare

Bambi to take his place as guardian of the herd. The original "The Little Mermaid" is more of a story about immortality than romantic love. Second, we must look for good translators for works originally written in other languages. I noticed in Le Gallienne's translation of Andersen's "The Snow Queen" that she omitted the section where Andersen quoted Mark 10:15, "Whoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child shall not enter therein," which is the spiritual centerpiece of the story.

There is an excellent little book for parents; "Tending the Heart of Virtue: How Classic Stories Awaken a Child's Imagination," (Oxford Press) by Vigen

Guroian that gives a good perspective on the value of good Christian literature in instilling biblical virtue in children. He also lists his favorite stories and their lessons. There are times we need assistance in navigating the dark waters of our society and Guroian provides some help.



— Bob Kohl
Calvary Free Lutheran
Arlington, South Dakota



What's ethics, Daddy?



— by Pastor Warren Swanson
*Freedom and St. Petrie Parish
Ottawa, Illinois*

This question, asked by my seven-year-old son, took me by surprise. We had been watching the news together during the Senate trial of President Clinton when an individual being interviewed made the statement, "The president, obviously, does not have any ethics."

I explained what ethics meant to Ian and he responded by asking the question, "Why, (meaning the president) doesn't he have any?" The question of "Why doesn't he have any?" was a thought-provoking question for me. It even startled me a little bit. I started asking myself questions such as, "Why is that people don't live anymore by a code of ethics, a body of virtue, or a set of values?"

Is there a set of governing rules that they live by? Why is it they don't have any absolute markers or lines they will not cross?" These are questions that should concern us today. However, there are a couple of other questions that concern me even more. "How can I raise my family in such an environment? Can I raise them and teach them in such a way that they will not compromise biblical values and ethics?"

How did we get here?

How did we get to our current position of having to define and defend ethics, virtues and values? An old English term would be to say that there is a "dearth" of these in the world today. Some of the earliest published works of humanity dealt with the importance of ethics and morals. If it was that important even then, why is it not important now? The basic answer would be to state that man has abandoned God.

Mankind has always had the capacity to place itself outside the moral will of God and has done so many times. I am often reminded of the verse that so clearly states this: "In those days Israel had no king, so the people

did whatever seemed right in their own eyes" Judges 21:25 (NLT).

Our family's response

My wife and I have seven children. We have home-schooled since 1990. This year we allowed our two oldest daughters to go to a local grade school. The stories they tell about classmates and their behavior has confirmed to me that this generation is not being taught ethics, virtues and values. Frankly, the behavior of these kids scares me. They are children now, but soon they will take their lack of basic morality and ethics into adulthood. This public school experience has convinced us that home-school will be the norm for this family in the future.

What we have experienced did not come as a surprise to us and should not to you. The attitude of society is now based on the philosophy of situational ethics which states that you can do what seems right in your own eyes in any given situation. It may not be right in the eyes of your neighbor but in your situation it is. The decision is not based on what is truly moral or right in God's eyes but on how it affects your personal situation.

What has saddened me is to see Christians, whom I know well, behave in a way more in line with society than with the Bible. Their willingness to cut corners and to use double standards in their lives has spurred me into action. I have begun to preach more often on topics relating to proper behavior as Christians.

There is a shortage of moral anchors. But how do we reverse this trend? How do we instill an unshakable moral compass in our children and defend against societal attitudes that often come home with children saying, "But their parents allow this"? There have been other indications that the moral values of this world rub off very easily onto children. I have come to realize that it is not enough that my kids are being raised in a Christian home. We have to take a more direct approach to teaching and illustrating correct moral behavior.

My wife and I have been talking a great deal about how we will structure our home-



An evangelism seminar just for you

April 30 - May 1, 1999
Emmaus Lutheran
8443 2nd Ave. S.
Bloomington, Minnesota
Sponsored by the AFLC
Evangelism Commission

Don shares his discoveries with audiences around the country.

Don't miss this opportunity to discover how thousands of others

have found help and answers through this seminar! For more information call the evangelism office at (612) 545-5631.

Find tools to share Jesus with your friends!

Friday evening's opening session at 7:00 p.m. will feature the AFLBS worship team and a message on "Personal Evangelism, The Heartbeat of Heaven" by Pastor Jim Ritter, senior pastor at Emmaus.

Saturday's "Friend to Friend" seminar will begin at 8:30 a.m. Invite a friend to join you. Do you know someone questioning his or her faith, the Bible, Jesus as Savior, or perhaps a seeker with honest questions? Teenagers and older people alike will learn life-changing biblical principles. The sessions will conclude at 3 p.m. The registration cost of \$10 includes the required workbook and the noon meal.

Saturday's presenter is Dr. Don Bierle of Faith Studies International and author of the book, "Surprised by Faith." His search for meaning in life led him to a teaching and research career in the natural sciences. He did ecological research at both the North and South Poles. All this failed to bring satisfaction. What did finally satisfy Dr. Bierle proved to be a surprise.

What's happening in youth ministries

◆ AFLC Youth Ministries Director Pastor Kevin Olson was in Astoria, Oregon and Beulah, North Dakota for two recent youth rallies.

◆ Ten students are signed up to spend six weeks in Naknek, Alaska. Five are hoping to work in the fishing cannery in nearby King Salmon and the other five are planning on spending dedicated time working with Pastor Tom Olson and his congregation.

◆ The youth mission department budget is only at six percent of the needed support at the end of the first quarter.

◆ The youth board is making plans for the traveling youth ministry training team. The team will spend one to two weeks at each church that has applied for them

to come and encourage their youth ministry. The goal of this new team is to encourage, challenge, and share vision with the churches, leaders, and the youth.



Pack your bags!

Free Lutheran Youth Convention registrations have come in like a flood! About 1100 have registered at this point with 10 to 20 percent more expected before the June 28-July 3 convention begins in Estes Park, Colorado.

The FLY convention CD has been given good reviews by those who've heard it. If your youth group is not learning these convention songs, call 612-545-5631 and order your CD from the Youth Ministries office.

schooling in the future. My wife has done a terrific job of educating the children scholastically. The two in public school have excelled. The change will be to place a greater emphasis on teaching and instilling a solid moral compass within them. This is not to say that they are not biblically literate. The material we have used since the day we started home schooling is solely based on the Bible. I am amazed time and time again at the knowledge our children have retained about God's Word.

One of the things we are planning to do is to include a basic class on ethics, virtues and values according to each age group in our family. This can and should be done whether you home school or not. As I was

investigating what materials are available I found that there are quite a few. Some are very old resources that are being republished; works that were used to teach our grandparents and generations before them. There are also many new, biblically based resources being published. True ethics, virtues and values must be based on the Bible since the Bible itself is the greatest teaching resource.

Above all else we continue to pray for our children. We ask God that what they have been taught and have known since infancy would be brought to mind when they are confronted with the attitudes of this world.



Missionaries Jonathan and Tamba Abel, Campo Grande, Brazil, are grateful for the help of two lay pastors, Valdeci and Luiz, who have recently joined in the ministry in Campo Grande. Valdeci and his family live in the church building which is still under construction. After finishing the walls and apartment on the first floor before Christmas, they hope to have the roof on the second floor this month. Luiz and his family are now living in a rented house on the other side of town which will be used as a preaching point. The house and lot have possibilities for purchase as it affords space to build a future church.

In January, Missionary Abel took 47 campers in a rented bus to the AFLC Bible camp in Campo Mourão, ten hours away. Pastor Abel said, "We had about 100 campers and about 20 decisions for Christ. God blessed and I feel that my church was greatly strengthened through this event."

After seven months of searching, the Abel family moved last February into a rented home closer to their church. Their new home has a small yard and back house which Pastor Abel is making into an office, his first one. They also have better facilities to house the FLY teams.

Naknek, Alaska — Pastor Henry and Linda Mohagen, Towner, North Dakota returned home on March 9, after a month of working with the Lutheran Mission Society in South Naknek. They lived in a 20 by 30 foot home with a full basement which the mission is considering purchasing for a missionary for the South Naknek community. The Mohagens were able to drive across the ice to Naknek where Pastor Tom Olson is serving. While there Pastor Mike Crowell of the Missionary Aviation Training Academy in Washington State, taught an instrument rating class to nine people from the community. The weather prevented (-30 degrees) Pastor Mohagen from

World Mission Prayer League recently established the "Let Your Light Shine" scholarship for Lutheran college students. WMPL is a Lutheran mission organization which has been praying for the world and sending out missionaries for over 60 years. AFLC missionaries Richard and Clara Gunderson and Darwin and MaryAnn Jackson are currently on loan to WMPL, serving in Mexico.

WMPL started the scholarship out of a sense of calling to mobilize

and enable Lutheran students to join in God's mission around the world. Those receiving the scholarship are not obligated in any way to WMPL. They are not required or expected to become WMPL missionaries. There is the expectation and prayer they will offer themselves for global mission service.

For more information contact WMPL at 232 Clifton Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55403; phone (612) 871-6843; e-mail wmpl@aol.com; <http://www.wmpl.org>.



Bateias, Brazil — Pictured is the new church construction underway in Bateias, the congregation near the ARCA. On March 21 they moved into the building with lots of needs remaining before the project is completed. Joel, one of four lay workers with Missionaries Paul and Becky Abel, is taking night courses in a seminary in Curitiba while serving the Bateias congregation.

taking more than one hour of actual flying lessons with Pastor Crowell.

According to AFLC Home Missions Director Paul Nash, the money is available and the Cessna 150 airplane is being refurbished. When the plane is annualized and readied it will perhaps be used for training before being flown to Alaska. Pastor Mohagen expects to pursue his pilot's license as time and funds permit. In the meantime, he continues to serve an independent congregation near Bottineau, North

Dakota, Inherred Lutheran Church. He also ranches near Towner. Currently the Mohagens are committed to two months of mission work in Naknek and South Naknek next summer.

Faith Mohagen, daughter of Pastor Henry and Linda, and a former AFLBS student (1997-98) began working at the Lutheran Mission Society radio station in Naknek during the second week in March. Her initial commitment is for three months.

World Missions Director Eugene Enderlein, Minneapolis, Minnesota traveled to Atonement Lutheran in Arlington, Washington for the Pacific Northwest District Bible Conference and WMF Rally on March 12-13, and on to area churches before concluding his 12-day trip to the West Coast. He had been home just over a week from long and grueling trips to India and Mexico.

Most of the month of January was spent in India with the Bible School mission team and continuing on for a week after the team returned to the States. The exhausting trip ended with a long (79 hours and 45 minutes) flight from Gunter to Minneapolis, including airport delays.

On February 19, World Mission Committee members, Vernon Russum and Ken Williams joined Pastor Enderlein and Al Brazier, Partners in Missions coordinator, on a car trip to Leon and Aguascalientes, Mexico. The group stopped at Pastor Tim and Janet Hurley's home in Ponca City, Oklahoma and shared with Pastor Ray Ballmann at the worship service at Word of Life Lutheran in Burleson, Texas on Sunday, February 21.

The AFLC mission congregation in Leon is building a new church and has the brick work

completed up to the roof. Raul Hernandez continues to assist in the work there with Pastor Samuel Flores. In Celaya where Pastor Milton Flores is serving, the congregation has purchased beautiful property and now awaits the approval of 100 of their neighbors before they can go ahead to begin building. They ask for prayer that God would open the way.

One and a half hours away is the mission work in Aguascalientes where Missionaries Giles and Schierkolks are ministering in four different communities. The four men visited there until returning to Minnesota after a 48-hour road trip home, arriving on March 1.

Before they left Aguascalientes, they were joined by 16 youth and five adults from Medicine Lake Lutheran Academy in Minneapolis, Minnesota. One of the projects for the youth was to tear down a wall to enlarge the building for Springs of Living Water congregation. The congregation previously rented a half of the house to use as a worship facility and now are renting the whole building. The youth also cleaned the property behind the newly rented half so by the time the team returned to Minneapolis on March 7, the congregation could spread out and enjoy their "new" facility.



The 1999 faculty and student body at the AFLC Bible School in Brazil.

Durant, Oklahoma — Faith Lutheran Church has purchased property north of town. The new congregation is now in the process of getting approval from the planning and zoning commission for the type of building they can construct. They are praying for their new pastor, Gary Jorgenson from Ottawa, Illinois who expects to begin his new ministry with them upon the selling of their home in Ottawa. Pastor Jerry Peterson of First Lutheran in

Oklahoma City is preaching for them until Pastor Jorgenson arrives.

Beulah, North Dakota — Prince of Peace Lutheran celebrated the mortgage burning of their church property on March 14. The congregation is a home mission church served by Pastor John Mundfrom.

Canton, South Dakota — Redeemer Free Lutheran has gone off of AFLC Home Mission subsidy. Pastor Tom Gilman serves the con-

gregation along with Skrefsrud Lutheran in nearby Beresford.

Duluth, Minnesota — St. John's Free Lutheran has voted to go off home mission status. The congregation is being served by interim Lay Pastor David Peterson.

Tucson, Arizona — Body of Christ Lutheran has voted to go off home mission subsidy ahead of schedule. Pastor Frank Cherney serves the congregation along with Living Word Lutheran.

Available from the AFLC Parish Education office
Order your copy for \$8.
612-545-5631

Ambassador Hymnal Concordance is created for pastors, musicians, and others who are involved in planning worship services where the *Ambassador Hym-*

nal for Lutheran Worship is a primary worship source. It's also a helpful reference for personal study and an essential tool for the church library.

The AFLBS basketball teams returned from the March 13 finals of the NBCCA tourney in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, with fifth and sixth place finishes. Coach Wade Mobley's men's team was fifth nationally and the Lady Conquerors were sixth. They were coached by Sara and Mark Johnson, Shawn Danielson and Wanda Jacobson.

The AFLBS alumni tournament will be held in Minneapolis during Campus Days, April 23-24. Opening games will begin Friday at 6 p.m.

A third-year pilot program for missions, evangelism and youth work is slated to begin September 1999, according to the AFLC Board of Trustees. Called the Ministry Training Institute (MTI), the program is open for applications from students with the equivalent of a two-year Bible school degree. Deadline for registration is July 5. Call AFLBS at 612-544-9501 for more information.

Spring Campus Days at AFLBS

April 23-25, 1999

- Hear the Christian men's trio, "River" at 8 p.m. on Friday.
- Experience a taste of campus classes and life on Saturday morning.
- Enjoy free time during the afternoon before the 5 p.m. barbecue followed by the evening service.
- Return home on Sunday after church to consider Bible school yourself and get an education to last a lifetime!

Cost is just \$10.

Register with AFLBS at 3120 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN, 55441 or call 612-544-9501.

Groundbreaking for seminary housing scheduled

A four-family townhouse style housing unit is expected to be ready for occupancy by Free Lutheran seminarians next August. Groundbreaking is scheduled for May. The unit will be located south and east of the Bible school dean's home, across the street from the Administration building. The initial floor plans include three 3-bedroom apartments and one 2-bedroom apartment.

According to Vision 2004 Project Director Tonnes Pollestad, "I know that seminary housing has been a great concern for many over the years. We all praise God that it is now becoming a reality. We have the majority of the money on hand for this first unit, but are short of building it debt free. We would really appreciate financial support now from those whom God lays it upon their heart. Please pray that God would bring in the rest, and maybe even enough to build two units."

Pastor Pollestad said each four-plex unit costs about \$360,000 or about \$67 per square foot. With volunteer help and reduced prices on some materials, the cost could be lowered.

The need for and interest in seminary housing has been height-

ened by the increased number of students applying for seminary enrollment next fall.

Seminary married housing is the first stage of the Vision 2004 Project. Stage two is the Bible school student center and the remodeling of the existing dorms. The last stage of Phase 1 of the project is to build the multipurpose gym/music center, one new dorm and possibly another seminary housing unit. Seventy-five per cent of the cost for each stage must be raised in cash or pledges and then paid off before the next stage can begin, also with 75 percent of its needed funds raised.

Pastor Pollestad visited the Pacific Northwest district in March and also traveled to Texas the last week of March. He said, "God is so good! As we travel, we sense that God is going before us to prepare the way. God has placed Vision 2004 on many hearts and people are excited about what is happening at our seminary and Bible school. We ask you to pray that this excitement will continue to grow larger than any of us could imagine, not only for our schools, but also for the entire AFLC."

Frontier, Saskatchewan — Bethel Lutheran Church will host the 16th Annual Conference of the AFLC-Canada, April 9-11. Pastor Gene Sundby, the only president the AFLC-Canada has had, is up for election.

Camrose, Alberta — Solid Rock Lutheran has purchased 53 acres on the north side of Camrose. The council is obtaining quotes for the development of residential lots as well as preliminary planning of the church building site.

Pastor Mark Molstre, Tioga, North Dakota has resigned as pastor of Zion Lutheran Church where he has served since 1994, in order to accept the call from Elim Lutheran in Lake Stevens, Washington. He expects to begin his new ministry in June.

Seminarian Wayne Olson, has accepted the call from Bethel Lutheran in Faith and Emmanuel Lutheran in Eagle Butte, South Dakota. He will begin his ministry as a lay pastor after the completion of the Free Lutheran Seminary school year on May 22.

Senior seminarian Gary Haug, has accepted the call to serve as associate pastor of Emmaus Lutheran Church in Bloomington, Minnesota. He has been working at Emmaus as a part-time staff member while attending seminary.

Onalaska, Wisconsin — Christ is Lord Lutheran is hosting the Central Tri-State District WMF Rally on April 17. Louanne Strom of Kenyon, Minnesota will be the morning speaker and a time of sharing is scheduled for the afternoon. This is the first opportunity for the district ladies to visit Christ is Lord Lutheran's new church facility, which was dedicated last fall.

Dexter, Minnesota — Zion Lutheran hosted a Valentine's Banquet as one of four evenings of special meetings with Pastor Rodger Olson of Fergus Falls, Minnesota. The congregation has been encouraged with the effective outreach opportunity resulting from the meetings. Earlier in January, the congregation received eight new members.



Rev. Harvey Carlson

Rev. Harvey Carlson, 80, formerly of St. Paul, Minnesota, passed away on March 1, 1999 at the Augustana Home in Minneapolis. Pastor Carlson was born September 3, 1918, to Otto and Ruth (Meline) Carlson in Minneapolis. He graduated from Augsburg College in 1941 and from Augustana Theological Seminary in Rock Island, Illinois in 1950. He also attended the Lutheran Bible Institute of Minneapolis and Luther Seminary in St. Paul.

On June 21, 1942, he and Hazel Anderson of Moose Lake, Minnesota were united in marriage. They joined the staff of the World Mission Prayer League and later the World Evangelization Crusade working in the Minneapolis and Los Angeles home offices. He served in the Augustana Synod parishes in Ham Lake and Bemidji, Minnesota. He

was active in the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement and served on that board. In 1950 they moved to Thunder Bay, Ontario before returning to Mount Carmel Lutheran Church in St. Paul for eighteen years. In 1973 he began serving Trinity Lutheran, the AFLC congregation in Grand Forks, North Dakota. He served Victory in Christ Lutheran in Maplewood, Minnesota from 1981 until his retirement in 1986.

He is survived by his wife Hazel; daughters Gracia (David) Rinden, Fergus Falls, Minnesota, and Faith (Don) Norstrud, Roseville, Minnesota; nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents and a daughter, Sharon Dyrud. Burial was at Blomskog Cemetery, Sturgeon Lake, Minnesota.

Blessed be his memory.

A tribute to Pastor Carlson

He often said with a smile, "I am certainly among them who love His appearing."

To hear Harvey Carlson preach was to hear a man living close to God. His preaching was devotional and his sermons seemed to grow until he found a convenient place to stop. His heart and mind were so full and rich with the Word of God, the listener knew he could have kept on and often wished he had. He closed many of his sermons by saying, "Well, much more could be said on this text, but we will have to end here for now." His strong conviction and great love for the Word of God was obvious and he could be counted on to preach the law in all its sternness and the gospel in its sweetness. He always taught of the importance to be prepared for the return of Christ.

Pastor Jeff Swanson served his internship with Pastor Carlson. "I really benefited from his knowledge of eschatology. I treasure the series of articles on the return of Christ that he wrote in the LEM magazine." Pastor Swanson continued,

"Our family was privileged to learn so much from the Carlsons. They had a real concern for missions and demonstrated genuine compassion with all people they were able to minister to. Their warm, kind and gentle Christian love will always be an example to us."

After his retirement twelve years ago, when some of his friends encouraged him to be a teacher, Pastor Carlson would respond, "I feel called to devote myself to a life of prayer instead." There was always refuge from the world and a place of encouragement at Harvey and Hazel's apartment at McKnight Village on St. Paul's east side.

Failing health for the Carlsons brought the move to the Augustana Home in Minneapolis just before this last Christmas. He was praying for us and we'll miss that. We look forward to that joyous reunion one day in heaven when we'll see that tall, lanky, soft-spoken man give us his warm, approving smile.

— **Pastor Wayne Hjermstad**
Bruce, South Dakota

Sioux Falls, South Dakota — Abiding Savior Lutheran has added Vicki Freestone to their staff as a parish worker. Pastor Michael Brandt serves the congregation.

Pastor Merle Fagerberg, Elbow Lake, Minnesota, is recuperating at home after hospital treatment for cancer. He is a retired AFLC lay pastor.

Beresford, South Dakota — Members of Skrefsrud Lutheran have been remodeling the interior of their church. Several members from Redeemer Free Lutheran in Canton have assisted. Skrefsrud Lutheran is preparing to celebrate their 90th anniversary on September 19, 1999.

Leeds, North Dakota — Lebanon and North Prairie Lutheran has added Hope Free Lutheran in Rugby to form a three-point parish. The official change occurred January 1, 1999. The congregations are served by Pastor Mark Antal.

Dickinson, North Dakota — Our Saviour's Lutheran Church is being served by Interim Pastor Harold Reitz of Norcross, Georgia.

Montgomery, Illinois — St. Olaf Lutheran hosted the Men's L.E.M. night on February 19. Pastor Charles Sampson of Newark Lutheran in Newark, Illinois was the speaker.

AFLC Memorial gifts January-February, 1999

AFLC department
given in memory of

AFLTTS

Rev. Harry Bobsberg
Margaret Kasperson Rusche
Myrl Moland
Ester Falla

AFLBS

Janette Ritterman
Orrin Nyhus
Myrl Moland
Kenneth Nyhus
Virgil Nelson
Edwin Ackerson
Gertie Hughes
Donald Bakken
Raymond Mahoney
Clarence Lunde
Margaret Kasperson Rusche
Millie Jones
Tanya Hermanson
Thilda Novak
Charlie Williams

Home Missions

Josie Caspersen
Gladys Moen
Vivian Ulven
Rev. Harry Bodsberg
Myrl Moland
Lyle Narveson
Gertie Hughes
Helen Hall
Dave Ehlers

Vision 2004

Orrin Nyhus
Bill Bevers

Youth

Mariah Olson

Parish Education

Howard Johnson

General Fund

Myrl Moland
Margaret Kasperson Rusche

World Missions

Evangelist Clifford Anderson
Myrl Moland

Evangelism

Myrl Moland

All Funds

Art Mykkanen

Legacies to all funds

Evola Barron
Marie Ballner

Wilderness camp continues to be developed

The term "wilderness" could be taken out of the title of the AFLC Wilderness Bible Camp because of the improvements that have been made to the camp. What began as a wooded and brush covered piece of land with potential, donated for use as a Bible camp by Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Dahlgren, has become a beautiful and inviting 70-acre campground.

For many years the camp has offered camper and RV hookups for those who had their own campers. A modern bath house was constructed some years ago and last year a new building with a large meeting room and eight sleeping rooms was erected. A separate building has kitchen appliances for food storage and preparation.

The AFLC Family Bible camp is held in July, ending on the third Sun-

day of the month and beginning on the Tuesday before. This year the dates are July 13-18. A Labor Day weekend retreat is also held.

No charges exist for registration. Events are supported by free-will offerings. The camp is available for use by other groups or for private family gatherings. AFLC members are allowed use of the camp on a free-will offering basis. Located in the beautiful lake country of north central Minnesota, less than thirty miles from Detroit Lakes, the camp provides accommodations in close proximity to many inviting tourist attractions.

To make arrangements for using the camp contact one of the camp board officers: Pastor Dale Mellgren 218-563-7375; Don Olson 701-232-5261; or Pastor Bruce Dalager 701-772-1846.

Pastor Gerald F. Mundfrom, Osceola, Wisconsin, is looking for someone to take over as director of Mercy and Truth Publishers, Inc. Pastor Mundfrom believes it is time he retired. He wants to use the time God gives him to do some writing. Contact him at 312 235th St., Osceola, WI 54020-5943 or call (715) 294-2052.

Shakopee, Minnesota — Faith Lutheran presented their third annual "Living Last Supper" on April 1 and 2.

Rollag, Minnesota — Lay pastor Gary Simons was installed as the pastor of Grong Lutheran Church on March 7, 1999. AFLC President Robert Lee officiated at the service.

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (2 months) – January 1 - February 28, 1999

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN FEBRUARY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$234,385.00	\$16,049.79	35,384.81	15
Seminary	110,296.00	16,499.92	25,752.49	23
Bible School	147,674.00	10,722.28	41,719.25	28
Home Missions.	238,152.00	12,093.61	30,198.14	13
World Missions.	190,909.00	9,140.23	21,947.01	11
Capital Investment	14,065.00	329.45	894.73	6
Parish Education	56,854.00	6,072.30	10,311.82	18
Church Extension	21,051.00	3,558.76	5,646.31	27
TOTALS	\$1,013,386.00	74,466.34	171,854.56	17
TOTALS 1997	1,278,758.00	82,238.27	197,198.65	15

Goal 17%

(The Evangelism department received \$2,781.94 in February)

What belongs under the ethics label?

If you go to a paint store and ask for blue paint, you will most likely be presented with a large number of shades, all called blue, to choose from. A similar thing exists with ethics. A large number of "shades" exist which people call ethics, some of which should not be carrying that label.

Some hold up tolerance and acceptance as the highest ethic. In this view, being moral means saying no belief system, no lifestyle choice is wrong, as long as it doesn't hurt someone else. The ethical thing to do, it is claimed, is to encourage each person to find happiness on whatever path they have chosen. Telling someone they have to change paths is seen as unethical.

Tolerance of everything and anything is not biblical ethics. It would not be ethical to let a person swallow something you know is poison but they don't, while you stand to the side saying, "But that is what they want to do. Who am I to tell them they are wrong?"

People regularly make choices that appear to harm no one, but are quite dangerous and sinful. The ethical thing to do is to speak out; to lovingly warn them. "When I say to a wicked man, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood" (Ezekiel 3:18, NIV).

Ethics is not simply saying, "no," however. It is more than compiling a list of bad things — keeping off the list areas in which we have a weakness, avoiding them, and then looking down on others who do not do the same. Certainly things exist that we should say "no" to. The Bible does not say "yes" to everything. It calls us "to put off your old self," but it does not stop there. It also says, "to put on the new self" (Ephesians 4:22-24, NIV).

It is just as unethical to fail to do good as it is to engage in evil. "Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins" (James 4:17, NIV).

Jesus will say to those who are going to enter into His kingdom, "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was

sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me" (Matthew 25:35, 36, NIV). He doesn't simply say, "You stayed away from this, you didn't do that, come and enter in." Yes, the Bible tells us of things we are not to do. It also tells us of things we should do. Both are a part of ethics.

A multiple choice test is not found under the ethics label. We do not find something like, "get six out of ten right, answer questions one and two right, and we'll call you ethical."

Some people say nice sounding things about morals and values. They take positions many of us who call ourselves evangelicals agree with in speaking out against abortion and homosexuality. But then they are found guilty of things such as unethical and illegal business practices, lying, a love of money, being unfaithful in their marriage. Those things should not be discounted. A person should not

be held up as a role model of ethical behavior simply because they take a stance we may agree with in some important areas. You do not get to pick and choose in ethics. Things aren't excused as being "minor" sins. "Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it" (James 2:10, NIV).

It is not only outward actions that belong under the ethics label. Ethics involves what is going on inside as well. Moral behavior begins with a transformed heart. Jesus said, "The good man brings good things

out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart" (Luke 6:45, NIV).

It is only Jesus who can change a heart. That change comes about because of the good news of Jesus and the Cross and the Resurrection; not from good advice on how to live.

Ethics is important, but it doesn't come first. Evangelism does. First we need to know Jesus and be in a relationship with Him before we can live for Him. We first receive the gift of life He graciously offers, then we strive to live a godly life, trusting in His power, desiring to bring honor to Him. Jesus alone breaks the power of sin and gives us the freedom to live as ethical people.

— Pastor Craig Johnson

"Tolerance of everything and anything is not biblical ethics."

SOMETHING TO SHARE

Veggies and visits

We moved to Wisconsin in the bleak of winter. It seems our ranch-style home was snowed-in on all sides most of the time. Loneliness also hemmed me in as a stay-at-home-mother-of-three. As signs of spring began to blossom around me, I needed to break out of my comfortable, self-absorbed cocoon and explore my new surroundings.

One morning as I opened the back patio door to check the temperature, I discovered a neatly wrapped bundle of fresh asparagus. It was obvious where it had come from as we had already been admiring the flourishing row of tender, green stems at the back of our property line. Our neighbors had been hiding the largest garden I had ever seen under the winter's blanket of snow. It took up one whole lot beside their house with a tiny two-seat gazebo at the opposite end.

I promptly thanked Alvina for the generous gift, and she replied matter of factly, "We're neighbors. Neighbors share." Many more gifts appeared on the deck: a bowl of shiny red strawberries, a bucket of crisp green beans, a basket of succulent tomatoes, a grocery sack of sweet corn, hand-crafted bookmarks made from her own pressed, dried flowers. Upon receiving each gift I would scurry over to her yard with

thanksgiving, and interrupt her garden work with a brief visit under the shaded gazebo.

Over the summer I grew to know Alvina and her husband Gordon, their children living away from home, their grandchildren, and each of their interests and special events. Alvina loved to chat, and would respond at the end of each visit to my closing repetition of gratitude with, "We're neighbors. Neighbors share."

I began to examine the generosity of my own soul. How willing was I to divide what was mine and give a portion to my neighbor? While the Lord was dealing with my attitude of selfishness, I wondered also what I could possibly share with Alvina. Anything that I possessed in excess, she already had in abundance. Any craft I attempted, she had already mastered. As I wrestled internally with this dilemma, I began to notice how she hurried to the gazebo when she saw me coming, how she brightened when I spoke of Jesus, and warmed when I took an interest in her family. It became easier to "share" the gospel message, because I had befriended my neighbor.

Alvina was teaching me that I needed to be a friend to have a friend. It started with asking questions (and remembering the answers). It continued with showing a sincere interest in the things that interested her. It included the underlying purpose that making

friends was not just to ease my own loneliness, but also to stimulate an interest in Christ so I could ultimately "share" my Best Friend with my neighbor. I had to earn the right to witness. It was not my possessions I needed to share, it was my very self. When the tragedies of life occurred, Gordon's life-threatening surgery or the sudden death of her college-aged grandson, we were welcomed into those tragedies with the comfort and assurance of Jesus.

Alvina accepted my first-time effort at homemade yogurt, my occasional loaves of bread, and my one and only attempt at apple jelly. But more importantly she let me share my faith in Christ. After all, we were neighbors, and neighbors share.

"We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us" (I Thessalonians 2:8).



— by Jeannie Brandt
Abiding Savior Lutheran
Sioux Falls, South Dakota