

The Lutheran AMBASSADOR

April 7, 1998

RELATIONSHIPS THAT COUNT FOR ETERNITY



*greater love –
those special friendships*

*Be the friend
Jesus is to you*

*Taking responsibility
for our parents*

*Each for the other,
all for Christ*



PLUS
Evangelism Celebration
May 1-2
AFLC Schools' Chapel



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

April 7, 1998
Volume 36, Number 5



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CONTENTS

Those cherished friendships	p. 4
One life at a time	p. 6
A Father, a Son and a Voice	p. 8
To have and to hold	p. 9

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

The powerful tongue

With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.

— James 3:9-10



On Easter Sunday, I love to praise the Lord by singing, "Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds." The third

verse is a prayer,

"Oh, fill us, Lord, with dauntless love;

Set heart and will on things for life's day

That by our lives we truly say:

Christ has triumphed! He is living! Alleluia!"

It's easy to sing hymns of praise in church, but do we allow His grace and victory to be reflected with our tongues on a daily basis? In a very practical way, James is concerned about the type of witness we are giving with our tongue.

James describes the *tongue as a fire ... It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.* Gossip can get out of control as illustrated in the following story:

There was a woman, who heard a story about her pastor. She proceeded to tell everyone she knew about it. At some point, she found out that the story was not true.

She felt terrible! She went to the pastor, confessing what she had done. She asked if there was anything she could do. The pastor said, "You have a feather pillow, don't you?"

"Yes," she said.

"Take the pillow to the tower. Since it is a windy day, I want you to empty the pillow of all of the feathers. Then come back to me."

The woman did as he had instructed. When she returned she asked, "What should I do now?"

The pastor replied, "Now go and collect every feather that was in the pillow!"

"I can't do that!" she cried, "The wind has carried them for miles around!"

The pastor quietly responded, "Nor can you correct all the damage you have done with your tongue."

James made it sound pretty hopeless when he wrote, *All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.* The tongue has quite a reputation!

Jesus gave us insight on the source of our untamed tongue. In Matthew 15:18-19, He said, *But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, ... For out of the heart come evil thoughts, ... false testimony, slander.* It's a heart problem.

Though no man can tame the tongue, God is able. His grace is sufficient. Christ has triumphed. Since the tongue is only reflecting what is in the heart, it requires a cleansing of the heart. As David came to realize that God desired a broken and contrite heart, he prayed, *Create in me a clean heart, O God* (Psalm 51:10). When the Spirit convicts us of our sin with the tongue, our hearts are broken in order to create a pure and clean heart. Thank God for the promise of I John 1:9, *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*



— Pastor Jerry Peterson
First Lutheran Church
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

sound bites

Married life is a marathon, not a sprint. It is not enough to make

1 a great start toward long-term marriage. You will need the determination to keep plugging on, even when every fiber of your body longs to quit.

— James Dobson

To be a friend a man should be tolerant; he should have an understanding heart

4 and a forgiving nature, knowing that all men stumble now and then

and that he who never made a mistake never accomplished anything.

— Wilferd A. Peterson

6

**Reprove a friend in secret,
but praise him before others.**

— Leonardo Da Vinci

2

**Let the wife
make the husband
glad to come home,
and let him make her sorry
to see him leave.**

— Martin Luther

A man never discloses his own char-

3

**acter so
clearly as
when he
describes another's.**

— Jean Paul Richter

Is any pleasure on earth as great as a circle of Christian friends by a fire?

5

— C. S. Lewis

Those cherished friendships

— Rachel Johnson
Redeeming Love
Lutheran Church
St. Joseph, Minnesota

The word friend is defined as “one attached to another by affection, regard, or esteem; an intimate acquaintance.”

Who are our true friends?

Proverbs 17:17a states, “A friend loves at all times.” Friends can share accomplishments, anticipate needs and overlook unkind words or deeds. True friends have a fresh supply of graciousness and cheer.

John 15:13 states, “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” Through thick and thin, they are there to support and meet your needs. True friends know all about us and love us just the same. The best friends are like Jesus — they are faithful! They lend a hand, yet never interfere. Where would we be without those special people in our lives who share our joys and sorrows, support

and encourage us, understand us and accept us unconditionally?

As I face my third ear surgery and have the possibility of the facial nerve being severed, I have shared this with friends and have many praying for me. It is quite a comfort for

me to know I have friends who care about me and encourage me through this trial in my life.

My appreciation of friendships changed after having a very close friend's life taken at a young age. I came to realize that even when we think friends will be around forever, God sometimes has other things in mind. As I stood at the back of the church during the funeral, I actually envied her because she was with our heavenly Father. In adjusting to this loss, I came to understand that God was in control. He wasn't going to leave me with a hole in my heart. I gained a deeper relationship with the Lord. I knew He would care for me by meeting my friendship needs.

The circle of friends is something one

increasingly cherishes with time. While attending AFLBS nearly two decades ago, I obtained a strong foundation of friendships. These friends are there to encourage, pray and stand by me. As circumstances change, we may not be as close as we once were, but my friends remain an inspiration to me whenever I am down.

The book of Ruth shows us the depth of friendship we are capable of if we use our gift for friendship in obedience to God. Ruth's example encourages us to be the kind of friend God longs for us to be. She modeled how to help a grieving friend. She didn't criticize, she didn't offer advice, she simply sat with Naomi and quietly loved her.

Sometimes we trust our relationships more than God. We tend to cling to others to receive a sense of value. Ruth was amazing. When her husband died, she undoubtedly grieved, but she clung to God for strength. She was in God's hands and was completely convinced that He does all things well.

The Apostle Paul felt loneliness when friends abandoned him (II Timothy 1:15 and 4:16). But Paul also enjoyed the refreshment of his courageous and unselfish friend, Onesiphorus (II Timothy 1:16-18).

Friendships come with a price. They won't mature unless both parties put forth effort and time to remember, to care and to be together. Can we really afford not to make time for friendships? God will send special people in our lives when and where we need them. Our part is to keep an open heart to how God is working in our relationships and show true friendship when the opportunities arise.

Friendship is a gift from God — a precious gift to be handled with the utmost care. These special people have a reason and a purpose in our lives. As we unwrap God's gift, we need to continually seek His direction in handling each friendship, dedicating it to the Lord.

Job 42:10 states “And the Lord restored the fortunes of Job when he prayed for his friends.” We need to pray for and cherish our friends, for they are indeed a lifeline — a treasure worth seeking and keeping once we find them.





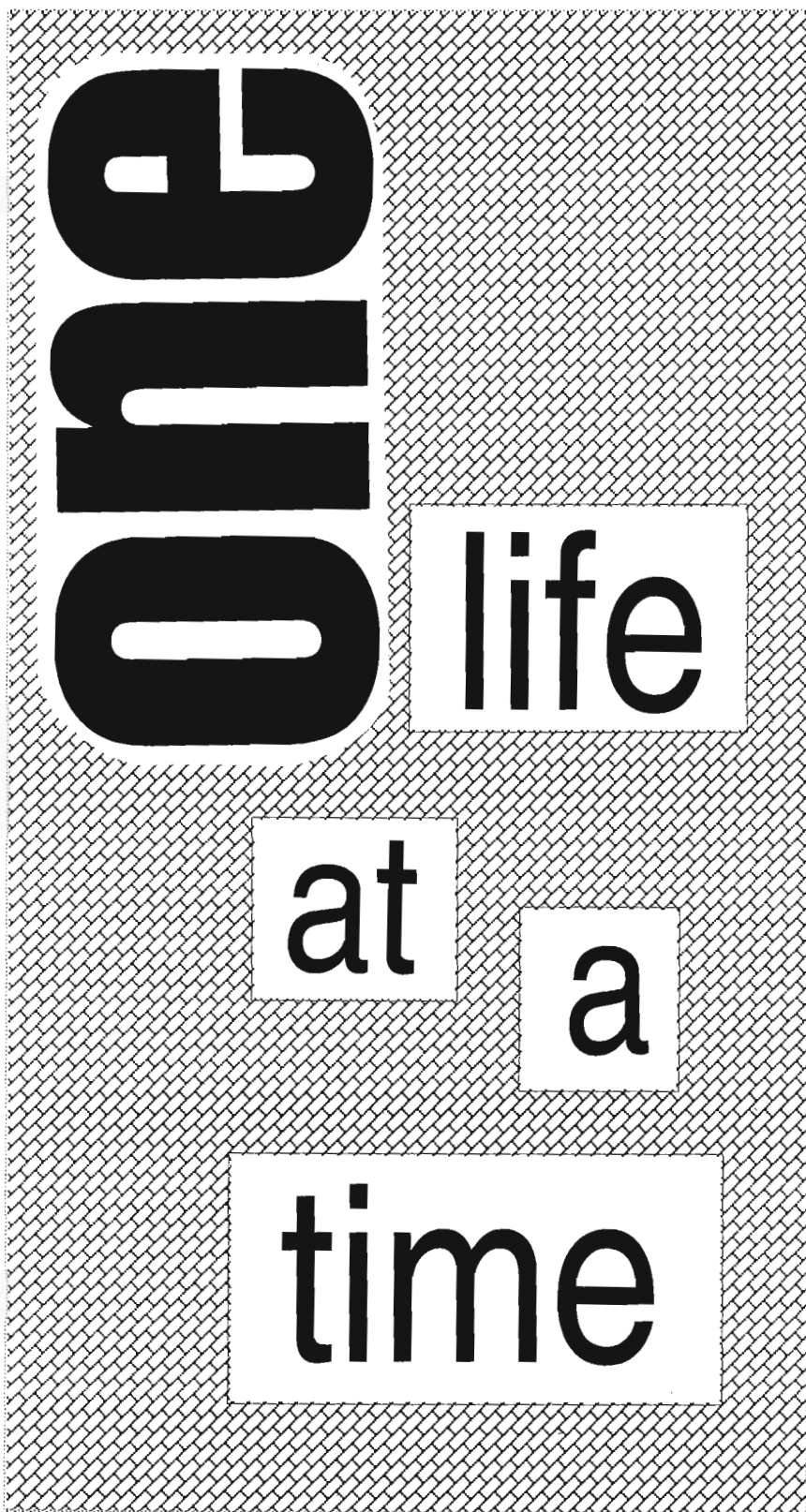
My Savior

I love to see the sunrise
All beautiful and bright.
It reminds me of my Savior,
all draped in purest white.
It wasn't always completely white.
There was the time He hung on that tree.
His precious blood dripped on His clothes.
It was for you and me.

He continues to knock on your door,
so gentle don't you see?
He wants to fill you with living water,
like He did for me.

The Savior, He is coming soon!
Are you going to answer the door?
When He comes to earth again,
He wants to take you and me
to be with Him forevermore.

— Dale Posey
Monroe Free Lutheran
Monroe, Washington



— Jeremy J. Erickson
Interim Youth Director
Emmaus Lutheran Church
Bloomington, Minnesota

During a recent speaking engagement at a Christian high school, I asked the students to raise their hands if they had at least one non-Christian friend. Simple request. Didn't expect quite the misunderstanding.

No hands.

So I explained to them that it wasn't a bad thing. That if they admitted they had an unbelieving friend, they wouldn't be required to meet with the principal after school. (He was a big man.) Making my point clear, I asked again.

Then a horrible thing happened. In a room overflowing with roughly one hundred Christian teens, six hands went up. Six hands.

A quick observation on my part noted that the three hands coming from the back row were hands of three sadly deviant teens; the only three who would much rather be enrolled in a public school — and not for evangelistic purposes.

The other three? Just transferred in.

What occurred to me next turned my stomach. As I assessed the situation and saw the potential these young troops had for bringing light into a dark world, I cringed at the realization that the dark was getting darker and a bushel was over the light that was sadly out of sight.

When I finished my message and the students were excused back to class, I sat down with a pen and paper and started to make a list of unbelievers I called friends. I didn't get too far. It seems it all stopped when I graduated from high school. During my years at Bible school I let those friendships fade into history. Now there I sat with ten names running down the paper. Only three were accounted for and it had been months since any of them had heard from me.

For four years now, I've been involved with some sort of ministry. Studying. Speaking. Planning. Hauling kids from church to the park. Even done some street-style evangelism. But I've failed to utilize one of the most effective evangelism tools ever — a friendship.

I've been fed by the Family. I've been blessed by the Fellowship. I've been ministering to the crowds. But I've forgotten my friends who really need Jesus.

Though our Lord came to save the multitude, He didn't change lives that way. He walked this earth with purpose, and loved one life at a time. Watch Him as He touches

the withered hand of a leper. Hear Him laugh as He calls Zacchaeus down from the tree. See Him turn to restore the woman with the hemorrhage. He calls her "daughter." No one had loved her for years. Remember blind Bartimaeus? What was so special about him? Why did God see to it that his name was placed in the Bible? Was he more blind than all the rest? Or is God trying to remind us of an important truth?

He chooses to change lives one life at a time.

They surround us. We open the doors of the church and invite them to come. They hear the invitation of the bars and night-clubs and go stumbling the other way. There are walls in our lives that cause us to shy away from people like that. People who don't understand the Bible. People who want nothing to do with Christianity. Yet they're the very souls that need us most. They need to meet Jesus.

Maintaining a relationship with an unbeliever is not necessarily the easiest thing to do, nor is it the most comfortable. It takes serious commitment. It takes lots of prayer. It takes a desire to love what others despise. It takes the guts to be honest. And it takes the Light from under the bushel and into the life of one who needs Jesus more than anything.

America is weary of hearing about Jesus. It's time we roll up our sleeves and get serious about showing them Who He is. Jesus is the Light. Light is meant to be seen.

Having an unbelieving friend gives us opportunity to bring the only true source of hope in this life to one who needs it badly. It also exposes us to a healthy dose of reality from the world of one who lives in darkness. With that, God subtly reminds us this is not our home, and we ought not get too comfy.

We will be in a better place someday. Who will be there, thanking you for being the friend who introduced them to Jesus? There may be a bunch who responded to the message you preached. But the one most grateful will likely be the one you chose to call "friend."

Got an unbelieving friend? Stick it out. Reap the blessings.

Don't have one? Get one. Be the friend Jesus is to you, and watch God do His work — one life at a time.

As for me — I think I've got some phone calls to make.



I sat down with a pen and paper and started to make a list of unbelievers I



called friends. I didn't get too far. It seems it all stopped ... For four years now ... I've been fed by the Family. I've been blessed by the Fellowship. I've

been ministering to the crowds. But I've forgotten my friends who really need Jesus.

Jeremy Erickson (AFLBS, 1996, current Devotional Life Secretary of the Free Lutheran Youth) is willing to do concerts, camps, retreats, and the like this summer for you and your church. This singer/songwriter from Northern Minnesota is skilled on both piano and guitar, and has been writing songs for the cause of Christ for the past seven years. "Appreciation" (written in 1995) has become a familiar prayer for many youth and adults alike across the AFLC. With a heart for worship and a passion for the gospel, Jeremy tells the story of the cross with his music, and shares the testimony of God's "undeniable and unshakable love." Serving as an interim youth director for the last year, Jeremy loves working with youth, and loves ministering to the "big people," too. If you are interested in inviting Jeremy to your church or Bible camp this summer, please phone, write or e-mail him at:

Jeremy J. Erickson
RR 2 Box 264
Badger, MN 56714
218-463-1009
dockcrew@juno.com



A Father, a Son

later, our whole family rejoiced with them. We moved back to Grand Forks to be close to both JoAnn's and my parents. I wanted my children to know their godly grandparents, and Grand Forks was only about an hour's drive from either pair. During this time it seemed like we received much more than we ever gave.

It wasn't necessary for her to say it. Of course I would take care of my dad, but he was still a young 76 and in excellent health. Her words indicated she knew her time was short, and yet they were comforting, reflecting the deep love she had for Dad. They had been married only twelve years in what was an almost perfect marriage. I was thankful for the loving companion she was to Dad, caring mother to me, and wonderful grandmother to my children.

Dad did well in the first years after Evelyn's death, but the loneliness was there. During this time my love for him grew deeper and I enjoyed the frequent trips to Finley and his overnight stays with us in Grand Forks. My two sisters in the area and their families also spent time with Dad whenever they could. Then Dad was also diagnosed with cancer. At first the treatment seemed to be working, but after several years, he was fighting for his life.

As he grew weaker, his desire was to remain at home. It would not have been possible had it not been for the loving care provided by a dear friend of Dad's and help from my aunt. Hospice also provided additional appropriate care. During the last weeks, my sisters and I took turns staying with dad and helping to make him comfortable. The last days were difficult. The tough 85-year-old body of the Norwegian farmer refused to give in. My sisters and I were by his side when he breathed his last.

As a youngster, I thought it would be easy for an adult to lose elderly parents. Now I know the opposite is true: the more years

T "Take care of your Dad," were the last words I heard her say. She was hospitalized and weak battling cancer. I didn't think her time was up yet and was unprepared for the call in a few days from Dad that she had passed on. JoAnn, my wife, was already past due with our third child, and I had pictured in my mind that Evelyn, my stepmother, would be able to enjoy her new grandchild before she was called home.

God's timing didn't seem right. It didn't seem fair that Dad was alone again for the second time. My first mother had passed away fifteen years earlier after years of poor health. It was just a month after I left home for Bible school and Dad found himself alone after raising six children and saying goodbye to their mother. Even though I was only 18, I felt a sense of responsibility to be a good son to my father. He had already lost two sons and now his wife. I don't remember specifically being taught at home or church that it was my duty to care for my parents. The Word must have been working in my heart, even if I was unaware.

When Dad married Evelyn several years

— Stanley J. Miller
Trinity Free Lutheran
Grand Forks, North Dakota

and a Voice

one has known the godly love of a parent, the more difficult it is to say goodbye.

Dad had lived a long life of faithful service to God and was now with his Savior. We were thankful the suffering and pain of his illness was over. Yet, the sting of death was real and there was emptiness knowing he was gone. The thought entered my mind, "Who will pray for me now?" Dad had a deep unselfish love for his children.

Of my cherished moments, I can still see him sitting on the floor playing with Karen, our daughter (who was born with Down Syndrome the day of Evelyn's funeral). How could a man in his eighties and in poor health make that loving effort? Could it be that the love of our Lord was being demonstrated in a way that can only be taught by the still, small voice of the Spirit?

Likewise, it is that small voice that guides us to take responsibility for our parents, whether it means simply spending time together or providing physical care. This is not the harsh work of the law demanding perfect service, but the unheralded fruit of the Spirit.



— Pastor Amos and Ovidie Dyrud
Medicine Lake Lutheran
Plymouth, Minnesota



✿ To have ✿ and to hold

Prior to our wedding day we asked the jeweler to engrave our marriage motto, "Each for the other, all for Christ" inside our wedding rings.

The Bible gives clear instructions for Christian marriage: "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her ... So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies" (Ephesians 5:25, 28, 33). This speaks of the husband loving her, honoring, protecting, providing for her, encouraging and comforting her. Yes, the Bible is very clear: Christ is our example.

The Bible also speaks of bearing each other's burdens patiently, lovingly and humbly. Without these characteristics the husband, as head of the marriage relationship, is prone to be a taskmaster, lording it over his wife and children.

It is soon fifty years since Ovidie and I became one in holy matrimony ordained by God. And when, in prayer, the Holy Spirit searches my heart, my honest response to God's principles for Christian marriage is: "No, I don't measure up." I'm convicted of my many shortcomings and faults, and for that I have prayed and pray for forgiveness to God, and to my dear wife. In confession there is forgiveness, cleansing, healing, restoration and genuine joy. And we have had and have the experience that "the joy of the Lord is our strength" (Nehemiah 8:10).

The longer we live together the more we



Pastor Amos and Ovidie Dyrud are looking forward to celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary this June. The Dyruds are former missionaries to Madagascar and Pastor Dyrud is the former dean of the Free Lutheran Seminary.

laugh together. This too is good for our health, happiness and well-being. And above all we love to read and pray together for ourselves, our children, and children's children, extended families, our neighbors, the Body of Christ the Church, our nation and around the world.

"O Lord, in your mercy, visit all your churches and our nation with spiritual awakening, repentance of sin, and a deep desire to obey You, Your Word and Your will — as You visit and visited me in my youth when I had drifted away from You. 'Thank you Lord for saving my soul, Thank you Lord for making me whole; Thank you Lord for giving to me Thy great salvation so rich and free.'"

Now Ovidie continues on this topic of our marriage relationship.

During our youth both of us strongly wanted to live for Christ and serve Him according to His guiding. It was at Bible camp when I was 18 that I came to the cross-road and made my full commitment to Christ. Full assurance of my salvation followed. Amos and I feel strongly that we were brought together by the Lord in His time.

The words of a favorite hymn express my testimony: "All the way my Savior leads me. What have I to ask beside? Can I doubt His tender mercy, who through life has been my guide."

Being we hadn't even met before I was in my late 20s and Amos was in his early 30s, we were blessed to learn how similar our

backgrounds were: of Norwegian heritage, grew up on farms, and not only both Lutherans — but Lutheran Free. We had finished most of our schooling and had been employed, so we were blessed by being able to enter the marriage relationship free of school debts even! All of these blessings, besides being very much in love, found us very ready to become one and follow the Lord's leading together.

And He continues to lead us all the way. We have learned that in marriage our joys are doubled and our burdens halved, as is meant to be.

As Amos has already so ably stated, the Lord in His Word has laid out His plan for husband and wife. I am thankful the husband is the head, and the role of the wife is to care for the home and the children, and be the helpmate supporting the husband in his calling and work.

How we marvel at God's love and God's Word! When trials come we are especially thankful for Philippians 4:6, 7 which says: "In nothing be anxious but in all things by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Also, Matthew 18:19 is so precious. Amos often quotes that as we are praying earnestly about some concern: "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." What promises!

The Lord has truly blessed us in giving us hearts of gratitude to Him and a thankful spirit. And we know as the motto goes, "the future is as bright as the promises of God." Each day our prayer is that God would help us to walk the path He lights for us on that day. We know His promise that He will give strength and grace for the days ahead too. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

That is our story. We know the Lord leads his dear children along. For others their story may be more like J. R. Miller writes in his book *The Home Beautiful*. He says that "Someone has likened the coming together of two people in marriage like two rivers coming together. At first there is confusion, excitement, commotion, and apparent conflict and strife as the two flow together, and it seems as if they never would blend and commingle; but in a little time they unite in one broad peaceful stream, rolling in majesty and strength."



Plan now to attend the first ever
Evangelism Celebration
May 1-2, 1998

AFLC Schools Chapel
3120 East Medicine Lake Blvd.
Plymouth, Minnesota
612-544-9501

Friday

- 3 p.m. — Session for pastors and wives
Speaker — Dr. Francis Monseth, FLS Dean
- 5 p.m. — Dinner for pastors and wives (*free*)
- 7 p.m. — Praise and Worship Opening Service
for pastors and laity
Worship leader — Pastor Rodger Olson
Speaker — Pastor Allen Monson

Saturday

- 8:30 a.m. — Prayer and Praise
Leader — Pastor Rodger Olson
- 9:15 - 10:00 a.m. — Workshop
- 10:15 - 11:00 a.m. — Workshop
- 11:15 - noon — Workshop
Leaders — Pastor Wayne Hanson on
Miracle Mile Ministry
Pastor Joel Rolf on *Twelve Keys of Evangelism*
Pastor Jack Aamot on *Prayer Light House*

Lunch — salad bar available for purchase in the cafeteria

- 1 p.m. — General session
The evangelism vision —
led by the AFLC Evangelism Commission.

Pipestone, Minnesota —

Christ the King Lutheran is being served by Pastor David Wold, a former European missionary originally from Revillo, South Dakota. The Dallas Theological Seminary graduate served with the Greater Europe Mission before coming to Christ the King Lutheran. He is assisted by Eric Manus, a youth worker with Tentmakers.

Bismarck, North Dakota —

Calvary Free Lutheran has been served by interim pastor John Abel. The congregation has enjoyed monthly Sunday evening mission services. Recently the Abels left for Brazil. Their last mission Sunday featured a Brazilian supper prepared for the congregation by Ruby Abel. Pictured is Pastor Abel explaining a Brazilian artifact displayed for the congregation.



**To members
of the Association:**

Pastor Lee's letter to pastors asking for prayer on my behalf has given me courage to write.

I want to confess to all of you that I have lived in sin, even in recent years. I realize the anguish and grief I have caused my family, and all of you in the AFLC as well.

As I confess this sin, I ask for your forgiveness. I pray for your continued fellowship.

I have truly confessed my sin to God, and committed my life wholly to Christ.

— Richard Snipstead
Osceola, Wisconsin

(Editor's note: Richard Snipstead was president of the AFLC from 1978 to 1992.)

Bloomington, Minnesota —

Emmaus Lutheran hosted 21 regional teams at an all-day teen quiz. National competition will be in Denver, Colorado, on April 21-25. Emmaus has at least four quizzers who have qualified to participate in the national competition. Teens for Christ is the sponsoring organization of the Bible Quizing Program.

Upsala, Minnesota — Word of Life Lutheran hosted their ninth annual valentine's banquet on Saturday, February 14. The 168 guests were treated to a delicious meal and an evening of sharing by Cary Dietsche. This was the second year the congregation was able to host the event in their own church and views the banquet as an outreach event.

Amery, Wisconsin —

Amery Free Lutheran celebrated the burning of their mortgage and the dedication of the *Ambassador Hymnal* on Sunday, March 15. Former Pastor Brian Davidson, now of Ponca City, Oklahoma preached at the morning worship service and neighboring Pastor Tom Olson spoke during the afternoon service. Both Olson and Davidson coordinated the efforts in developing the *Ambassador Hymnal*. Dennis Christopherson reflected on the early days when the church was organized in 1976. The congregation also hosts a growing academy of nearly 65 students in their church building. Amery Free Lutheran is currently served by interim pastor, Walter Johnson.

Kalispell, Montana — Following the worship service on March 29, Stillwater Free Lutheran broke ground for their second church addition. This addition will be at the front of the church and includes the installation of a handicap lift. The original 1911 building was doubled in capacity with the 1981 completion of the addition in the rear of the church.

Planning for VBS

A Vacation Bible School Curriculum Comparison Chart is available from Parish Education. It's a helpful tool in evaluating the different emphasis between several publishers of VBS materials. Compare gospel content, view of sin, the cross of Christ, power for Christian living, student and teacher materials and resources before making your decision.

Call AFLC Parish Education at (612) 545-5631 or e-mail at parished@aflc.org.



It's Coming!

**The 1999 FLY Convention
June 29-July 3 at
Estes Park, Colorado**

Convention brochures will be out in June. The cost is \$300 per person. **Plan now!**

Campo Mourão, Brazil —

Missionaries David and Sarah Nelson are thanking God for answered prayer. As of February 28, the Nelsons are official permanent visa card holders, meaning they can be in Brazil for nine years before having to do more paperwork. They are anticipating the arrival of a new addition to their family in mid-June.

Pray for Missionary Sonja Dahl as she continues the long project toward acquiring her permanent visa card.

On March 2, the new school year began on the Campo Mourão campus with 35 students at the opening chapel service. Last year there were 14 students studying at the Bible school. The Nelsons hosted ten of the students living on campus for an ice cream party. The evening featured a Bible Trivia game, complete with prizes sent from the U.S. — toothpaste, soap, notebooks, razors, and erasers. "They love the goodies you ladies send!" writes Sarah Nelson.

The evening concluded with a time of testimony. Sarah said, "It was a heart-touching time as eight of the ten students come from extremely broken homes. All of them have been abandoned by one or both of their parents at some point in their lives. Please pray for restoration for their wounded hearts. Many have also been involved in one way or another with Spiritism. Spiritual oppression is a very real fact these young people live with. Pray for victory and the power of the blood of Christ to be known in their lives."

Along with the arrival of more students is the need for more books for the Bible school library in Brazil. The library is sorely lacking in materials on important subjects such as Christian Education for example. Individuals and congregations who might be led to give to this important project may give to the Brazil Bible School Library Fund in care of:

AFLC World Missions
3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, MN 55441

Bateias, Brazil — Missionaries

Paul and Becky Abel enjoyed a busy camp month in February. Ninety children and youth attended the children's camp followed by the youth camp for Carnaval. They squeezed 192 people in the 120-normal-capacity ARCA. The Abels wrote: "We sensed God's presence and praise Him for the wonderful spirit of the

camp and for the many conversions. We especially praise God that Celso (who lived with us for a couple of years) re-dedicated his life to the Lord. He had been in a backslidden condition for many months and we're so thrilled to have him 'back' again. Please remember to pray for the young people who made life-changing decisions at this camp."

Increase your giving to AFLC World Missions without cash outlay!



If you live on a farm or ranch, you can help support a missionary or missions project by caring for livestock or planting a crop of your choice. AFLC World Missions is a member of STEER, Inc. of Bismarck, North Dakota, which will purchase livestock from your herd or give you the funds to purchase from a sales barn or neighbor. If you are involved in the "God's Acres Plan," STEER, Inc. will pay for the seed, gas and fertilizer.

For more information on how you can increase your giving to AFLC World Missions, complete the coupon below and send it to:

AFLC World Missions
3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, MN 55441
Phone: 612-545-5631
e-mail: WorldMis@aflc.org

Please send me more information:

☐ Beef Cow ☐ Dairy Cow ☐ Hogs
☐ Sheep ☐ Feeder Cattle ☐ Crop (God's Acres Plan)

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Shevlin, Minnesota — Alida Lutheran is hosting the North Central Minnesota District WMF Rally on April 25, 1998. The theme is, "Let the Son Shine."

Newark, Illinois — Helmar Lutheran held their spring evangelistic crusade during March 20-25, with the theme, "Spiritual Springtime: Finding New Life In Christ." Pastor Vern Baardson was the guest speaker. The crusade began with a marriage seminar on Friday and Saturday followed by an evening area youth rally. The crusade continued with nightly meetings through Wednesday.

Metropolis, Illinois — On February 22, Faith Lutheran held a commissioning service for Brent Logeman, now serving a four-month mission term in Naknek, Alaska. Logeman, 36, is one of several laymen in the congregation who enjoys preaching. The two-year-old congregation broke ground for their building on March 29. The new church will be located about two and half miles north of town. Todd Klemme is the pastor.

Bethel Park, Pennsylvania — Ruthfred Lutheran has called Wes Patterson to serve as a summer youth intern. Wes currently is a college student and assisting the dean of men at AFLBS. He is also the 2nd vice president of the Free Lutheran Youth.

Ruthfred's music director, Robert Vogel, is also the orchestra conductor at Mt. Lebanon High School. His orchestra, along with two others from Ohio, were selected to play in concert at Carnegie Hall in New York City on March 18. Mr. Vogel has conducted Ruthfred's senior choir and the bell choir for the past 12 years.

Mr. Ivars Krafts, Free Lutheran Seminary senior, has accepted the call to serve Faith Lutheran in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The AFLC schools' graduation will be held on May 23, 1998, after which he will begin his ministry.

Budget note — The income for AFLC evangelist support during January-February, 1998, was \$440.

The 1998 AFLC Annual Conference

June 17-21

Red Wing High School

Red Wing, Minnesota

Watch for the April 28th issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* for the conference schedule and registration.

AFLC Memorial Gifts

February, 1998

Name	Given By	Department
David Hanson	Maple Bay Lutheran	World Missions
Rev. John Strand	William/Rachel Chesley	
Orville Bjerkager	Kenneth/Mary Nash	Home Missions
Opal Peterson	Living Faith Lutheran WMF	
	Iris Myron	
	Thomas/Marion Stockeland	
Dulcie Sumne	Thomas/Marion Stockeland	
Calvin Egeberg	Mr/Mrs. Allen Nelson	
Agnes Vietti	Aini Myking	General Fund
	Faye James	Evangelism
	Pastor/Mrs. Robert Lee	
Agnes Ostrem	Gregory/Renate Schmitke	
Bob Franklin	Kollen/Joan Ferden	Vision 2004
Rolland Suelzle	Ben/Esther Suelzle	
LuVerne Jones	Ted/Judy Hegseth	
	Ken/Kathi Anderson	
	Delbert Jones	AFLBS
Maxine Erickson	Arlan/Margaret Vonesh	
	Gerry/Karen Knudsvig	
	Pastor/Mrs. Bruce Peterson	
Mabel Rugland	Gordon/Gladys Rugland	
Ceil Taylor	Pastor Marilyn/Gayle Kruse	
Harvey Johnson, Sr.	Gregory/Donna Bruce	
	Pastor/Mrs. Ted Berkas	
Isidor Winkelmann	Pastor/Mrs. Ted Berkas	

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences - January 1 - February 28, 1998

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN FEBRUARY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$224,870.00	\$17,072.95	41,935.69	19
Seminary	112,558.00	6,439.52	14,792.31	13
Bible School	180,678.00	8,453.41	22,443.95	12
Home Missions	260,263.00	17,435.49	41,434.96	16
World Missions	420,686.00	27,173.24	61,849.22	15
Capital Investment	16,276.00	365.05	1,031.35	6
Parish Education	50,335.00	5,510.48	12,505.59	25
Church Extension	18,092.00	737.19	1,205.58	9
TOTALS	\$1,278,758.00	83,238.27	197,198.65	15
TOTALS 1997	1,223,905.00	85,637.19	184,334.47	15
Goal 17%				

Digging deep

To find oil, a well generally has to be dug deep. The precious substance is not on the surface waiting to be tapped. Work and effort is necessary before its discovery. A similar truth applies to relationships.

They don't just happen. Close relationships with other people can be a source of great blessing in our life. They are a chief means God uses to teach and encourage us, strengthen and stretch us. Our relationships can be a well of real and great riches; but for that to happen digging must take place. Relationships that never get past the surface, generally never become the fount of blessing that God desires.

I have heard people who have come from other parts of the world to this country comment that one of the most confusing things for them has been the many people who ask how they are doing, and then rush off or indicate in some other way that they have no real interest in hearing an answer to the question.

Many of us share in the guilt of asking, "how's it going?" but not really expecting an answer. In the rare cases where an answer has been given, it surprises us, and may leave us confused as to what to do.

Or maybe we are the one being asked the question. We smile and say everything is fine, because we figure that is what is expected. For many, the real answer may be far different. Too often we just scratch the surface in our interactions with one another, including our relationships with other members of the family of God. We don't reveal what is within us, or take the time and show interest in finding what is within the other person.

We don't read of Jesus being asked the night before He went to the cross, "how's it going?" But He went ahead anyway and told His disciples how He felt. "Then he said to them, 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me'" (Matthew 26:38, NIV). He doesn't put on a happy face and say everything is fine. He is hurting and He lets His three close friends, Peter, James and John, know.

The revelation of His feelings that night before the cross wasn't made to the crowd. "He did not say anything to them without using a parable" (Matthew 13:34, NIV). It was made to close friends.

People in America today often operate in just the opposite manner from Jesus. A couple of times, while

waiting for my car to be repaired, I have had what I consider the unfortunate experience of watching part of a daytime talk show. People are on national television revealing details of their private lives that I felt had no business being aired in such a manner. I'm afraid that, while sharing private matters with a public audience, they very likely lack any close friends with whom they can be open and honest and share from the heart.

An appropriate description of far too many, men in particular, would be many acquaintances, few real friends. The list of people they work with, play sports with, see at community functions and maybe even church is long. But the list is short of ones they would feel comfortable calling at three in the morning if they really needed someone to talk to. The list may be nonexistent of those who know the dreams of their heart and their deepest fears. They may have no one

to whom they have opened up their life. There may be no one who really knows them. Is there anyone who really knows you? Have you gotten past the surface in a relationship with anyone?

Many are afraid of letting anyone past the surface because of what they might find. "If they really knew you, they wouldn't like you, and they wouldn't want to be around you," is a thought the tempter sends past our mind. So we put on a front. We try to act the part and play the role, thinking that is necessary in order to be liked.

Jesus sees past the facade, and still wants us as His friend. "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8, NIV). He knows us completely, better than we know ourselves. Nothing will surprise Him, and nothing will change His desire to be in a relationship with us.

The incredible, unchanging love of Christ frees us to be real with one another. We can let others past the surface. We know sin will be found, but it's forgiven and we are cleansed by the blood of Jesus. We also know sin will be found when we get past the surface with others, but we look at them in the light of the gospel. Their sin has been paid for at the cross. They are a new creation (II Corinthians 5:17). As new creatures, and because of our relationship with Jesus, we can have new and real relationships with one another.

— Pastor Craig Johnson

*Many of us
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SOMETHING TO SHARE

Season opener

It's that time of year when we begin preparing for that special day in May: opening of the fishing season. A true fisherman finds fishing thoughts going through his or her head quite often. He or she longs for the thrill of the fight even in the cold of winter.

As a fisherman, have you ever wished the season was always open? Wouldn't it be great if whenever the water was open so was the season?

Before you call your legislator to propose this change in the law, let me caution you about what I experienced in Montana. While living along the Missouri River, I learned that there was no season opener. It was open all the time! It seemed the result was because there was no special opener, people fished less. They never made time to go out and do what they enjoyed, because they could do it any time. What a contrast that was to my early fishing days when I

could hardly get to sleep the night before the opener in anticipation of a big walleye biting out on the rocks or in the narrows.

I believe this is true spiritually also. In II Timothy 4:2 we are told that the season for souls is open all the time.

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season.

Many Christians witness when they first get saved because they are so excited about their new-found faith. But after an emotional high and a few ordinary problems to deal with, they drift into "spiritual lockjaw." Slowly the anticipation of a new soul saved begins to lose importance.

What then can we do about this problem of taking for granted a continuous open season on souls? I know no other cure than daily being in the Word so that God's urgency for souls becomes our urgency. You and I will be

preoccupied with countless things as Christians unless the Word is daily reshaping our thinking. We will mistakenly assume that we can go out and soul fish anytime because its always open. Instead we need to live in utter dependence on the Holy Spirit to empower us to be bold and to open the heart of the person. God alone can give us that urgency and keep the urgency alive to live everyday as if it were the opener.

May God bless your soul fishing.



— Pastor Lyndon Korhonen
Good Shepherd Lutheran
Cokato, Minnesota