THE LUTHERAN AUGUST 2005 AVBASSADOR

changing
unchanging
GOD The AFLC
Annual Conference

[Encouraging Word] Quest for truth

English came one after another.

her about her Creator and His

Holding out the Word of Life, I told

atya looked at me intently, her brown eyes filled with emotion and her expression unmoving. As I told her of our need for a Savior and of Jesus' sacri-

fice for our sins, the hunger in her heart was undeniable. Katva, a beautiful and intelligent young

relentless love for her. Each June hundreds of students like Katya attend Friendship English Language Camp in Petrozavodsk, Russia, where they learn about the Bible while building

friendships with their American teachers. To celebrate the 10th anniversary of this camp this summer, a record number of short-term missionaries joined in this expanding ministry. More than 55 short-term missionaries taught approximately 700 students at three different schools.

I am so thankful to be a part of this ministry. I first journeyed to Petrozavodsk in the

summer of 2001, and since then, God has kept bringing me back. Knowing that this passion comes from Him and not from myself is really humbling. What a joy it is to return each summer to familiar faces and the ever-expanding outreach.

Our curriculum, titled, "The Quest for Truth," uses apologetics to point out the truth about God and the lies of the world. The theme

verse, John 8:32, sums up my hope for Katya and the many students like her, "And you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."

As much as I want Katya to be free from the lies that keep her in bondage, I cannot make her believe. How I pray that the seed planted in Katya's life will grow in rich soil and bear fruit! Yet, God gently reminds me that it is not I who cause the growth, but Him (I Corinthians 3:7).

Knowing it is only by God's grace that He uses me for His service, I am humbled. Only a God like ours can take broken and cracked pots and use them to pour out the love of Jesus Christ. As Paul writes in Philippians 2:13, "It is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose."

I am thankful for the chance to join Him in reaching hearts with His love. Claiming God's promise that His Word will not return void, I pray that each seed planted would bear much fruit in His timing.

This summer my husband, Andy, and I are serving as team leaders with East European Missions Network. In addition to the language camps in Russia, we are helping with new ministries in Poland and Latvia, which I look forward to writing more about.

> — Monica Coyle East European Missions Network



The Coyles (at left) with students at the Friendship English Language Camp in Petrozavodsk, Russia.

woman, had been to language camp before and had heard about Jesus Christ. Yet, something was holding her back.

Later as we talked together, I began to see the lies that held her captive. Years of teachings on atheism and evolution had blinded her from the truth in God's Word. Struggling to break through the language barrier, her questions in broken

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置LUTHERANAMBASSADOR

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Passing it on

he time was June, 1967, and the place for the conference was Fargo, N.D. It was a special time of celebration for the newly organized fellowship, as the first graduates of the seminary were ordained.

Four hundred pastors and lay people were registered, representing



Robert Lee

almost 100 congregations "affiliated or in the fellowship of" the AFLC, and nine of the people were from a small rural congregation in western North Dakota. (The pastor and his wife were not in attendance. since their wedding

took place less than two weeks earlier, and they were still on their honeymoon.) Fred, Florence, Bonnie, Chet, Verdi, Lloyd, Olga, Maureen, and Mamie ... only two of them are still living, and one of the two is an AFLC pastor's wife.

When they returned to their congregation, a Sunday evening service was set aside for conference reports. Attendance was good, as usual, and at least four people who attended presented reports, one for the WMF and one for each of the business days of the conference. Each presentation was unique, and I remember Mamie (who reported for Thursday) reading the entire list of those who were on the clergy roster. All of the resolutions approved were mentioned, and the service stretched far beyond the usual hour or so. My suspicion was that this might have encouraged others to attend in the future, as it would be easier to experience the conference in four or five days than

to have it compressed into one evening!

Was your congregation represented at the annual conference this year? Anyone besides the pastor? Are those who attended from your congregation passing it on? How are they doing it? My sense is that most of the AFLC congregations during these early years felt that it was vitally important to be represented if this new association was to survive and thrive, and that there was a strong sense of ownership. Math is not my strong suit, but it looks to me like the average representation in 1967 was four people per congregation; this year it was less than two.

Let me offer these suggestions:

- Consider including a line item in your annual church budget to send at least one lay person to the conference, if you haven't done so. (Help your pastor to attend, too, of course.) You may call him/her a "delegate," in the sense that they are responsible to report to your congregation afterward, but be sure to emphasize that all members of our congregations are welcome to attend. The AFLC will probably survive, but I don't think that we will truly thrive as a spiritual movement if representation at the conferences is not strong.
- Prepare. Plan for a time prior to the conference for those to gather who plan to attend. The conference booklets are available in advance, and you may want to use these to acquaint people with the procedures as well as the issues that might arise. (Some have requested copies of the PowerPoint presentation that is used on the first morning of the conference ... "AFLC 101," said one of our Illinois members.) Pray.

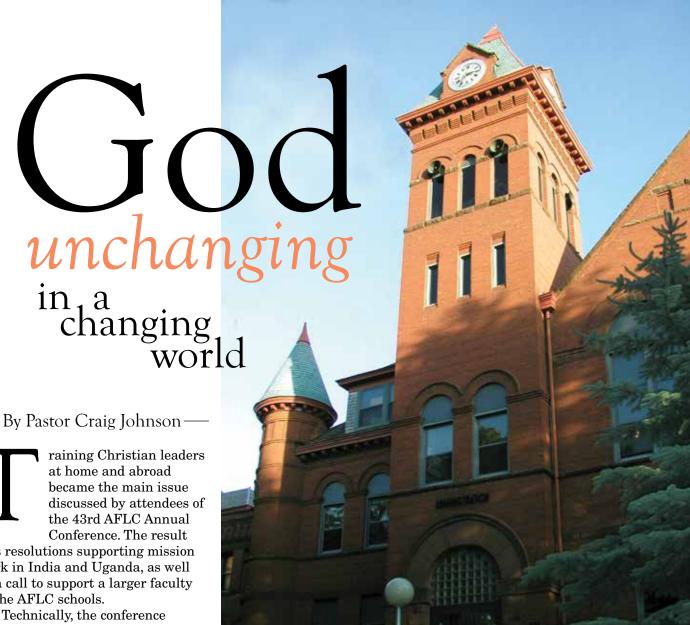


Our President Writes

Pastor Ron and Doris Pulscher, Bagley, Minn., visit displays at the Annual Conference.

• Schedule a special time for conference reporting. Ten minutes on Sunday morning won't do it, and a page in the church newsletter is not enough. Perhaps an adult Sunday school hour might be workable: a Sunday or midweek evening meeting would even be better. Stress the importance of every member of your congregation needing to be better informed about our AFLC. Serve lunch.

The AFLC is designed to be a spiritual movement, with the goal of encouraging the building of free and living congregations. We reject representational government, and yet our conviction is that it is important for every congregation to be represented at the annual conferences. Let us prayerfully work together and encourage one another to make this a reality.



From June 14-17, more than 400 lay men and women and pastors met on the campus of Valley City State University, Valley City, N.D., for the 43rd AFLC Annual Conference.

was resolutions supporting mission work in India and Uganda, as well as a call to support a larger faculty at the AFLC schools.

Technically, the conference began on the evening of June 14 in Valley City, N.D. For the host congregations of Grace Free Lutheran and Zion Free Lutheran of Valley City, and for AFLC staff and committees, however, planning and preparing for the conference began months in advance.

A day before the conference, the AFLC Commission on Evangelism hosted "Rekindling the Fire," an event for pastors and their wives. Dr. Stephen Goold, pastor at Crystal Evangelical Free Church of New Hope, Minn., spoke three times

during the day, encouraging pastors to remember their call to the ministry, to recommit themselves to sharing the Word of God with people, and to renew the home front by caring

for their families.

Sharing a cappella music during the evangelism event was the Light Springs Singers. The group consists of four brothers and sisters, original-



Amy Dalager, Argyle, Minn., talks with her sister, Karina Olson, Eden Prairie, Minn., and friend Jen Dryburgh, Grafton, N.D.



Pastor Rodney Johnson, Stanley, N.D., chats with Pastor Tim Hinrichs, an AFLC missionary on loan to East European Missions Network and working in Poland.

Renewing the vision for free and living Lutheran congregations

ly from the Ukraine, but now living and ministering in the United States for the last five years.

June 14

The Women's Missionary Federation met with the theme, "Who is God but the Lord" (II Samuel 22:32). See pages 12-13 for a report. Also meeting were five committees, whose members read the reports of the applicable departments and worked to prepare resolutions to share with the conference. Members of the nominating committee met to continue with their work for the conference, and other boards used the time to gather and conduct business.

The conference itself began with an opening service in the evening with Holy Communion. Pastor Peter Franz brought the message on the conference text, Isaiah 40:8. The theme of the conference taken from the text was, "Unchanging Truth in

a Changing World." Pastor Franz shared how God's Word hasn't changed, our sin pays wages, and our Savior provides mercy. He told those in attendance they should each have this attitude, "I'm a great sinner, but Christ is a great Savior. May we be faithful in sharing that unchanging truth."

June 15

The business sessions of the conference began with a presentation on the uniqueness of the AFLC structure, discussing how the various boards, committees and corporations function and relate to the congregations. Also discussed was the purpose of the annual conference. Pastor Robert Lee, AFLC President, led the sessions and spoke of how the conference is to be a "spiritual powerhouse," a time of spiritual renewal and renewing the vision for free and living Lutheran congregations.

The various officers and departments of the AFLC shared reports on things happening within their area of the work. In his report, Pastor Lee stated, "The world would try to convince us that change is the only real constant, and even within church circles one hears the ancient lie that there is no absolute truth. ... There is solid ground on which to stand. It is the Word of God."

A draft statement, prepared by the AFLC President and Coordinating Committee explaining the Scriptural basis for why the AFLC does not ordain women to the pastoral ministry, received a resolution of support from the conference, which expressed the need for such a statement. The resolution directs the Coordinating Committee to present a final draft to the 2006 Annual Conference.

Pastor Ken Moland, chairman of the Coordinating Committee, reported that 10 congregations had been



"The grass withers and the flowers fall ...

welcomed into the AFLC during the past year: Ebenezer Lutheran, Humboldt, Tenn.; Salem Lutheran of Oxford, North Branch, Minn.; West Prairie Lutheran, Kindred, N.D.; St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran, Gifford, Ill.; St. Peter Lutheran, Melvin, Ill.; Egeland Lutheran, Waubay, S.D.; Peace Lutheran, Crescent City, Fla.; Messiah Lutheran, Champaign, Ill.; St. Timothy Lutheran, Redding, Calif.; and Trinity Lutheran, Bastrop, Texas. Three congregations left the congregational roster.

Eric Westlake, director of the Association Retreat Center in Osceola, Wis., for the past 10 years, recently accepted a call to serve as lay pastor at Our Savior's Free Lutheran in Zumbrota, Minn. He introduced to the conference his successor as ARC Director, Pat Flanders. See page 9.

Gene Quist shared on behalf of a task force that had been formed during the past year to study ministry to senior citizens. The number of people in that age bracket has increased a great deal in recent years throughout the world. In considering that, the task force is looking for 30 congregations in the AFLC to use a senior ministry inventory published by Church Resources, Inc. For more information, contact Quist at heq@mylifeline.net or call (952) 835-3768. See page 21 for a news note.

June 16

Pastor Phil Haugen, chairman of the Board of Parish Education, expressed thanks for the way people responded to the financial needs of Parish Education during the past year. Haugen shared some of the reprinting needs that exist and the costs involved.

Luther's Small Catechism
Explained will need to be reprinted by 2006. The board is looking at doing some updating to the cate-



ABOVE: Eldwyn VanBruggen, Valley City, gets a ride in the golf cart from Gary Retterath, a member of host congregation Grace Free Lutheran.

LEFT: Pam Olson takes questions from the audience following a presentation on her family's nine-month sabbatical in Tanzania.

chism in format but not in content and seeks comments from congregations by the end of the year.

Funding is needed to print new preschool curriculum. Several gifts were received at conference, but an additional \$5,800 is needed by August 15 in order to have the first quarter student materials printed in time for fall Sunday schools.

For a more comprehensive list of other Parish Education printing needs, contact Parish Education at (763) 545-5631.

AFLC Youth Ministries Director Pastor Kevin Olson, who recently returned from a nine-month sabbatical in Tanzania with his family, shared about his time on the mission field and the needs that exist. He and his family shared more details about their experiences during a conference dinner on the evening of June 17.

Prior to the conference, members of the AFLC Youth Board had stated







FAR LEFT: George and Chris Lautner, members of Ruthfred Lutheran, Bethel Park, Pa., look for t-shirts designed for the July FLY convention in Estes Park, Colo.

TOP LEFT: Melissa Wolla and Katrina Zeltinger, both of host congregation Grace Free Lutheran, Valley City, get crafting materials ready for vacation Bible school.

BOTTOM LEFT: Pastor David Hinrichs, Ortonville, Minn., and Pastor David Wold, Pipestone, Minn., chat during one of the conference breaks.

but the word of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:8).

that they would reluctantly have to reduce the position of youth ministries director from full-time to three-quarter time because of financial concerns. They reported at the conference that recent gifts made it possible for them to keep the position at full-time. The situation will be reviewed at the end of the year and the position will be maintained at full-time if the financial situation permits.

David Bjornson, chairman of the AFLC Stewardship Board, shared about the board's interest in developing congregational communicators, individuals in each congregation who could share with their congregation about needs in the AFLC. For more information, contact Bjornson at david.biornson@thrivent.com or call (701) 845-2894.

In the reports regarding the AFLC's seminary and Bible school, thanks were expressed for the work God is doing. Dr. Francis Monseth, seminary dean, stated, "We stand in awe of what our great and gracious God has done and is doing through His Word and by His Spirit." Positive reports were shared about an increased number of students planning to attend the schools in the fall.

Dr. Dan Mundfrom, chairman of the AFLC Schools' Board of Trustees, announced that a permit had just been received to begin construction on a second seminary-housing unit. Construction is possible due to recent designated gifts. Upon completion of the units, four more seminary student families will be able to live on campus, doubling the current available housing.

Regarding buildings on campus, a list of needed maintenance, repairs and upkeep to buildings and grounds is steadily growing. Mundfrom attributed this in part to the 3 to 5 percent of tuition and fees that

go uncollected each year. Congregations were encouraged to come alongside students who struggle to meet their financial obligations by helping them pay their bills.

June 17

On the last day of the conference, the discussion turned to the topic of missions. Information was shared about the AFLC's work in the nations of Brazil, India, Mexico and the continent of Africa. The conference passed a resolution supporting future mission work in Uganda. The Lutheran church in Uganda has requested help and partnership in their work. Legacies have been received to assist with the costs involved in the start of a new work. Seminarian Nate and Rhoda Jore have felt a call of God to go to the mission field in Africa. The conference resolved to "thank God for this

[The AFLC Annual Conference]









Pat Flanders and his family have recently taken over as director of the Association Retreat Center in Osceola, Wis. OPPOSITE PAGE TOP: Youths had organized sessions as well, including Bible study, worship and games. LEFT: Kids from throughout the AFLC met for vacation Bible school, where they created many craft projects, RIGHT: Pastor Jim Johnson, AFLBS dean, and Pastor Steve Carlson, Dalton, Minn., chat.



Cris Finstrom and Larry Swenson, both of Glyndon, Minn., take advantage of a break from business to chat in the auditorium.

Resolution on term limits was tabled indefinitely

open door and establish a mission work in Uganda as soon as possible" and to "pray for Nate and Rhoda Jore as they prepare for this work." The Jores recently began a year of seminary internship in Minot, N.D.

In the area of Home Missions, information on the joys and challenges being experienced by various home mission congregations across the U.S. was shared. People were encouraged to contact the Home Missions office to receive the prayer e-mail updates. Plans are being developed for a training time in August for people from home missions congregations.

A resolution was passed regarding the need for home mission pastors and missionaries. The mission committees were encouraged to consider target areas for future work and possible job descriptions for the ones needed for serving in those areas.

The director of FLAPS, Lavon

Bohling, shared about the 85 households that are part of the resource pool mailing list that has been developed. Teams of volunteers have been involved in various maintenance and building projects in the past and they are looking for information on future project needs and ways they can share their time and talents.

A discussion was held regarding evangelism on college campuses. Pastor Elden Nelson told of a man who volunteered his time to mentor and take an interest in his college-student-son. People were encouraged to consider ways they could be involved in the lives of college students in their community.

A resolution on term limits for the executive offices, proposed at last year's annual conference and open for action by the conference in 2005, was tabled indefinitely. Jon Dryburgh, Grafton, N.D., who initially proposed the resolution in 2004,

offered to withdraw the resolution, stating that he did not wish for the issue to become divisive. He quoted from Ecclesiastes 3:1, "There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven."

There were 445 people who registered for and attended the conference. The business sessions ended by 3:30 p.m., which is believed to be the earliest closing in conference history.

The 2006 Annual Conference will be held in Stanwood, Wash. Invitations for conferences in 2007 and 2008 were received from the AFLC congregations in Fergus Falls, Minn., and Oklahoma City.

The conference concluded in the evening with a worship service, at which three seminary graduates were ordained into the pastoral ministry: Wayne Olson, Craig Scavo and Calvin Willard. See page 21.







Pastor Elden Nelson, Rockford, Minn. (1 year)

Secretary

Pastor Brian Davidson, Hopkins, Minn. (1 year)

Coordinating Committee

Tim Berntson, Valley City, N.D. (5 years)

AFLC Schools Board of Trustees

Pastor Jon Wellumson, Williston, N.D. (5 years)

ARC Board

No current results

Stewardship Board

Pastor Greg Schram, Northwood, N.D. (5 years)

Youth Board

Pastor Alan Arneson, Fosston, Minn. (5 years)

World Missions Committee

Tom Caouette, Brooklyn Park, Minn. (5 years)

FLAPS Board of Managers

Eldwyn VanBruggen, Valley City, N.D. (5 years)

Commission on Evangelism

Pastor Michael Brandt, Sioux Falls, S.D. (5 years)

Board of Publications and Parish Education

Pastor John Mundfrom, Eugene, Ore. (5 years)

Home Missions Committee

Pastor Dale Finstrom, Glyndon, Minn. (5 years)

Board of Pensions

Pastor Larry Haagenson, Loveland, Colo. (5 years)

10 THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR



Schools Corporation (5-year terms)

Loiell Dyrud, Thief River Falls, Minn.
Bonnie Handsacker, Radcliffe, Iowa
Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, Cokato, Minn.
Michael McCarlson, Webster, S.D.
Michele Mobley, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Pastor Ken Moland, Kirkland, Wash.
Pastor Brent Olson, Bethel Park, Pa.
Pastor Rodger Olson, Tioga, N.D.
Brent Peterson, Valley City, N.D.
Wendy Westlake, Zumbrota, Minn.

ARC Corporation (5-year terms)

A quorum was not reached at the Annual Conference. Corporation members are currently voting by mail. Results will be printed as soon as the votes are received.

Nominating Committee

Ivar Berge, Fargo, N.D. — Eastern North Dakota Jerome Rice, Tioga, N.D. — Western ND-Eastern Montana Paul Kneeland, Sioux Falls, S.D. — South Dakota Ken Sletton, Duluth, Minn. — Lake Superior Loiell Dyrud, Thief River Falls, N.D. — Northwestern Minnesota

Pastor Tim Johnson, Fertile, Minn. — North Central Minnesota

John Halvorson, Dalton, Minn. — Southwest Central Minnesota

Layne Hoops, Deshler, Neb. — Nebraska-Colorado Pastor Phil Haugen, Crystal, Minn. — Minneapolis Wayne Walker, Kenyon, Minn. — Central Tri-State Pastor Tom Schierkolk, Eben Junction, Mich. — Northern Michigan

Karl Busse, Humbolt, Tenn. — South Central John Rowan, Mesa, Ariz. — Southwestern Lois Forde, Lake Stevens, Wash. — Pacific Northwest George Lautner, Bethel Park, Pa. — Eastern John Talley, Newark, Ill. — Illinois



ABOVE: Pastor LeRoy Flickinger, Badger, Minn., and Sharon Tungseth, Fergus Falls, Minn., help count ballots.

LEFT: Pastor Terry Olson casts a ballot for one of the corporations during the business meeting on Wednesday.

2006 CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

Committee No. 1 Administration

Myron Compton, Beulah, N.D. Pastor Wayne Hjermstad, Bruce, S.D. Wes Kunz, Northwood, N.D. Pastor James Molstre, Bethel Park, Pa. Kermit Nash, Rogers, Minn.

Committee No. 2 Schools

Pastor Orville Hiepler, Fallbrook, Calif. Dale Lankford, Mount Vernon, Wash. Bill Minor, Canal Winchester, Ohio Pastor Gerald Peterson, Oklahoma City, Okla. Kay Stebner, Spanaway, Wash.

Committee No. 3 Missions and Evangelism

Marlin Benrud, Goodhue, Minn. Solveig Hjermstad, Bruce, S.D. Pastor Herb Hoff, Salinas, Calif. Pastor Joseph Schultz, Buckley, Wash. Art Wilson, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Committee No. 4 Pub., Parish Ed & Youth

Bill Fish, Everett, Wash. Pastor Ken Hart, Greenbush, Minn. Pastor Rick Larson, Fairbury, Neb. Julie McCarlson, Webster, S.D. Joy Hoff, Anoka, Minn. Nadine Compton, Beulah, N.D.

Committee No. 5 Stewardship & Pensions

Ray Cuthbert, Bethel Park, Pa. Tom Johnston, Bloomington, Minn. Pastor Joel Lohafer, Ferndale, Wash. Vern Russum, Grafton, N.D. Pastor Tim Skramstad, Eagan, Minn.

Missions Corp. (5-year terms)

Wendell Berg, Mayville, N.D. Dr. Peter Dyrud, Plymouth, Minn. Pastor Dale Finstrom, Glyndon, Minn. Gene Finstrom, Buxton, N.D. Arley Hartsoch, Ray, N.D. Pastor David Hinrichs, Ortonville, Minn. Mark S. Johnson, Albertville, Minn. Ron Jorgenson, Beulah, N.D. Pastor Ted Kennedy, Nogales, Ariz. Glen Larson, Fosston, Minn.

Dr. Lyle Mattson, Greenbush, Minn. Pastor David Nelson, Wheatland, Iowa Pastor Kris Nyman, Beulah, N.D. Kevin Olson, Eden Prairie, Minn. Linda Peterson, Beresford, S.D. Ralph Peterson, Portland, N.D. Greg Schmitke, Glyndon, Minn. Dr. Wayne Sletten, Faith, S.D. Loren Tungseth, Fergus Falls, Minn. Eunice Will, Springfield, Mo.



By Lorilee Mundfrom —

II Samuel 22:32

he 43rd annual convention of the AFLC Women's Missionary Federation met June 14 at Valley City State University, Valley City, N.D. Host congregations were Grace Free Lutheran and Zion Free Lutheran churches. An instrumental ensemble from St. Paul's Free Lutheran Church, Fargo, N.D., led our praise and worship, while Mary Ann Berntson welcomed us to Valley City.

Carolyn Dyrud, missionary to Brazil, led morning devotions and the memorial service that followed. Carolyn's husband, Pastor Connely Dyrud, led the Bible study on our theme verse, asking, "Who is our Rock?" It is Jesus, our hope and strength, whose way is perfect.

National WMF President Cheryl Skordahl led the business meeting after an offering was received for Home Missions, World Missions and the WMF general fund. Her annual report was accepted and the remaining portion of the WMF constitution was ratified by a majority vote.

Molly Wiesen, Grafton, N.D., was elected second vice president, and Lynn Wellumson, Williston, N.D., was re-elected treasurer.

During the noon luncheon, outgoing Second Vice President Barbara Gustafson, Beulah, N.D., was honored for her years of service. The women in attendance heard a mother-daughter duet sung by Mary Ann and Sarah Rolf of Valley City. Linda Papillon, Wadena, Minn., and Sharon Keranen, Sebeka, Minn., presented the skit, "The Garment of Praise for the Spirit of Despair." Renata Hinrichs, missionary to Poland, spoke about the Bible school program she and her husband, Tim, have started there, giving clear evidence of her compassion for their students and her devotion to Jesus.

Times of learning and challenge came during the afternoon workshops on several topics: "Reclaiming your Godly Position," with Pastor Steve Heilmann; "Reclaiming the Tongue," with Pat Lewis; "Reclaiming the Times," with Dr. John Eidsmoe; and "Reclaiming the Vision for Missions," with Vicki Johnson.

The evening banquet program included Pam Olson, speaking about her family's recent experience in Tanzania, and Linda Mohagen, who presented a charming ventriloquist skit. WMF Women's Outreach Coordinator Faylin Myhre, spoke about the "stones" that help us remember what the Lord has done for us. Following her message, AFLC President Robert Lee presided at the installation of officers.

The Mission Festival service on June 15 opened with music led by the St. Paul's Instrumental Ensemble and a vocal solo by Barbara Gustafson. Pastor Tim Hinrichs, missionary to Poland, spoke about their work at the Bible school, noting that the Word of God proclaims Jesus as the only way to salvation. While Jesus is an obstacle for some, they cannot run away from the Rock. But for Christians, Jesus — the Lord, our Rock — is a source of refuge and strength. Pastor Joel Rolf, Valley City, N.D., closed the ser-

Mundfrom is the first vice president of the WMF and a member of Spencer Creek Lutheran, Eugene, Ore.



14 THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

Share Advice on growing a church good news

— By Pastor Orville Hiepler —

ongregations grow and flourish when people generously share the good news that God loves us in Christ Jesus. Yet it appears to me that frequently and unintentionally we hide and hoard the good news rather than share and broadcast it.

One of the most sorrowful days in our lives was the death of a seven-year-old congregation that we assisted in giving a happy and vibrant birth. Satan will fight our every effort to spread the good news.

It has been fun to have a part in starting seven new churches. Exciting things have happened. We have had the opportunity to direct church and school building programs through our ministry.

Ron, who lives on my street and belongs to my golf club, told me recently that he'd be the first one on my list of people interested in a new church that we hope to start in a few months. He wants to renew his Lutheran roots from the days he lived in North Dakota. This kind of list has expanded also by new visitors, new Sunday school members, marriages, baptisms, and service club contacts. In my experience, door-to-door visitations build this list the most rapidly. Two hundred and fifty families were added to this list in a five-month period by pastoral calling.

Here's two recent happenings to illustrate how this list can grow: A young lady happened to sit in our row on the plane to Minneapolis. Now she and her fiancé are in my pre-marital/adult inquiry class becoming members soon. Second, through a phone call from a man announcing he had cancer. He and his wife are receiving counseling and membership instruction at the same time.

What else can you do with this list of prospective members? Martin Luther said, "Pray as if all depends on prayer, and work as if all depends on work." This includes sending letters to church visitors, visits by the pastor and church members, and phone calls.

Overcome attitudes like: "I'm too busy and it won't work here," or, "Door-to-door is for the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons," or, "I need to spend evenings in family time, don't I?" or, "The Holy Spirit will bring who He wants."

To make home calls successful, know you are in God's will by reading His Word in places like Colossians 1:20 and Romans 10:9-10. Share an attractive, up-to-date and informational brochure with people you visit. Emphasize things happening in the congregation such as a children's object lesson, a testimony being shared, some special music and the sermon theme. Give a positive witness about Christ and the church. Also offer people a ride, sit together in church and have lunch afterward.

Remember, the rewards are great. Angels in heaven rejoice over one sinner who repents. One of our laymen told me, "Last Sunday was the highlight in my entire 55 years when Tom and his wife knelt at the altar and promised to serve Jesus and the church the rest of their lives." Why? Because he was the first churchman to ever call at their home. Our efforts and time are rewarded when we see the effectiveness of the good news.

Hiepler lives in Fallbrook, Calif.

Seeing people as more than just a step in ministry

Seize than just a step in minis

By Pastor Tim Hinrichs ——

hat are you going to be when you grow up? This may sound very childlike, but for many of us this is our daily perspective in life. In teaching Bible school students year after year, I've been asked by many students, "What next?"

The future looms ahead! But at the same time I find myself secretly thinking the same thoughts: "When will I arrive?" "When will I finally be doing something that matters?" This is especially true in light of ministry. We push toward some kind of vision of the future and some wonderful goal or dream and live for that.

I know I spend a lot of my time living in light of the past or else in preparation for the future. I often think in light of Romans 8:28: "All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purposes." It seems like such a good excuse for the terrible days and moments we go through. When things go wrong, I can look at it and say, "It's all preparing me for the future, so that I can do something great for the Lord." It also helps me see that every meeting, every relationship, and every phone call is a step toward the bigger purpose God has for me.

I used to work at a Christian drug and alcoholic treatment center in Minneapolis during two years of seminary. "It's good experience and will prepare me for future ministry," I would often think. The same was the case with the obligatory nursing home training we had my last year of seminary. Now, I'm not saying that it didn't bless me and that I didn't have great opportunities to minister to others, but the problem was that it was all focused on the future. I didn't see that *now* and *today* is the most important thing. There are so many people I remember who passed through my door and I didn't think of their needs as a high priority because they didn't happen to be "on my schedule" for the day or fit into my future plans. Or people simply became stepping-stones for what I thought was something much bigger

Recently I discovered a book by Keith Miller, which was buried in our CME library among the English books. He writes these profound words about living in the pres-

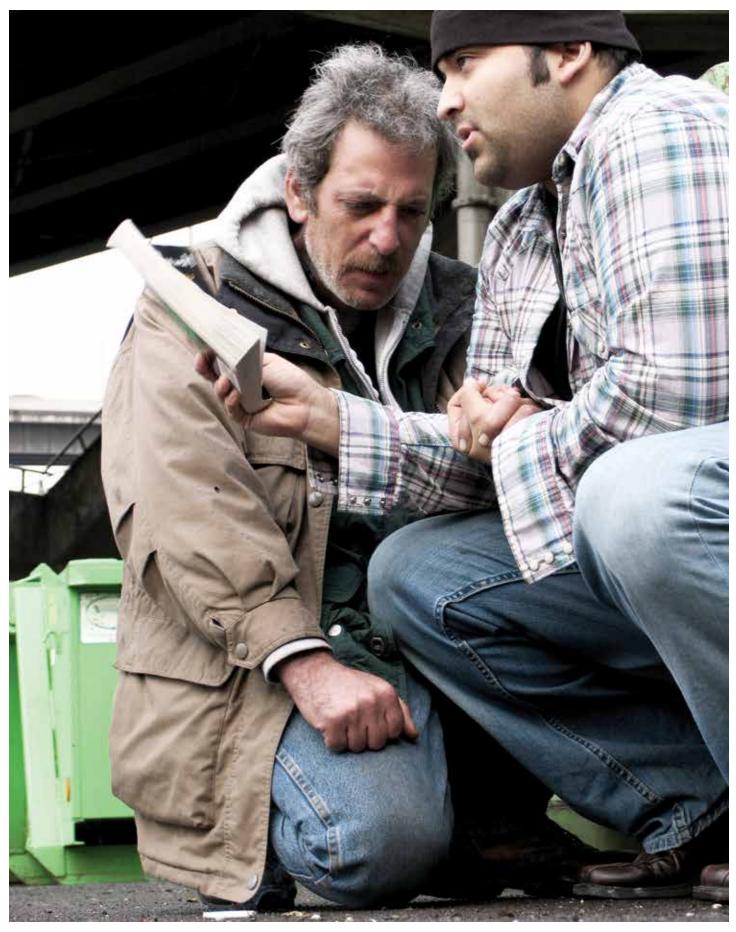
ent: "[Changing] the focus of my attention to the immediate events of the moment as the important events — from God's perspective — made me realize that all of my background and training were not a kind of 'practicing' preparing me for some big public Christian position sometime in the future. ... I now began to see that all my past was training me for the events and encounters of *this day*, however insignificant this day may seem from my perspective."

This idea is a great challenge for me, but I see it as the key to being a follower of Christ. The Lord trains us throughout our lives, not just for a few years like the disciples. In some ways I never really "arrive" at the Lord's ideal until I'm taken to be with Him. But at the same time, during all of these training experiences of life, I come across real people with real problems, needs or hurts. So I have to ask the question: Do I just treat this person as a training tool along the way? Or do I see one person as the goal of all the training the Lord has given me up to this day? If I take that challenge, then I begin to see how extremely precious people are and how many divine appointments I have missed along the way.

It's not just dealing with the needs and problems of people, either. It's celebrating life together with others. Do I celebrate the relationship I have with this one person when we meet today at lunch? Or is it quick small talk on the way to another more important event of the day?

These are definitely challenging questions, but I think that Jesus wants us to see that the people around us are divine appointments and not steps along the way or bothersome distractions to the *real* ministry. Today is the most important day of my life. I can never repeat it or relive it. *Everything God has put me through in my life is all for this day*. Will I miss out on the great opportunity before me when I shake that hand or receive that phone call? As the phrase goes: Seize the day!

Hinrichs and his wife, Renata, are AFLC missionaries on loan to East European Missions Network in Poland.



[Chaplaincy]

sen. Sings my Soul

My heart is steadfast, O God; I will sing and make music with all my soul.

Psalm 108:1

n many ways, it feels like my life has been one long song. Blessed with a natural love for music that was watered and fed by my mother, I grew up with an appreciation for many kinds of music. I began to play piano by ear before I started first grade, and recall composing songs as a boy. These were no classics, mind you, but they told stories — stories of the life and imagination of boyhood.

My brother, Bob, and I were adopted into a Christian home. It was there and in our country church that we heard and sang the songs and hymns of the faith. My mother played piano at church for more than 20 years, and soloists being in short supply, she would coax me into singing. While I didn't know Jesus in a personal way for most of my young years (no fault of my parents), I began to memorize many gospel songs and hymns. Following my conversion just after high school, they took on new significance.

Scripture is full of references to the power and influence of music on the soul. In the Psalms alone, reference is made to tambourines, stringed instruments, cymbals, harps, flutes. Music is referred to 87 times. Instructions are given to sing to such tunes as "The Lilies of the Covenant" (Psalm 80:1), "Do Not Destroy" (Psalm 75:1), "Lilies" (Psalm 69:1), and "A Dove on Distant Oaks" (Psalm 56:1). In Ephesians 5:19 we are encouraged to "speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord."

Throughout my years in the parish I saw how powerful music could speak to people's souls. It might be something familiar played. Maybe it was a solo, choir number or such. It might be during or at the end of the service. Many a soul is heaven bound today because of the call to the heart carried on the wings of song.

Ministering for the Lord as a chaplain these past 12 years I have found a wonderful door into

the lives of those I have the privilege of visiting. I sing a lot and have become known in the hospital as the "Singing Chaplain." Over and over again I find that patients have one or more favorite hymns. For most, there is a story. I share one with permission.

While I was a hospice chaplain here, I visited a patient in her 80s who was dying of cancer. She loved the Lord. I asked her if she had a favorite hymn and she said it was "What a Friend We Have In Jesus." When asked if there was a story behind that, she told of the time when, as an 11-year-old girl, her community was hit by an epidemic of scarlet fever. Her entire family became ill, but only her 5-year-old brother, with whom she shared a room, died. During the days prior to his death, she said the only way he could sleep was if she sang this hymn to him.

I doubt she had shared this story with anyone else. Singing a hymn provided her with the chance to talk about her brother and how this affected her as a young girl. Jesus remained a true and unfailing friend for the rest of her life.

When asked to sing, "Amazing Grace," or, "It Is Well with My Soul," I'll often ask, "Would you like to know the story behind this song?" Many are the opportunities to share the message of God's unfailing grace in a non-threatening way. Often this comes at the crossroads between life and death, when hearts are open and receptive. Sometimes staff will page me and ask if I will sing for a particular patient.

My soul and my voice continue to sing for Jesus, and I am so thankful for every day of opportunity He provides in my place of worship called Altru Hospital. To God be the glory.

 By Chaplain John Rieth Grand Forks, N.D.

buildin God's church

By Pastor Oséias Câmara-

ew Hope for Village C," that was the title of an article published by the city of Foz do Iguaçu, outlining proposals to better the quality of life in one of the city's districts with a population of 15,000. The proposals are part of a project called Energy Solidarity, which envisions Village C transformed into an example of efficiency for the rest of the city. The project aims to restore the historical value of the district as well as to make improvements in the areas of public health, safety, ser-

All of these proposals for Village C are fine and well, but they do not address the most important thing, the blessings that come through the gospel of Christ. While the politicians are taking action so that Village C residents can have a better quality of life, the Free Lutheran Church of Foz do Iguaçu is working so that these people can know Him, the One who can truly change anyone's life through Jesus.

vices, recreation and general education.

The AFLC church in Foz do Iguaçu has launched its own project, called Primavera. It was born out of a concern for the growth of the church and has been made possible through the help of brothers and sisters in Christ from the AFLC in the United States.

The Primavera project has made possible the building of a chapel in Village C, where people can come to worship the Lord in song and hear the blessed, eternal gospel message. The chapel was built in record time. We are already seeing fruit of the seed sown. People are being converted to Christ.

We want to praise the Lord for the initiative of those brothers and sisters in Christ at Trinity Free Lutheran in Janesville, Wis. They have been tools in the hands of God to bring about the realization of a dream of the AFLC in Brazil.

Through the Primavera project, it has been possible to reach another Brazilian city called Londrina. A year ago a new chapel was built and is also reaping a harvest of fruit in the Lord's work. Our prayers are that Primavera would continue to be a blessing here in Brazil. There are still many places needing a chapel, people needing the Lord, and spiritual needs to be met. We are certain that with the continuation of Primavera, these needs will be met.

When thinking about Primavera, a passage about Elijah comes to mind. There was a period of three and one-half years

World Missions



Members of Trinity Free Lutheran, Janesville, Wis., present a check for \$10,000 to Brazilian missionary Pastor Connely Dyrud for the Primavera project.

reme challenge

here is a wonderful program on TV called, "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition." A group of homebuilders, designers and volunteers come to a physically challenged or needy family and literally redo their home in such a way that allows the family to cope with their difficulty. Many times they completely tear the existing home down and literally build a new home in just seven days.

Last January, we at Trinity Free Lutheran in Janesville, Wis., had the privilege of having Brazilian missionaries Pastor Connely and Carolyn Dyrud in our church for an International Festival weekend. While meeting with our church council and congregation, they challenged us with an extreme makeover of missions work in Brazil. They are working toward the goal of developing, establishing and building 40 churches before the year 2019. It's called the Primavera Project.

The project begins when a group of believers sense the calling to develop a church in their home area. With the help of our missionaries and mission board, they hire a contractor who will build a chapel to seat about 100 souls for \$10,000.

We were challenged. The members on our

See CHALLENGE, page 21

Illinois church founded in 1872

t. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Melvin, Ill., was organized on Oct. 20, 1872, as the German Evangelical Church. It consisted of 15 families and the pastor, the Rev. Simon Suess. These members erected a building in the spring of 1873, which housed both the sanctuary and the parsonage. It was valued at \$1,100.

Growth of the congregation required a new and larger building by 1888. This second building, with several additions and modifications, served the congregation for 79 years.

Toward the end of the 1800s St. Peter's began its association with the Lutheran congregations in Germanville and Roberts. The Germanville Lutherans later affiliated with those in Chatsworth, but cooperation with those in Roberts continued

until after our first vote to leave the ELCA in September 2004.

Until 1913, the services were held exclusively in German. As the years passed the German language was used less frequently, eventually being replaced altogether by English.

The second parsonage was erected about 1915. Three years later the church received its first electrical wiring, and the parsonage was wired in 1921. About this time, the congregation provided the pastor, Rev. Wilhelm Schumacher, with a Model T with which to make his rounds.

The third building was dedicated on Sept. 10, 1967, just prior to the



St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Melvin, III.

congregation's celebration of its 95th anniversary. Our present parsonage was completed in 1979 and is located next to the church.

Our congregation consists of 113 baptized and 100 confirmed members. Pastor Jan Horne serves the congregation on an interim basis.

By Virgil Rueck

One year later, California congregation is growing

In the spring of 2004 a small group of Lutherans met to discuss the possibility of starting a new Lutheran congregation with a goal of returning to a more traditional and spiritual atmosphere.

We immediately realized we faced many problems. How could we afford a meeting place and a pastor? Were we all in accord on a more traditional service and a more spiritual atmosphere? Could we attract members from the community? All had a Missouri Synod background. Would the synod accept us?

We asked for a resolution from the Circuit and the District. When our problems were not resolved, we met to pray and to plan. Two lay assistant ministers were available. They were asked to shepherd the flock, free of charge, until the new church could get started. This, we found, meant severing connections with the Missouri Synod. After some research, we found some information about the AFLC.

An affordable meeting room was found. Through individual contributions, a local business, and a church in a nearby community, we

obtained needed items. The name St. Timothy was selected. It was agreed that from the start there would be a Bible study every week. Don Duff and Mel Trotter were called as pastors. On July 11, 2004, the first service was held. Average attendance for the first month was 17.

A year has passed. Average attendance is 34, and growing. We are now able to pay our pastors a small salary. There have been as many as 15 youths attending services. There is a regular outreach to a community service that feeds the



St. Timothy Lutheran, Redding, Calif.

needy. We have had our first baptism and first funeral. We are solvent and have started a building fund because we will soon need a larger meeting room.

God has treated us with great goodness. Through His people, He has provided us with the material things we needed to meet in His name. He has also provided us with the gifts of the Spirit we so badly wanted. Thank you, dear God, in the name of your precious son, Jesus Christ.

— Alice Kabanuk



Construction on a new seminary housing unit on the AFLC's campus in Plymouth, Minn., began on June 27. Originally planned for occupation in September, the unit is now scheduled for completion in October.

CHALLENGE, from page 19

council were challenged. Trinity Free Lutheran has a beautiful place to worship, a place to sing praises to our God, a place to hear the Word of God preached in all its fullness and a place where we can reach our community. We began to wonder, could we help one of these groups put up a church building where they could sing, praise God and reach their community?

It seemed like an impossible task. We know that our God is the God of the impossible. Could He use us? Could He help us raise \$10,000?

A challenge was given to the congregation to begin receiving funds during our Lenten services and the Easter season. We challenged our congregation with this simple request:

"We need six people each who will give \$1,000, \$500, \$100, \$50, and \$25."

In all, we needed 30 people. If everyone was willing to give, we would more than meet the goal.

Members accepted this opportunity. Everyone became involved

and everyone gave according to what God had laid on his or her heart to give. We began to receive funds on Feb. 9, and concluded on April 24. On June 5, we were very pleased to present a check for \$10,000 to Connely Dyrud.

May God receive all the glory as a result of the Holy Spirit moving the hearts of our people at Trinity!

Now there will be one more place where Brazilian Christians can sing praises to God, where the Word of God will be shared and where souls will be saved. It will be a place where men and women, boys and girls, will come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Your church can adopt this challenge, and you, too, can be a part of building a church home in Brazil. It's a small price to pay, especially if through these gifts, souls will be given the opportunity to enter the kingdom of God. Will you join Trinity in helping to build the spiritual future of Brazil?



Pastor Craig Scavo, Pastor Wayne Olson and Pastor Cal Willard were ordained at the closing service of the AFLC Annual Conference.

Sign up for senior ministry inventory

After all the pleas at the Annual Conference to get congregations to sign up to learn more about the Senior Ministry Inventory, I lost the list! If you signed the list on the yellow pad at the Senior Ministry booth in room 118, send me an email at heq@mylifeline.net so I can reconstruct the list. If you don't have access to email, my phone number is (952) 835-3786. I will have information about future plans to you by the end of August.

— Gene Quist

PRIMAVERA, from page 19

with no rain. According to Scripture, a small cloud the size of a hand was seen. This small cloud grew until it became a great cloud sending torrents of water to quench the thirst of the parched, dry ground. Likewise, Primavera began small, but with the passing of time it has grown. We are certain that great showers of blessing will rain down upon us here in Brazil. We praise the Lord and desire His blessing upon all who have contributed in small or large ways toward the realization of this project. Glory be to God!

"They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light" (Psalm 36:8-9).

Câmara is administrator of the AFLC Brazil Bible school and seminary in Campo Mourao.

Help AFLC Brazil celebrate 40 years

Deadline is September 30

L's not too late to register for the Brazil 2006 mission trip! This visit, planned in conjunction with 40th anniversary of the AFLC work in Brazil, is a supercharged way to catch a glimpse of what God is doing in His global church. Each day has planned opportunities to interact with our Brazilian brothers and sisters and AFLC missionaries.

The trip is open to anyone with a serious heart to go, learn, and give. As a pastor though, I particularly want to encourage other AFLC pastors to join the trip.

Why pastors? Here are two reasons.

First, pastors have the responsibility and privilege of teaching the issues of the mission mandate — that is, what God is doing around the world, what still needs to be done, and how we, the Church, can partner with God in the task.

Second, pastors are called to involve the entire congregation in the learning process, in praying for people groups, in praying for specific missionaries, and in trips to the mission field. Pastors help provide information, tools and support. This is no easy task!

Taking a mission trip isn't required to successfully impart the mandate, but a pastor's missionary heart can certainly use fuel for the task at hand. Each of the mission trips I have made as a pastor recharged and directed my spiritual ministry. It changed the news I care about. It changed the way I raise my children. It changed the way I read God's Word. Pastors and congregations, I hope you prayerfully consider this special invitation. May God be exalted through it!

A group will leave from Minneapolis on Jan. 17, 2006, and return Jan. 24. The last day to sign up for the trip is Sept. 30. The estimated cost for transportation and lodging (and some meals) is \$1,500. Pastor Jonathan Unverzagt, Onalaska, Wis., is organizing the trip, including all transportation, housing and visa applications. For more information, contact Unverzagt at (608) 781-5821.

— Pastor Ray Ballmann Kopperl, Texas

AFLC memorials — June

AFLBS

Jeannie Brandt, John Scott, Lorraine Nyhus, Leo Hauge, Sue Ann Barnhart

AFLTS

Jeannie Brandt, Omer Espe,

Lorriane Nyhus

Evangelism

Jeannie Brandt

FLAPS

Les Mickelsen

General Fund

Jeannie Brandt

Home Missions

Jeannie Brandt, Don Foster,

Evelyn Thompson \mathbf{MTI}

Lorraine Nyhus

Parish Education

Alvin Froelich, Alvin and Lillian Nordvold

Vision

Lorraine Nyhus, Jeannie Brandt, Pastor Chris Oswood

World Missions

Verna Wollin, Tom Gray

... in honor of **Evangelism**

Amos and Magdalene Stolee

Pastor Terry Olson has accepted a call to serve Trinity Free Lutheran, Grand Forks, N.D. He currently serves Our Saviour's Lutheran, Thief River Falls, Minn.

Resurrection Free Lutheran, Beltrami, Minn., has extended a call to **Pastor Scott Merrill**, who will work mainly as a youth worker. He previously served as a missionary in Romania with Greater European Missions.

Pastor Larry Severson has

resigned from the parish ministry at Rose Lutheran and Spruce Free Lutheran, Roseau, Minn., effective Sept. 30. He will continue in his position as chaplain at Roseau Area Hospital and Homes.

Pastor Harlan Johnson, who has served St. Paul's Lutheran, Jewell, Iowa, has accepted a call to serve Trinity Lutheran (independent), Carlos, Minn., and has withdrawn from the AFLC clergy roster.

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (6 months) - January 1 - June 30, 2005

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN JUNE	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund*	\$387,377	\$36,321	\$220,550	57
Youth Ministries	56,062	8,800	34,384	
Parish Education	81,988	8,375	36,856	
Seminary	156,804	19,227	104,897	67
Bible School	269,308	27,961	151,579	56
Home Missions	277,870	18,620	121,784	44
World Missions	262,377	13,782	112,600	43
Personal Support	368,688	31,083	187,555	51
TOTALS	\$1,860,474	\$145,549	\$848,421	46
TOTALS 2004	\$1,739,460	\$157,148	\$907,268	52
Goal 50%	. , ,	. ,	. ,	

The Evangelism Department received \$6,184 in June.

Please contact individual departments for more information on projects.

^{*} Includes Evangelism totals

[Editorial]

Teachers

school can exist with old buildings, rundown buildings and, in this Internet age, no buildings. A school can't make it, however, with-

out teachers.

Our Free Lutheran Seminary and Bible school have experienced increased enrollments during the



Craig Johnson

past couple of years. The reports shared at the conference were positive about the size of the student body anticipated for the coming fall. A new building, erected on campus a year and a half ago, has contribut-

ed a great deal. The schools have benefited from a larger library, new classrooms, cafeteria, music rooms and offices. We give thanks for what God has done. We continue to pray, however, over a need that remains.

Dr. Dan Mundfrom, chairman of the AFLC Schools' Board of Trustees, stated in his report to the conference: "We continue to pray that God would provide funds to expand our faculty. We continue to believe that the needs of our students would be better served if we had a larger, regular, full-time faculty. Please pray with us that God would provide the resources according to His plan."

An excellent education is being provided to students with the faculty we have now, but it could be better. A larger faculty would most likely mean each teacher would have fewer classes to teach and allow them a more thorough preparation. They could give writing assignments and not face such a formidable number of papers to grade.

A larger faculty would create more opportunities for students and teachers to get to know each other. Some of the best learning happens outside the classroom when the student gets to know the teacher on a more personal level and sees how God is working in that teacher's life.

At our recent annual conference the need for teachers on the mission field was discussed as well. A six-year plan of course work has been developed for the pastoral training program in India. According to Pastor Del Palmer, AFLC World Missions Director, "The plan calls for teachers to travel to India for yearly, two-week courses." The goal is to train pastors in India who can train others. That will be the most effective way for us to reach the masses of India.

People in Uganda are longing for teachers, also. Pastor Palmer stated. "We have had requests to work alongside of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Uganda (ELCU). They desire that we help them establish a Bible training center in their nation." With that in mind, the conference passed a resolution to establish a mission work in Uganda and to pray for Nate (currently in his last year of seminary training) and Rhoda Jore as they prepare for that work.

Cutting down brush and finding a tribe that has never heard about Jesus is the kind of thing that makes for great missionary stories. That is important work, but the training of church leaders who can reach and train others in their nation might be the most far-reaching and long-lasting mission work we can do. It is following

... the training of church leaders who can reach and train others in their nation might be the most far-reaching and long-lasting mission work we can do.

the biblical command that says, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (II Timothy 2:2, NIV).

Moving dirt around and putting up buildings is fun to watch. Sometimes it is needed. Our schools' campus needed the Heritage Hall student center. Now we need more faculty.

A building campaign has a certain excitement to it. Also, it involves onetime giving, while hiring faculty will require an increase in regular giving. It will also require a vision as to the importance of the schools' faculty to the overall health of our church body.

It has been said, "As the seminary goes, so goes the church body." In a way we could add to that: as the faculty goes, so goes the seminary.

We give thanks for our current faculty and we pray that God might give them the strength and wisdom they need. We pray God might add to their number, here and in other parts of the world, more teachers with a love for the Lord, a love for His Word, a love for people and a vision for free and living Lutheran congregations.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd. Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

[Building the Base] lifeassured

ow do you know you are alive? It's a silly question, but very important to those who want to know if they are going to heaven. Am I a Christian? Am I spiritually alive? As ► I write this, I can tell you that personally I know that I am alive. Yes, I am a child of God, and I am on my way to heaven!

It all happened for me in a most interesting and outstanding way. One day in the spring of 1953, I came barreling down the stairs of the men's dorm at the Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis. Previously, I had prayed to accept Jesus into my heart at a Saturday night youth rally, but I was not very sure about God's willingness to accept me. As I hit the dormitory door to fling it open and head out, I noticed a plaque on the wall. On it were these words: "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17, KJV).

For all the times I had been in and out of that doorway, I had never seen the plaque and verse of Scripture. But that day I saw it. And it told me that I was ALIVE! I began to ask others how long that plaque had hung there, and everyone told me that it had been there all the while. There it was, right before me, available so everyone could see it! Yes, that plaque contained the very truth of what happens in the life of a person who has been reconciled to God in Christ Jesus.

Jesus has done it all to reconcile us, but we need to accept His personal presence in our lives. "If any man is in Christ ..." is the beginning, the salvation experience. In this verse and throughout the Word of God, Jesus is there for us to see Him, to receive Him and to be in Him as our Lord and Savior. "He that has the son has life ..." (I John 3:12).

That day, at the entrance of the men's dorm, I was

confirmed in the reality that I had a new perspective on life and I had become new. I was starting a **NEW LIFE!** And my life has never been the same. The old passed away. The old man had to die, and I realized that the new life had begun. While at first I wondered why life was not

For all the times I had been in and out of that doorway, I had never seen the plaque and verse of Scripture. But that day I saw it. And it told me that I was ALIVE!

easier, I did come to realize that Jesus is the victor. I began to let Him exercise His power in my life and permit the Holy Spirit to do His work in and through me.

Yes, like an infant I struggled in this new life. Then God graciously spoke to me in a Lenten message when the pastor told of how Jesus puts our names into His Book of Life, and not we ourselves. Right! To think that my very name is listed there, entered with the blood of Jesus. I knew right there and then that I was assured of salvation! Reading from Revelation 3:5, the pastor said it is only Jesus who could ever remove my name from the Book of Life. And more than that, Jesus will confess my name before His Father and even before the angels! NEW LIFE ASSURED!

> Pastor Richard Gunderson Cambridge, Minn.