

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

AUGUST 2006

*We are not
doing right
This is a day
of good news*

GOOD NEWS

Pacific Northwest District hosts AFLC Conference
in a dramatic year of growth and revival

*Let us go
at once
and report this
to the royal
palace*



[Encouraging Word]

What's your adventure?

I just finished an exciting adventure with some members of my family. We traveled to the state of Washington by car. Along the way we saw mountains and valleys, rivers, lakes, canyons, cliffs, wildlife, an island and of course the ocean! We returned to North Dakota by way of Wyoming and added geysers, boiling mud, clear warm pools and waterfalls to our list of the works of God's hands we've seen firsthand. I just got home and I'm ready to go again!

When we hear the phrase "exciting adventure," most of us react in one of two ways. Some of us tense up, get nervous and think to ourselves, "Oh no! I'm on my own!" We get scared because we fear the unknown and don't know if we can handle what may come our way. Others of us can't wait to get started! We're getting our gear together mentally, making sure the camera and the bottled water are packed first. We've experienced one or more exciting adventures already and look forward to the new experiences and challenges we are about to face.

Do you hear God asking you to join Him on an amazing and exciting adventure? Just as I did not always look forward to an adventure like driving myself across the United States, I have not always appreciated the spiritual adventure I share with God. More than any other thing, fear can keep me from experiencing the adventure He has planned for me. When we fear, we forget that the success of the adventure is not dependent on us.

I just read Zephaniah 3:17, "The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing." This reminds me that whatever I face, He faces it with me. My Father delights in me, His perfect love casts out the fear and replaces it with His peace. And all the while He just loves me so much He sings for joy!

What adventure does He have planned for you to begin today? Do you feel a tug at your heart toward missions? Are there souls He wants you to reach for Him in your neighborhood or in a foreign land? Maybe there is a Sunday school class He wants you to teach. Are there youths who need a volunteer leader or a teen who needs a mentor? Is the Lord calling you to start a women's group in your church or a neighborhood Bible study?

Sometimes we are living in the midst of our adventure and never even realize it. Do you have a family to care for, friends to love and pray for, a fellowship of believers to encourage and build up? No matter what God calls us to do, He is waiting to make it an exciting adventure if we let Him. The camera and bottled water are packed, so let's get to it!

— *Faylin Myhre*
Bethany Free Lutheran
Wahpeton, N.D.

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THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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From the 2006 AFLC Annual Conference, Stanwood, Wash.

God doesn't need our prayers. We need to pray. ... God wants you to communicate with Him. He wants your presence at His throne.

— Pastor John Mundfrom
Conference prayer hour leader

Thanks be to God for so faithfully supplying each and every need of the AFLC. His resources are without limit and He has poured out His blessing upon the AFLC.

— Pastor Ken Moland
Coordinating Committee
Chairman

These past seven plus years God has blessed me with many men and women who have promised to pray for me and the work of evangelism in the AFLC for one hour a month. This is the key to anything that has brought forth fruit for God's Kingdom in the AFLC. This is the lifeblood of AFLC Evangelism.

— Pastor Jim Rasmussen
Director of Evangelism/Evangelist

We have nowhere to go except to Jesus Christ and the cross. ... This is a day of good news. We have to share it.

— Pastor James Molstre
Conference opening service speaker

THIS IS A DAY OF GOOD NEWS

Pacific Northwest District hosts AFLC conference
in a dramatic year of growth and revival

By PASTOR CRAIG JOHNSON

There was a lot of talk about good news at the 44th AFLC Annual Conference held June 20-23. "This is a day of good news" from II Kings 7:9 was the theme of the conference at the Warm Beach Christian Conference Center in Stanwood, Wash.

The heart of the good news

Those attending the conference were reminded what the heart of the good news is during the worship services and prayer hours. At the conference's opening service, Pastor James Molstre of Bethel Park, Pa., spoke of how we are needy people like the lepers spoken of in II Kings 7. There's good news, however. Christ has provided for our needs abundantly at the cross. While serving Holy Communion during the same service, Pastor Mark Molstre of Lake Stevens, Wash., continually reminded those in attendance, "This is a night of good news."

During the morning prayer times, led each day by Pastor John Mundfrom of Eugene, Ore., the good news that God wants people to come to Him in prayer was shared. People were reminded that prayer



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presence*



Building projects continue on school campus

is not done for God's sake but for ours. Prayer is a privilege and a gift that God graciously offers.

In her report, AFLC Parish Education Director Marian Christopherson shared how "every day for the believer is a day of good news because it is a new day of God's grace. Though we are undeserving in every way, God in Christ showers His grace upon us day after day. Each day, the believer celebrates the glorious and amazing truth that 'while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us'" (Romans 5:8).

Good news of what God is doing

Good news was shared at the conference about ways God has blessed various areas of the work of the AFLC. One of those areas is finances. In his report, AFLC President Robert Lee said, "Gifts to AFLC ministries for 2005 averaged 116% of budget goals, for which we are grateful to God and our family of supporting congregations." Also in the area of finances, Pastor James L. Johnson, in his last report as AFLBS dean, reflected on things that have happened since the schools' Board of

The auditorium at the Warm Beach Camps and Christian Conference Center, Stanwood, Wash., was the backdrop for most of the conference activities.

Trustees met for a prayer retreat in 1997. "God has provided, over the regular school budget, for seminary housing and Bible school buildings and ministry vans and ground preparation, more than \$5 million, over the regular giving, since we began to pray." Debt still exists on the school's student center, space in the dormitories is tight and more work on the buildings needs to be done. But the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Dan Mundfrom said, "We are thankful to God and His people for progress that has been made on several of these concerns this past year."

It was announced at the conference that gifts had been received that make it possible to begin construction of a third seminary housing unit on the schools' campus.

Lavon Bohling, executive director of the Free Luther-



Ten new congregations join AFLC fellowship

AFLBS dean-elect Pastor James Rolf, Valley City, N.D., chats with outgoing dean Pastor Jim Johnson, Camarillo, Calif.

an Association of Pilot Supporters, said they were able to make the final payment on a plane that had been purchased five years ago.

The Parish Education Department reported that the student materials for the preschool curriculum are completed and progress is being made on materials for grades 5-8. Work on reprinting *Luther's Small Catechism Explained* continues.

Pat Flanders, director of the Association Retreat Center, said, "In 2005 the ARC hosted 135 faith-based groups comprising 9,500 people." He also stated, "Financial challenges remain."

Ten congregations new to the AFLC were welcomed into the Association during the past year. They are: Trinity Free Lutheran, Bastrop, Texas; St. Stephen's Lutheran, Metropolis, Ill.; Peace Lutheran, St. Francis,

Linda and Pastor Henry Mohagen, Reva, S.D., listen to a conference report during the business meetings.

Kan.; Lord of Life Lutheran, Mt. Vernon, Wash.; St. Paul's Lutheran, Hagerstown, Md.; Alsace Lutheran, Reading, Pa.; Mighty Fortress Lutheran, Seward, Neb.; Good Shepherd Lutheran, Madison, S.D.; Cornerstone Christian, Brandon, Fla.; and Trinity Lutheran, Brookings, Ore. Removed from the AFLC congregational roster during the past year was Lebanon Free Lutheran, Leeds, N.D.

The AFLC Coordinating Committee presented a "Scriptural and Confessional Study" to the conference on the subject of "The Ordination of Women for Pastoral Ministry." The conference passed a resolution that the statement be adopted "as the Biblical position on the role of women in pastoral ministry." The statement declares, "All Christians, whether men or women, have

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Two missionary couples commissioned for service Statement on women's ordination adopted

Pastor Tim Johnson, Northwood, N.D., studies his Bible in between sessions in the lobby outside the dining rooms.

the same standing before God. ... are included in the priesthood of all believers." However, "The Order of Creation, together with the example of Christ and His apostles, as well as 1,900 years of church history, teaches that women should not hold the pastoral office."

Sharing the good news

The day before the conference began, pastors and their wives received encouragement in sharing the good news in "Rekindling the Fire" sessions sponsored by the AFLC Commission on Evangelism. Dr. H.B. London, Jr., vice president of ministry outreach/pastoral ministries for Focus on the Family, was the guest speaker. In afternoon sessions and at an evening banquet he encouraged his listeners to strive for intimacy with the Lord more than a surface relationship. He shared of how he prays for God to stretch his mind beyond the ordinary, sensi-

Lori Crowell and Jan Gee, Arlington, Wash., presents a workshop titled, "Complacency to Commitment," at the WMF day.

tize his conscience and strengthen his courage.

Good news was reported to the conference regarding various people whom God has called to serve in missions. During the June 21 Mission Festival Service, Nate and Rhoda Jore and Tomasz and Miriam Chmiel were commissioned as missionaries. The Jores will be serving in Uganda, East Africa, and the Chmiels will be on loan to the East European Missions Network, serving in the Ukraine. The World Missions Department also shared about missionary candidates Andy and Monica Coyle and Pastor Kevin and Pam Olson. The Coyles are preparing to serve in Eastern Europe and the Olsons are pursuing work in developing a distance learning program. Short-term missionary assistants Ben Jore and Jesse Long have been accepted to serve in

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Pastor Joel Rolf elected as new AFLBS dean President Lee announces plans to step down

Josh and Bill Fish, Everett, Wash., (left and right) man the housing registration with Pastor John Mundfrom, Eugene, Ore.

Tanzania. News was also shared regarding numerous student mission trips going on throughout the world this summer.

"There seems to be a stirring in the hearts of some in the AFLC toward saving the lost in foreign countries," reported World Missions Committee Chairman Tom Caouette.

The Home Missions department reported on doors the Lord has opened for home missions across the United States. They cited prayer as the reason. The department has begun an email prayer update called *Knee-Mail*. They gave thanks for those who pray and the ways God has answered those prayers.

Changes coming up

Pastor James L. Johnson ended his service as Association Free Lutheran Bible School dean when he shared his report to the conference. He has accepted the call to pastor Good Shepherd Lutheran in Camarillo, Calif. Pastor Joel Rolf, who has been serving Grace and Zion Free Lutheran of Valley City, N.D., was nominated by the Schools' Board of Trustees and elected by the conference as the new dean.

Two men were ordained into the ministry at the con-

Pastor David Johnson, Silverhill, Ala., Pastor Greg Lenz, Minneapolis, and Pastor David White, Deshler, Neb., chat outside the conference center.

ference's closing service: Nathan Jore and Richard Ramsbacher.

Two hundred and eighty-seven people registered for and attended the conference.

Pastor Elden Nelson was re-elected AFLC vice president and Pastor Brian Davidson was re-elected AFLC secretary.

In his report, President Robert Lee shared that at the 2007 Annual Conference his term as president will be completed. "I will have served for more than 15 years, and it seems right to my wife and me to request that my name should not be considered for re-election. We have sensed peace and release in coming to this decision, and are looking forward to the next adventure that our faithful Heavenly Father will provide. Let me encourage all of our congregations to make this coming year a time of fervent praying, not of furtive politicking, as you seek the Lord's leading for a future president. My service as your president will conclude on Sept. 30, 2007."

The 2007 conference will be June 12-15 in Sioux Falls, S.D.

election *results* Vote

Vice President

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

Secretary

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

AFLC Schools Board of Trustees

Pastor Terry Olson, Grafton, N.D. (5 years)

Dr. Dan Mundfrom, Greeley, Colo. (5 years)

AFLBS Dean

Pastor Joel Rolf, Valley City, N.D.

Home Missions Committee

Pastor Tony Stockman, Brandon, Minn. (3 years)

Pastor Rick Long, Arlington, Wash. (5 years)

FLAPS Board of Managers

David Jameson, Earlville, Ill. (5 years)

Pastor Henry Mohagen, Reva, S.D. (5 years)

Coordinating Committee

Pastor Gary Jorgenson, East Grand Forks, N.D. (5 years)

Brad Severson, Sioux Falls, S.D. (5 years)

Commission on Evangelism

Pastor Tim Johnson, Northwood, N.D. (5 years)

Board of Publications and Parish Education

Pastor Les Johnson, Wilson, Wis. (5 years)

Youth Board

Kayla Russum, Lake Stevens, Wash. (5 years)

Board of Pensions

Pastor Mike Klenner, Freeman, S.D. (5 years)

ARC Board & Corporation

A quorum was not reached. Voting by mail.

Stewardship Board

Paul Slaamot, Tioga, N.D. (5 years)

World Missions Committee

Jim Keller, Osceola, Wis. (5 years)



Budget Analysis Committee

Robert Knutson, McVile, N.D. (3 years)

Schools Corporation

John Amdahl, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Larry Behne, Lowden, Iowa

Jon Dryburgh, Grafton, N.D.

Lyle Forde, Arlington, Wash.

David Fugleberg, Lakeville, Minn.

Pastor Earl Korhonen, Radcliffe, Iowa

Kermit Nash, Rogers, Minn.

Pastor Terry Olson, Grand Forks, N.D.

Pastor Steve Snipstead, Kalispell, Mont.

Art Wilson, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Colloquy Committee

Pastor Steve Carlson, Dalton, Minn.; Pastor Brent

Logeman, Metropolis, Ill.; Pastor James Johnson,

Camarillo, Calif.; Pastor Tom Schierkolk, Eben Junc-

tion, Mich.; Pastor Dale Mellgren, McIntosh, Minn.

Nominating Committee 2007

Arne Berge, Binford, N.D. — Eastern North Dakota
Mark Gustafson, Beulah — Western N.D./Eastern Montana
Pastor Wade Mobley, Sioux Falls, S.D. — South Dakota
Ken Sletten, Duluth, Minn. — Lake Superior
Pastor Todd Erickson, Roseau, Minn. — Northwestern, Minn.
Pastor Alan Arneson, Fosston, Minn. — N. Central Minnesota
Pastor Mark Johnson, Dalton, Minn. — SW Central Minnesota
Pastor Rick Larson, Fairbury, Neb. — Neb./Colorado/Kansas
Kermit Nash, Rogers, Minn. — Minneapolis
Pastor Eric Westlake, Zumbrota, Minn. — Central Tri-State
Erling Langness, Ishpeming, Mich. — Northern Michigan
Carl Busse, Humboldt, Tenn. — South Central
Vint Bruflat, Mesa, Ariz. — Southwestern
Bill Fish, Everett, Wash. — Pacific Northwest
George Lautner, Bethel Park, Pa. — Eastern
Dave Van Hoveln, Milford, Ill. — Illinois



ABOVE: Kermit Nash, Rogers, Minn., works with Charlotte Oswood, AFLC staff member, to format committee resolutions.

LEFT: Volunteers tally up the results from balloting at the Annual Conference business sessions.

Missions Corporation (5-year terms)

Don Berge, Fargo, N.D.
Delores Berkas, Bloomington, Minn.
Carl Busse, Humboldt, Tenn.
Robert Dietsche, Osceola, Wis.
Pastor Amos Dyrud, Minneapolis
Tim Erhardt, Lake Stevens, Wash.
Scott Erickson, Badger, Minn.
Pastor Jim Fugleberg, Fargo, N.D.
Lois Grothe, Astoria, Ore.
Pastor Wayne Hjermstad, Bruce, S.D.

2007 Conference Committees

Committee No. 1 (*Administration*)

Pastor Karl Anderson, Argyle, Minn.
Mel Fischer, Shakopee, Minn.
Pastor Don Norr, Proctor, Minn.
Eric Rasmussen, Plymouth, Minn.
Trent Swanson, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Committee No. 2 (*Schools*)

Pastor Wayne Hjermstad, Bruce, S.D.
Phil Jensen, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Michelle Satren, Minneapolis, Minn.
Scott Schauer, Oklahoma City, Okla.
Mark Sivertson, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Committee No. 3 (*Missions and Evangelism*)

Bill Buck, Brookings, S.D.
Pastor Roger David, Armington, Ill.
Dale Manternach, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Pastor Bruce Peterson, Minneapolis
Pastor Don Richman, Bloomington, Minn.

Committee No. 4 (*Pub., Parish Ed. and Youth*)

Jon Dryburgh, Grafton, N.D.
Solvieg Hjermstad, Bruce, S.D.
Pastor Steve Mundfrom, Arlington, S.D.
Karina Olson, Eden Prairie, Minn.
Audrey VerMulm, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Committee No. 5 (*Pensions and Stewardship*)

Pastor Roy Johnson, Northome, Minn.
Bryon Beyer, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Pastor Jerome Nikunen, Minneapolis
Pastor Larry Severson, Roseau, Minn.
LaVern Thompson, Fergus Falls, Minn.

Pastor Lynn Kinnenberg, McVile, N.D.
Pastor Dale Mellgren, McIntosh, Minn.
Pastor Al Monson, Mesa, Ariz.
Pastor Steve Mundfrom, Arlington, S.D.
Joel Nash, Eden Prairie, Minn.
Tom Olson, Edinburg, N.D.
Pastor Jerry Peterson, Oklahoma City
Pastor Tom Tuura, St. James, Minn.
Eldwyn Van Bruggen, Valley City, N.D.
Jeremy Zeltinger, Jamestown, N.D.

The next *ten years*

A familiar name was found in a recent obituary. His name was Harold, and he and I were students in a graduate school class together about 20 years ago. He was on the edge of retirement years, then, and enrolled in some courses to help him decide what to do during the next 10 years or so of ministry.

I was impressed and still remember my visit with him. At a time of life when others would be thinking of quitting, this pastor was planning ahead. There are certain



Robert L. Lee

aspects of ministry in which he saw himself as more effective, Harold told me, and, as a result, were more satisfying to him, so he was embarking on a detailed self-study that should help him determine how to better focus his service for the Lord. Social security and pension (plus his wife's income from writing)

would provide him with a great degree of financial freedom, too, creating a unique season of opportunity without the burden of earning a living that he had borne during earlier years.

Well, the Lord gave him 20 years instead of 10, and I hope to learn some day how those years were spent. Harold was an example to me, and probably to many others, of a commitment to Christian service that smiles at artificial retirement milestones as it seeks for age-and-health-appropriate avenues to continue in ministry. I am reminded of two elderly pastors who met at our annual conference many years ago.

"Where are you serving, Carl?" the one asked.

"Oh, I'm retired now," the other responded.

"Where do you find that in the Bible?" asked the first. "The only thing my Bible says is that you die!"

What has the Lord in store for you and me during the next 10 years ... or 20? These are real questions for me as I look forward. As we look up to Him to lead, however, He will open and close doors of opportunity for us, too. And others (like my departed classmate) encourage us to discover the unique joys that are waiting during this season of life for those who continue to follow. The best may be yet to come.



be ready for *open* doors

[Chaplaincy]

How do we open the doors to tell others the good news of Jesus Christ? Recognize that it is not our methods that open doors, but the Holy Spirit calls, enlightens, and sanctifies a person.

Throughout the New Testament, we find that Jesus made Himself available to those who came to Him with their needs. As instruments of God, we, too, need to make ourselves available. To be God's instruments, we need to hear what is going on in a person's life. We need to build a relationship with that individual. When people are hurting, they welcome spending time with someone who cares and takes the time to listen and sympathize with them. God opens doors for us to share the good news of salvation by grace through faith alone.

It's important that as we seek to be God's instruments we don't let our personal agenda get in the way. So often we have the idea that we need to use certain words when, in reality, the good news is applied in God's timing. One lady, a resident at Pleasant View, truly believed that if I prayed with her, she would die. No matter what I could say, it wouldn't change how she felt. As a result, we spent time talking about the Chicago Bulls and so on. We developed a good friendship. Two years later, she asked me what Easter was all about. God opened the door, and we talked about our sinful nature and how Jesus died for our sins so that we can be forgiven. She died about a week later. If I had pushed my agenda, she would have refused to speak to me.

Sometimes God opens doors immediately. As I enter a resident's room, I ask what brings them to Pleasant View, and they tell me what is going on in their lives. I ask permission to have Scripture and prayer and our relationship begins. Ministry is God's work through His Word and through Christians who are willing to be His instruments.

Often, people need time to process what is taking place in their lives. They know they are anxious and frustrated, but they don't know why. When I interned as a chaplain at the state mental institution in North Dakota,

part of my time there was spent with people who had trouble with alcohol and drugs. I remember a Native American woman who struggled with grief. Her son had committed suicide, and she felt that because she was a bad mother it was her fault. Furthermore, her husband wouldn't let her talk about her son and the things she felt guilty about. The result was that she would go to the bar and drink because then she could cry and talk about her son. We spent several days talking about her guilt, going one-by-one over her feelings. I asked her how she could have handled some of the situations differently, and she realized that she couldn't have done anything differently. She was able to let go of her grief in these areas. In regard to the things that she had done wrong, we were able to talk about Jesus dying upon the cross for the forgiveness of her sins. Within a short time, she was able to go home because she had processed her grief and was accepting God's forgiveness in Jesus' name. Good news for her meant someone listening to her and helping her process her grief. God provided.

— By Chaplain Kerwin Sletto
Pleasant View Lutheran Home
Ottawa, Ill.

SEEKING GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

Commissioning highlights missions service

By Phyllis Nikunen

The 44th annual National WMF Convention was held on June 20 at Warm Beach Camps and Conference Center, Stanwood, Wash., with the theme "Seeking God's Perspective," based on Isaiah 55:9. Following the welcome on behalf of the 11 sponsoring churches in the Pacific Northwest District by Eddi Walty, Lake Stevens, Wash., Women's Outreach Coordinator Faylin Myhre led the devotions and memorial service, and AFLC missionary Becky Abel shared the Bible study from the theme text. During the business meeting, Lorilee Mundfrom, Eugene, Ore., was elected as WMF president, Sandra Weaver, Munich, N.D., as third vice president, Robin Jameson, Earlville, Ill., as communication secretary and Phyllis Nikunen, Minneapolis, was re-appointed as recording secretary. A number of resolutions dealing with encouragement, special thanks and prayer, God's will in proposals and current events, and commitment and challenge to all women were also adopted.

Greetings were given by AFLC missionary candidates Rhoda Jore and Miriam Chmiel during the noon luncheon.

The four afternoon sessions included "Complacency to Commitment," presented by Jan Gee and Lori Crowell, "Depression to Delight," by Sue Garner; "Disarray to Discipline," by Michele Mobley; and "Loneliness to Loving," by Faith Nelson. During the wrap-up time led by Myhre, WMF treasurer Lynn Wellumson highlighted her experiences during her trip in January to Brazil to

attend the church's 40th anniversary.

During the evening banquet emceed by communication secretary Robin Jameson, missionaries Pastor Paul and Becky Abel gave a presentation of their work in Brazil and Pastor Abel shared from II Corinthians 2:14. Pastor Robert Lee, AFLC president, installed the new WMF officers.

On June 21 members of the national WMF board met with the WMF advisory board for a time of sharing information, ideas and concerns during a breakfast meeting.

Those attending the mission festival service on June 21 had the privilege of being a part of the commissioning of Tomasz and Miriam Chmiel, AFLC missionaries on loan to the East European Missions Network for ministry in Ukraine, and Nathan and Rhoda Jore, AFLC missionaries to Uganda. Greetings were given by Tomasz and Nathan, and Pastor Del Palmer, World Missions director, gave a presentation on the work in Uganda. Nathan brought the evening message and Pastor Connely Dyrud, AFLC missionary-at-large, closed the service.

Music was provided during these two days by the AFLBS Ambassadors; a trio from the Pacific Northwest District consisting of Lois Forde, Gracia Gilbertson, and Cathe Erhardt; Pastor Paul, Becky, Andrew and Matthew Abel; Dr. Francis and Ellen Monseth; and Lorilee Mundfrom as pianist. The offerings taken were equally divided between Home Missions, World Missions and the WMF General Fund.



*As the heavens
are higher than the earth
so are my ways higher
than your ways
and my thoughts
than your thoughts*



Pastor Tim Johnson was installed July 2 as pastor of Ebenezer Lutheran, Northwood, N.D. Pastor Elden Nelson, vice president of the AFLC, officiated.

Pastor Richard Sliper, Comstock Park, Mich., has accepted a call to serve Christ the King Lutheran, Pipestone, Minn. Formerly of the ELCA, Sliper is currently on the AFLC's fellowship roster.

Pastor Frank Cherney, Duluth, Minn., has accepted a call to serve Trinity Lutheran, Janesville, Wis., beginning in September. Cherney has served St. John's Lutheran, Duluth.

Pastor Jim Ritter, Parker, Colo., has accepted a call to serve Faith Lutheran, Shakopee, Minn., beginning in September. Ritter has served Living Water Christian, Parker.

Pastor Jim Christianson, Abercrombie, N.D., has resigned from his ministry at Bethany Lutheran, Abercrombie, and United Free Lutheran, McLeod, N.D.

Daniel Wilhelm, a 2006 graduate of AFLBS from Kalispell, Mont., has accepted a call to serve as a full-time youth worker at Stillwater Free Lutheran, Kalispell.

AFLTS 2006 graduates **Rich Ramsbacher** and **Nathan Jore** were ordained at the closing service of the annual conference, held at Atonement Free Lutheran, Arlington, Wash., with Pastor Robert Lee, AFLC president, officiating. Ramsbacher serves Bethel Community, Culbertson, Mont., and Faith Free Lutheran, Brockton. Jore was commissioned at the conference and called as a missionary to Uganda.

Pastor Dean Iverson, a 2006 graduate of the AFLC seminary, has accepted a call to serve Triumph Lutheran, Ferndale, Wash. A service of ordination was held July 22 in his home church, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Williston, N.D.



The congregation of St. Paul's Free Lutheran, Fargo, N.D., recently moved to a new facility. Their new address is 2802 12th St. S., Fargo, ND 58103. Their first service in the new building was on May 7. Find out more information about the church's ministry at www.stpaulsfreelutheran.org.

Bethel celebrates forty years



Members of Bethel Lutheran, Grafton, N.D., celebrated the congregation's 40th anniversary on July 2. Pictured above right are Pastor Tim Carlson, who currently serves the congregation, and former pastors Dennis Gray, Rodger Olson and Wayne Juntunen. Pictured above, two members of the congregation remove the time capsule.



Members and friends of Bethel Lutheran examine the contents of a time capsule that was placed in the church 40 years earlier.

every body a member

[World Missions]

It is my conviction that a church's poor spiritual condition is ultimately revealed by an absence of a mission emphasis or a weak understanding of missions. How do we see ourselves in a world that is perishing without Christ?

(Acts 1:8) Do we really believe that a soul who has not accepted Christ as Lord and Savior will pass into a Christ-less eternity at death? (Psalm 1:6) Do we really care about the needs of the lost? (II Peter 3:9) Is obedience to Jesus' command to go out and disciple our first priority? (Matthew 28:18-20) Or do we simply leave it up to someone else to do?

A congregation that is alive and well is a congregation made up of members who know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. It is a congregation that cares because its members have the heart of Jesus who cares. Mat-

thew 18:11 says, "For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost."

I just received volume 2 of the *Sverdrup Journal*, in which Georg Sverdrup writes in an article entitled, "A Chosen People," "Work must be done to seek and save the lost. Is this work of the pastor alone? Is it not the work of every Christian? Yes, surely. The entire Body of Jesus Christ, all who possess His Spirit and Mind, must be involved in this work."

Continuing, he writes, "It is the same with all testimony and labor in the service and community of Jesus Christ. When our Head desires to do a thing, He uses His whole Body to do it. All the members must be alive, all of them active; but not each in his own corner, unconnected to the Head. His will, His thoughts, must flow through each and every one, if the world is to know that He is the Head and the congregation His body."

There are numerous ways that Christ wants to use the body today. To be willing to leave home and family and to do as Christ calls. To be a prayer supporter for those who have gone or are going. To be a liaison providing needed materials and making needs known for those who have gone. To be a financial supporter of individual

missionaries and ministries. Write letters. Be a part of a work team.

The body of Christ, the congregation, loses its way when conflict and division takes place. We know that God is not divided and that love is to be the mark of the fellowship as Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). Being sinful people, we experience conflict of personalities, differing ideas and expectations. So what happens? We withdraw, wounded in spirit,

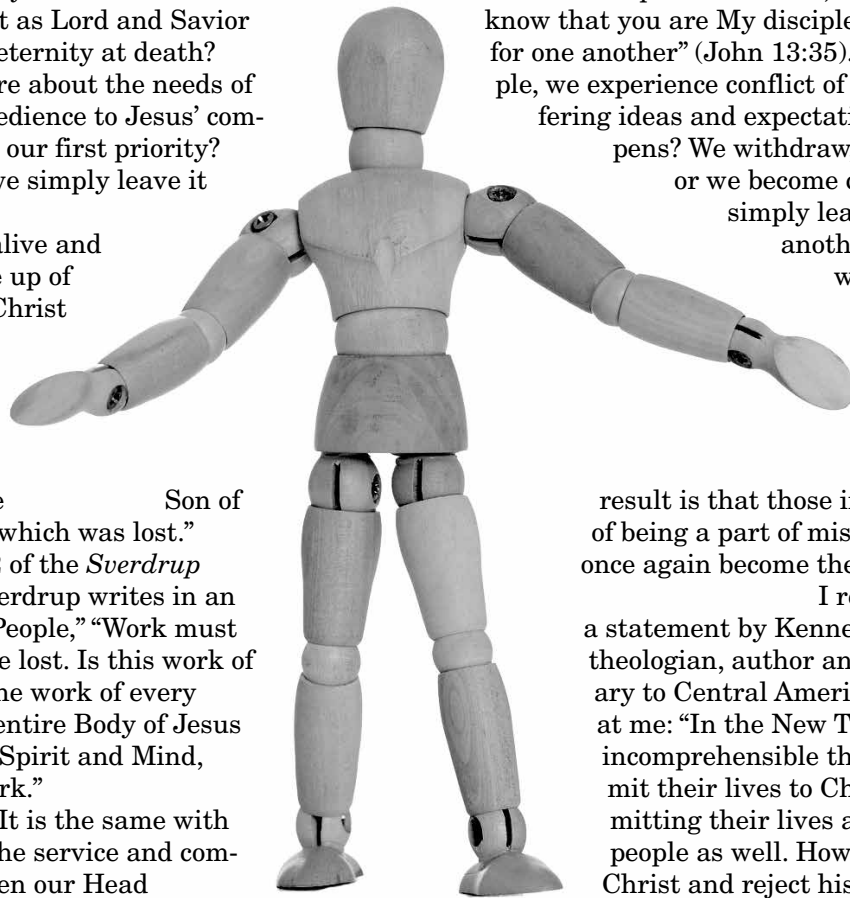
or we become contentious, or we simply leave, moving on to another fellowship. Or we walk away from the Lord, saying that if that is the way the church operates, we want nothing of it. The end

result is that those individuals, instead of being a part of missions to the world, once again become the mission field.

I recently came across a statement by Kenneth Mulholland, theologian, author and former missionary to Central America, that jumped out at me: "In the New Testament it's incomprehensible that people can commit their lives to Christ without committing their lives and destiny to His people as well. How can you receive Christ and reject his people?"

The truth is that missions is the calling of the whole community of Christ. Every believer — as a member of the community — needs to be involved to the point that he or she is willing to do whatever is necessary to reach the lost wherever they are. We need to ask what it will take to do what needs to be done. Then we need to be willing to do whatever is necessary to reach the lost.

— By Pastor Richard Gunderson
World Missions Committee



LEAVING ...

JORES HEAD TO UGANDA

By Pastor Craig Johnson

It would be easier in a lot of ways for them to stay in the United States. But God has called Nate and Rhoda Jore to serve the people of Uganda, East Africa. In response to God's call, the Jores were commissioned as AFLC missionaries during the 2006 Annual Conference.

Nate grew up in Brazil and is the son of Dan and Cheryl Jore, missionaries with Wycliffe Bible Translators. Rhoda grew up in Minnesota's Twin Cities and is the youngest daughter of Free Lutheran Seminary Dean Dr. Francis and Ellen Monseth. Nate and Rhoda met while attending AFLBS. They were part



of an AFLC World Missions team to Uganda in 2003 and while there felt a confirmation from the Lord to serve there as missionaries.

It would be easier in some ways for them to raise their two little boys in North America. Growing up in Uganda has been a challenge for many in recent years. The AIDS epidemic has swept through Africa. Recent efforts throughout Uganda to encourage abstinence have seen dramatic results, however.

A terror organization called the Lord's Resistance Army has abducted many young people throughout

northern Uganda. Since 1986, 30,000 have been killed, 50,000 abducted and 1.6 million people displaced because of this group.

The median age in Uganda is 15. It is unusual for someone to live past the age of 50.

English is the official language of Uganda, but for many people their tribal language is their "heart language." That is the language that is easiest for them to understand. While English is easiest for the Jores, their first challenge on the mission field will be learning the language of the people with whom they want to communicate. Their goal is to do that while living in the area in which they'll be serving.

The Jores will seek to learn from the people they'll be serving. Along with the language they'll be seeking to learn the culture, the ways people communicate, the ways they learn and the best ways the Jores can serve them.

Many of the people the Jores will be serving are quite poor. Owning a building to meet in would be far more expensive than most congregations could afford and an unusual thing in their culture. The Jores are going to seek to avoid giving any kind of an impression that church can't happen unless there's a building or that a building is a great necessity. Congregations in Africa are thriving without any kind of building. When God's people meet together, whether in a building or out in a field, they "are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you" (I Corinthians 3:16).

The Jores will be working with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Uganda. The group has eight congregations, six pastors, plus various lay leaders. It would be easy for Nate to acquire the position of "chief" of the church. That is not his plan. He wants to come alongside the church. His desire is to learn who the influencers of the community are and develop relationships with them, mentor them and provide biblical teaching. He wants to

See JORE, page 22



TO SERVE

CHMIELS PREPARE FOR UKRAINE

By Monica Coyle

In just a few more months, Pastor Tomasz and Miriam Chmiel, AFLC missionaries on loan to East European Missions Network (EEMN), will depart for Lviv, Ukraine, to serve in youth ministry. Exciting things are happening in Ukraine, spiritually speaking, and the Chmiels are eager to join where God is working. It is said that of all the East European countries, Ukraine is currently the most receptive to the gospel.

When Tomasz visited Ukraine in the summer of 2004, serving in summer camp ministry with the Lutheran Church, he saw a great need for youth ministry in this church body. Many times he was asked by several different people to come and help. The Chmiels have responded to that Macedonian call to “come and help,” and Lord willing, they will move to Lviv before the end of 2006.

Tomasz and Miriam have a heart to invest time and energy in young Ukrainians, helping them to grow and mature spiritually and train them to be leaders following Christ’s example. Their vision is to go and equip young leaders to fulfill Christ’s commission by making disciples, who then again make disciples. In the future, they would love to see young Ukrainian leaders be able to do youth ministry without help.

Tomasz and Miriam’s story is a beautiful testimony of how God brings people together to serve His Kingdom. Even though they had grown up less than 30 miles from each other in the Czech Republic, it was not until God called each of them to the Association Free Lutheran Bible School in Plymouth, Minn., that Tomasz and Miriam met for the first time. Miriam was raised in Ostrava while Tomasz grew up in Trinec.

As God brought each of them to pursue biblical study and ministry preparation, their paths crossed. Both Tomasz and Miriam completed the Ministry Training Institute (MTI), where Tomasz focused on cross-cultural ministry training and Miriam focused on youth ministry.

Miriam had received her master’s degree in English

and Christian Education before coming to the United States. Tomasz continued on to receive his theological training at the Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary (AFLTS). Tomasz and Miriam were married in May of 2005. He recently graduated from AFLTS with a master’s in divinity degree and was ordained this past May. The Chmiels were commissioned as AFLC Missionaries on loan to EEMN at the recent AFLC Conference in Stanwood, Wash.

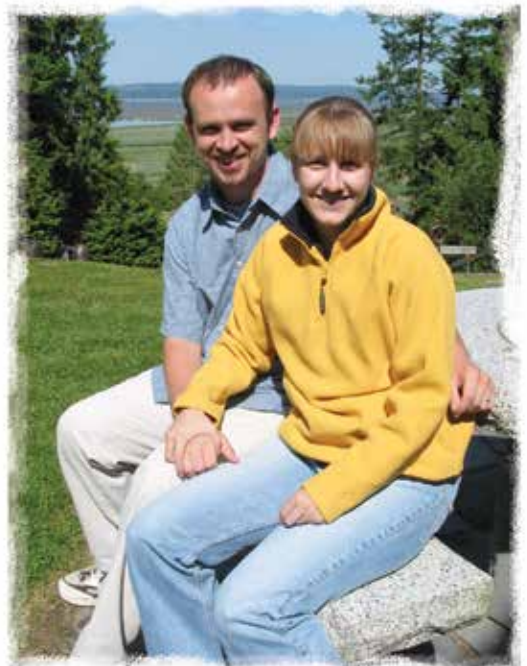
Perhaps one of the Chmiels’ greatest blessings in preparation for the mission field has come through their seminary internship at Our Savior’s Lutheran in Mason, Wis.

“When we came to that church last June, we were the youngest in the church.

But God has blessed us tremendously by letting us see young people come to Christ and some others renewed their commitment to Jesus through the youth ministry we started there,” said Miriam.

As most missionaries, the Chmiels are responsible for raising their own support. They are currently on deputation, traveling to churches and supporters to share their vision for ministry in the Ukraine.

“We believe God will put it on people’s hearts to be part of what He wants to do among young people in



See CHMIEL, page 22

JORE, from page 20

encourage and train people who will then go out with the good news of Jesus.

People in Uganda place much value on relationships. Training is usually done by mentoring more than lecturing. The Jores' goal is to follow the instruction of II Timothy 2:2: "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."

It is not easy for people in the church in Uganda. They have come to know Jesus but have had little opportunity to receive training in the Word of God. It is certainly not easy for people who do not know Christ and live in fear of demons, disease and other dangers.

It wouldn't be easy for the Jores to stay in the States, even though going to Uganda will involve challenges. It is not easy to resist the call of God.

As the Jores began down the path of following God's call — the path that is best but not always easy — they asked a senior missionary for some advice. He told them, "Be sure you have people praying for you." May each of us be sure we do just that.

Johnson, editor, serves Bethany Lutheran, Astoria, Ore.

CHMIEL, from page 21

Ukraine, because without the support of Christians here in America, our ministry in Ukraine would be impossible," Tomasz said.

Please pray for the Chmiels as they prepare for their ministry in Ukraine. They appreciate your prayers so much and invite you to join in praying for God to raise up strong spiritual leaders in Ukraine, specifically in the Lutheran Church.

While on deputation, the Chmiels are based at 140 W. 44th St., Minneapolis, MN 55409. Learn more about the Chmiels and their ministry at www.chmiels.com or at the EEMN website (www.eemn.org). To schedule a visit from the Chmiels to your congregation or to be added to their prayer team, contact the Chmiels at chmiel@eemn.org.

Monica and her husband, Andy, are currently preparing for missions work.

JUNE

AFLC Memorials

AFLBS

Char Wiek, Dienne Andrews, Celeste Finstrom, Owen Myhre, Margaret Ostrem, Janet Palkie, Elnora Aadahl

Home Missions

Owen Myhre, Isabelle Fox, Margaret Ostrem

Miriam Infant Home

LaVern Nyflot

Parish Education

Clinton Dahl

Vision

Margaret Ostrem

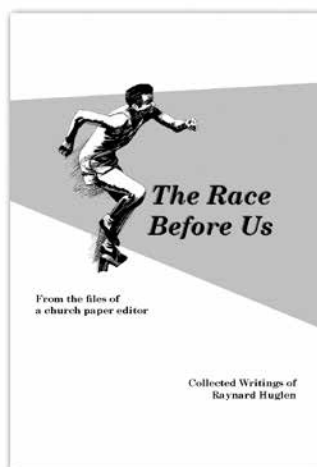
WMF

Carolyn Dyrud, Laverne Peterson, Irene Peterson, Harvey Smith

World Missions

Margaret Ostrem

Former editor's 'Race' now available



Pastor Raynard Huglen, editor of the "Lutheran Ambassador" for 27 years, has compiled a collection of his writings in a new book, "The Race Before Us." The collection features devotionals, tributes, travelogues, editorials, special articles and commentaries on the guiding principles of the AFLC.

The "Race" is available for \$5 plus tax and shipping from Ambassador Publications. Call (763) 545-5631 or write 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441, for more information.

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (6 months) – January 1 - June 30, 2006

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN JUNE	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$325,700	\$25,103	\$168,955	52
Youth Ministries . . .	57,949	3,839	35,261	61
Evangelism	98,330	5,490	48,755	50
Parish Education . . .	96,477	3,753	37,786	39
Seminary	189,224	16,873	96,391	51
Bible School	296,257	30,489	148,696	50
Home Missions.	293,287	17,318	125,271	43
World Missions.	260,933	14,532	123,123	47
Personal Support . . .	376,641	33,412	210,599	56
TOTALS	\$1,994,798	\$150,809	\$994,837	50
TOTALS 2005	\$1,860,474	\$164,169	\$970,205	52

Goal 50%

These are the Annual Conference-approved budgets but do not reflect all

the financial needs of the departments. Contact the individual departments for further information.

Good news

At the conclusion of the recent AFLC Annual Conference, President Robert Lee observed that he couldn't recall another conference where the theme was carried out so much throughout all the sessions. Sometimes themes don't connect very closely with what goes on in the conference, but this year was different. The theme, "This is a day of good news" taken from II Kings 7, was reflective of what went on at the conference and is going on throughout much of our AFLC.



Craig Johnson

In II Kings 7 we read of four lepers in a desperate situation. Their best option seemed to be to go to the enemy's camp and hope they'd get taken as prisoners and fed. As they went, much to their surprise, they found that God had caused the whole enemy army to flee and leave all their supplies behind. The lepers started to feast on what they found, but then they realized: "We're not doing right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves" (verse 9, NIV).

We're like those lepers. Apart from Christ we have no good options. But God in His grace has blessed us with His abundant love and mercy. Our souls are well fed by His Word. Many, however, aren't enjoying the spiritual feast. It wouldn't be right for us to keep the good news to ourselves.

God has given a number of stu-

dents in the AFLC a passion for sharing the good news. Tom Caouette, chairman of the World Missions Committee, reported: "There seems to be a stirring in the hearts of some in the AFLC toward saving the lost in foreign countries. This stirring is evident while speaking to students at AFLBS and AFLTS."

Pastor James L. Johnson said regarding AFLBS students, "Did you know that 46 percent of the class of 2006 is 'seriously considering' the call to full-time ministry? ... They volunteer to do hurricane relief in Louisiana without a staff leader to direct them. Thirty students gathered forces for spring break and borrowed Bible school vans and drove to the Gulf to witness and work on behalf of Samaritan's Purse — on behalf of Jesus Christ."

AFLC Youth Ministries Director Kevin Olson told of four mission trips the Youth Ministries Department is organizing this summer. "These four trips make up 70 young people, which is great, yet there are another eight mission trips being organized by individual churches and youth groups."

Some wanted to go on a mission trip but found the group already had more people than they could handle. So they organized another group to go — those are the kind of problems you want to have. That's evidence of a stirring from God.

This growing interest among students in sharing the good news hasn't come about because of some person's smart thinking or hard work. It has come from God. It may lead in surprising directions and result in mission work being done differently than it has been before. Our church body may soon be

When we start to realize how good it is to know Jesus as Savior and Lord and how much people need Him, we're going to want to share.”

involved in providing biblical training to people in other parts of the world via the Internet. We're sending missionaries to new places. People of different ages with a variety of gifts and educational backgrounds may be called to serve in missions.

The lepers went to tell the people in the city what they found. They knew how good the news was and how much the people needed to hear it. That's at the heart of a true passion for missions. When we start to realize how good it is to know Jesus as Savior and Lord and how much people need Him, we're going to want to share.

Christian educator Henrietta Mears said, "There is no magic in small dreams." Some in the AFLC have been inspired by God to dream big dreams of reaching the world with the good news of Jesus. Let us encourage those big dreams, prayerfully support the dreamers, and look forward with eager anticipation as to what God will do.

[Building the Base]

A view from the *brickyard*

What a view!" I murmured. The AFLC Annual Conference business had concluded just before noon on June 23. Finding the afternoon open, some friends in Christ and I found some Washington State natural beauty to take in. The rental car moved smoothly down the road as we came upon tucked-away shorelines and cliffs jutting up from the water. The physical view inspired many comments of awe as we came around new bends in the road.

The view from the physical realm directed this child of God through faith in Jesus to remember the Lord's mighty works. I wonder though if I would have connected the two so quickly had it not been for God's reminder weeks earlier.

About two months ago, I was not certain what to make of my view of things. I was having a real "dry" time in my walk with the Lord. Everything seemed to be particularly difficult: my ministry, my family, and my own selfish heart.

It was during that time that I came to Exodus 5. Moses and Aaron are going to talk to Pharaoh after the Lord met with Moses at the burning bush. God is in the midst of doing something amazing! But right in the middle of that spiritual reality, the physical reality looks awful.

Pharaoh's response to their appeal ("Let My people go") further burdens the Israelites' work load (v. 6-9). Their task of making bricks got significantly harder. The Israelite foremen respond (v. 15-16), "Wait a minute! You

can't do that to us!" Pharaoh explained his decision was in response to their desire to go and worship the Lord (v. 17-18). The Israelite foremen tell Moses and Aaron what they think of this development, including a call for Moses and Aaron's punishment from the Lord (v. 20-21). The chapter closes (v. 22-23) with Moses before the Lord, crying out, "What's going on here?" Moses' cry sounded a lot like mine during the dry time.

Then it hit me! I had been focused on the dry, confusing conditions, just like the Israelites. They were about to watch the Lord work through supernatural means to bring about complete deliverance from bondage, yet they could not see it! God was intimately at work behind the scenes, outside the realm of their physical view.

I am finalizing this article the Monday after the 44th Annual Conference of the AFLC concluded. It was a rich time hearing reports of God's faithful working, and considering His inerrant, infallible Word together. At the same time, there are questions about finances and about the future. These areas can lead us to despair if we looked only from the physical view.

The physical view from the brickyard brought the people of God serious discouragement. But a fresh view from uncertain conditions, a perspective that looks directly into face of Jesus, reminds us that He is at work behind the scenes — leading us on. Now that's a view to hold on to!

— By Pastor Jason Holt
Calvary Free Lutheran
Fergus Falls, Minn.