

THE LUTHERAN 

AUGUST 2008

AMBASSADOR

FROM HIM

THROUGH HIM

*The
Annual Conference*

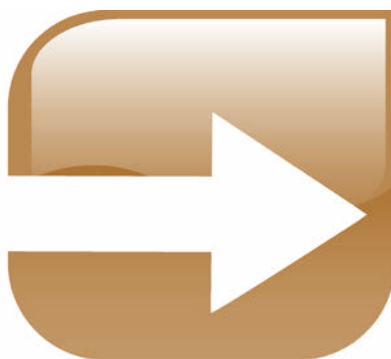


in Oklahoma City

TO HIM

ROMANS 11:36

My



territory

BY AMY ANDRESEN

I've been asking God nearly every morning this summer to enlarge my territory to share the truth of Christ. I've prayed, "Go before me, Lord. Guide, lead and direct me. Give me your words, not mine. For I no longer live for myself, but for Christ Jesus my Lord. Protect me from evil that I won't be harmed or harm others." Like the prayer of Jabez in I Chronicles 4:10, God has been answering my prayer.

This summer I have been working as a part-time naturalist at the local state park. Along with other naturalists from around the state, I spent several days at a training event. For two nights we slept in small cabins. My roommate was Michelle, who did not know about Jesus. The Lord had given us several hours of time alone together, and I shared the dire situation we are all in because of sin and how Jesus paid the penalty of sin for us. She didn't give her life to Christ, but a seed was planted. I am so thankful to Him that He gave me words to share with her. She said that she was happy to have had me as a roommate because I was encouraging to her. All glory to God who went before me.

On the second day, the naturalists were on a tour of the hosting state park. The guide was touching on evolution. I had a pit in my stomach hearing this lie. There were so many attentive ears! I raised my hand and gently and kindly remarked that Christians believe in creation

and that as naturalists we should be aware of that. I said that we can offer that belief as well in our presentations. What amazed me was that not one person spoke up to agree with me. Were there truly no other Christians in the group? Or were they afraid of offending someone? What were they going to do? Would they throw me off the high bridge we were standing on? (In some countries around the world they would!)

Returning from training and back at my own park, William and Anthony, two park summer employees, were eating their lunch next to my work area. I truly don't recall how the topic of spiritual things came up, but it did. Death was discussed and William said that when we die, we're in the ground and that's that. I said that actually there is more to it. I told him about how the Bible talks of going to heaven or to hell. We talked of evolution and other topics. The Lord gave me words to say.

William has come to me often and we visit. I know the Lord has prepared his heart to receive Him. I pray often for him. The Holy Spirit is at work.

I encourage you to ask the Lord to enlarge your borders. Ask Him to go before you, to guide and lead you. He is waiting for each of us to be obedient to the calling. It's such a joy and privilege to serve the Lord. Who else will speak the truth in love to the world if Christians won't?

Andresen is a member of Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Madison, S.D.

August 2008 >>

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Editor Pastor Craig Johnson
craigj@teleport.com

Managing Editor Ruth Gunderson
ruthg@afllc.org

Editorial Board Oryen Benrud
Pastor Jerry Moan
Pastor James L. Johnson

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How absolutely necessary it is for us to continually acknowledge that the individual ministries entrusted to us as a church fellowship are the Lord's ministries; they are not ours — they are from Him!

— Dr. Francis Monseth
Free Lutheran Seminary Dean

AFLC Youth Ministries stands prepared to encourage local congregations to win students to Christ, to build them in God's love, to equip them to communicate their faith with others, and to multiply maturing disciples of Jesus, who will engage others to follow Him.

— Pastor Jason Holt
AFLC Youth Ministries Director

Opportunities to share the gospel abound; let's be faithful to share with as many as we can, as often as we can, wherever we can the wonderful message of life He has given to us.

— Pastor Elden Nelson
AFLC President

We are compelled to reach as many as we can for Christ in the days ahead through prayer and mission endeavors that become self-supporting and reproducing as quickly as possible.

— Pastor Del Palmer
AFLC World Missions Director

FROM HIM THROUGH HIM TO HIM

AFLC ANNUAL CONFERENCE

ROMANS 11:36

The 2008 Annual Conference Report From

Oklahoma City

BY PASTOR CRAIG JOHNSON

Starting well is important for musicians playing a piece of music, athletes in competition, and workers on a new job. The 2008 AFLC Annual Conference in Oklahoma City, June 10-13, started well. It began with worship.

The sanctuary of First Lutheran Church of Oklahoma City was packed to overflowing on the evening of June 10. The congregation sang out loud and strong on the opening hymn, "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty." The singing was aided by the playing of the congregation's organist and music director, Elaine Chard, and by the great acoustics of the stately sanctuary. The service continued with more music, Scripture readings, confessions of sin and of faith, a message from Pastor David Skordahl and the serving of Holy Communion.

The next morning, after devotions, the conference business sessions began. Representatives of the various ministries of the AFLC shared reports, resolutions were presented and elections were held.



AFLC President Pastor Elden Nelson (top) officiated the business meetings while Pastor Brian Davidson, secretary, kept record of the events.

Pastor Alan Arneson, Fosston, Minn., and Pastor Ken Moland, Kirkland, Wash., (left) chat following a business session.

Jean Caouette, Maple Grove, Minn., and Pastor Dale Finstrom, Fertile, Minn., (above) grab refreshments outside the business meeting.

FINANCES

The Budget Analysis Review Committee reported on their evaluation of the budgetary system of the AFLC. Their study resulted in a resolution that was presented to the conference which states that donations to the AFLC that are not designated to a particular ministry be distributed among the Coordinating Committee Corporation, the Missions Corporation and the Schools Corporation equally. After much discussion the resolution passed.

Also in the area of finances discussion took place on once again hiring a director of development for the AFLC. Much of the discussion was about how such a position would be funded. The Coordinating Committee was encouraged to develop a plan.

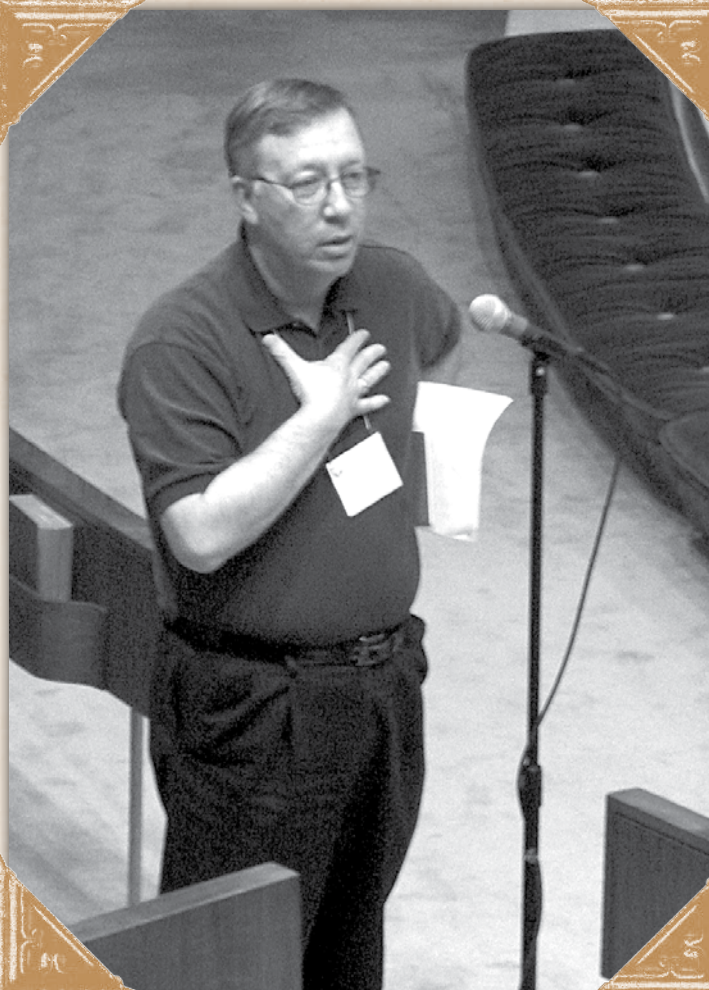
The high cost of premiums for major medical insurance has led members of the Pension Board and Coordinating Committee to consider dropping the health insurance plan that is offered to AFLC pastors. The conference resolved that the board "make every effort to assist the participants to find the best coverage possible."

COMINGS & GOINGS

Nine congregations were welcomed into the AFLC during the past year. These include: Grace Lutheran of Bensonville, Ill.; Immanuel Lutheran, New Leipzig, N.D.; St John's Lutheran, Newark, Ohio; Lakeview Lutheran, Egeland, N.D.; Trinity Bergen Lutheran, Starkweather, N.D.; Faith Lutheran, Blackduck, Minn.; East Marsh River, Halstad, Minn.; Augustana Lutheran, Duluth, Minn.; and Disciple Lutheran Fellowship, Reading, Penn. Congregations from York, Penn.; Shevlin, Minn.; Clayton, Wis.; and Parker, Colo., were removed from the congregational roster.

After the Wednesday evening mission festival service conducted by the Women's Missionary Federation a reception was held for missionaries Dan and Debbie Giles. The Giles recently left the mission field of Mexico to care for Dan's parents. Appreciation for their 23 years of service to AFLC World Missions was expressed.

After the Thursday evening worship service a reception was held to express appreciation for Jerry Nelson, who recently resigned after serving as director of music at the AFLC Schools for the past 17 years.





Pastor Richard Gunderson (above, left) prays for Pastor Dan and Debbie Giles, who resigned recently as AFLC missionaries to Mexico.



Pastor David Johnson (left, center) and his wife, Vicki, of Cloquet, Minn., talk with Pastor Todd Klemme, Starbuck, Minn.

Pastor Terry Culler, Hagerstown, Md., (opposite page, top) speaks to a resolution on the conference floor.

Pastor Tonnes Pollestad (opposite, left) discusses finances with AFLC bookkeeper Cory Buck.



SCHOOLS

Representatives from the AFLC Bible School and Seminary reported on opportunities and challenges facing the schools. The schools want to keep tuition as low as possible but costs continue to rise. The conference resolved to “encourage our congregations as well as individuals to provide financial support and/or establish scholarship funds for AFLBS students.”

A pipe organ was donated to the schools. Along with the installation of the organ, extensive repairs were made to the chapel on campus during the past year. The costs came to \$280,000. The debt has been reduced to \$134,000.

The amount owed on the mortgage of the campus’ Heritage Hall has been reduced to less than \$260,000. People were encouraged to take part in retiring this debt.

MISSIONS & EVANGELISM

During the past year the Lutheran Mission Society gave to AFLC Home Missions their property in Naknek and South Naknek, Alaska. The gift includes two church buildings, two parsonages, an airplane, an airplane hanger and the radio station KAKN with the FCC license. The conference resolved to give thanks for the open door of ministry and ask for God’s wisdom and direction. It also resolved “that all the issues related to this ministry be prayerfully reviewed annually for the next five years by the officers of the Missions Corporation and the Budget Analysis Committee.”

The 2007 Annual Conference asked the World Missions Committee to present a vision and goals for future foreign mission work. The Committee prayerfully worked on that during the past year and shared the direction God has been giving them. The vision is “to equip indigenous leaders to nurture local congregations so that by the grace of God they may direct their own affairs, seek salvation for the lost, and mutually assist one another to the glory of God.” The goal is to “carry out this vision through the following: prayer, preparation, outreach, training development and compassion.”

This vision and goal will involve preparing missionaries from childhood. It includes a “plan to make a deliberate effort to reach an unreached people group for Christ in the future.” It will also involve training spiritual leaders in their own country who will reach their own people. Then, they will lead ministries and congregations who will be reliant not so much on people from another country but upon God.

On June 9, a day before the Annual Conference began, the AFLC Commission on Evangelism sponsored a Rekindling the Fire event for pastors and their wives. Pastor Bruce Kotila spoke at two sessions in the afternoon on the theme of doing evangelism through small groups. In the evening the pastors were treated to dinner in the rotunda of the Oklahoma State Capitol.

PARISH EDUCATION & YOUTH WORK

The Parish Education department reported on projects that were completed during the past year. The late Dr. Iver Olson’s book, *Baptism and Spiritual Life*, was reprinted, thanks to a generous gift from the Olson family. The department worked with the Evangelism and Youth departments to produce a tract called, “The Mirror,” which explains the way of salvation.

A new book, *Missionary Chronicles*, was available for purchase at the conference. The book is a collection of short stories from various mission fields. It includes illustrations by children and maps of the continents and countries the stories speak about. Included in new projects the department is working on are Grade 5 Sunday school curriculum and confirmation curriculum.

In the area of youth work information was given regarding speakers and musicians who will be sharing at the 2009 Free Lutheran Youth National Convention, to be held July 6-11 in Estes Park, Colo. Information was also shared about the financial needs of AFLC Youth Ministries. The department has introduced the Gideon Plan and is seeking 300 supporters who will contribute \$10 a month to AFLC Youth Ministries to help cover the \$3,000 a month projected budget shortfall.

The morning and afternoon sessions of the conference were held at St. Luke’s United Methodist Church in Oklahoma City. The evening services took place at the nearby host church: First Lutheran. The concluding service of the conference on June 13 was a time of worship. The service included music, testimonies, a time of prayer and a message by Pastor Terry Olson.

Assisting in hosting the conference was Faith Lutheran of Durant, Okla. Conference sessions were led by Pastor Elden Nelson, who was elected last year to a 3-year-term as AFLC president. AFLC Vice President Pastor Michael Brandt and AFLC Secretary Brian Davidson were both re-elected to 1-year-terms. Registration for the conference totaled 327. The 2009 Annual Conference is to be held in Fergus Falls, Minn.



Pastor David Skordahl, Morris, Ill., (top, left) chats with Vint Bruflat, Mesa, Ariz., outside the business meeting room.

First Lutheran (bottom left), Oklahoma City, was the site of the evening services, including the Missions Festival Service.

Cassia Fugleberg (bottom right), from Fargo, N.D., teaches VBS at conference as part of an AFLBS gospel team.



Passion

BY PATRICIA BALLMANN

Surely the Spirit of the Lord is in this place.” This praise chorus was running through my head as I sat observing the AFLC conference going on around me. While I have been in the AFLC for several years, this was the first annual conference I have attended. Living in Texas, we can’t often make it to the conferences held up north, so my family definitely wanted to come while it was being held in the South. I was so blessed and glad that I went. I was familiar with the concept of the AFLC’s structure and emphasis on layperson involvement, but it was a privilege to get to see this in action and actually get to participate by voting. The AFLC’s policy is that a majority of members on a committee must be laymen. How different this is from other church conferences!

The theme for the conference, “From Him, Through Him, To Him,” was based on Romans 11:36, which says, “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.” I enjoyed hearing the different rich insights into this passage from various pastors throughout the conference. It was also special to worship and fellowship with believers from across the country who share the same beliefs and values as I do. The evening worship services were powerful as we heartily raised our voices in song to praise our Redeemer and King. Another blessing was getting to meet firsthand the people who serve in the various ministries of the AFLC and to finally put faces with the names of people about whom I had been hearing and for whom I have been praying.

Most importantly, I walked away with a renewed passion for prayer. Prayer time was a huge priority and emphasis throughout the conference, as well as the truths of *why* we pray. We were encouraged repeatedly to trust God to supply our needs for the AFLC, not just to focus on more creative man-made ways to achieve our goals. Again and again, people recognized that without the Holy Spirit’s involvement and blessing in our plans, we would labor in vain. Not only that, but they exhorted us to keep up our faithful praying at home. President Elden Nelson expressed it well in his report: “We com-


plain and blame the ACLU for taking prayer out of our schools, but think little about our responsibility to attend and participate in the prayer meetings at our church.”

However, these men didn’t just preach on prayer—they prayed! A half hour of prayer and morning and afternoon devotions were scheduled into each day’s packed agenda, and no matter how behind we got with the business, the times for devotion and prayer were never sacrificed or shortened. What a joy it was to lift up my voice in prayer with hundreds of other people, beseeching God on behalf of the ministries, missionaries, and people of the AFLC! Not only did they schedule times of prayer, but also many times during the actual reports of various committees, when a need was expressed, the business meeting would be put on hold while we held a special prayer time, lifting up that request to God’s eternal throne of grace.

There was only one thing that I felt would have improved my experience. It would have been extremely helpful if members of the Nominating Committee would have included short bios for each of the persons they nominated for different positions, including such things as the person’s prior involvement in the AFLC and/or other ministries and his or her occupation (if a layperson). I was unfamiliar with most of the names on the list and had to vote for people about whom I knew nothing. Making sure that those new to the AFLC have the information they need to make wise, knowledgeable decisions will foster more laity participation in the AFLC’s work.

Overall, it was a blessed time of encouragement, refreshment, and empowerment to get out and get doing, to keep my focus solely on Jesus, to pray, and to preach/share Christ crucified while I still can. I would encourage you, whether you haven’t been to the annual conference in a while or have never gone, to make it a priority for next summer. You won’t regret it!

Ballmann is a member of Word of Truth Lutheran, Glen Rose, Texas.



for Prayer



A group of conference attendees gathers together for prayer during the daily break for corporate prayer before lunch.

2008 conference election RESULTS

Vice President

Pastor Michael Brandt, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Secretary

Pastor Brian Davidson, Laurel, Neb.

Coordinating Committee

Mel Fischer, Shakopee, Minn. (four-year term)

Pastor Tim Skramstad, Eagan, Minn. (five-year term)

AFLC Schools Board of Trustees

Voted on by corporation members

Pastor Dana Coyle, Ottawa, Ill. (five-year term)

Pastor Martin Horn, Kenyon, Minn. (three-year term)

John Talley, Newark, Ill. (five-year term)

Board of Pensions

Jordan Volk, Brandon, S.D. (five-year term)

World Missions Committee

Voted on by corporation members

Pastor Craig Wentzel, Edmore, N.D. (five-year term)

Jim Taylor, Pittsburgh, Pa. (five-year term)

Home Missions Committee

Voted on by corporation members

Kenneth Graham, Camarillo, Calif. (five-year term)

Carl Busse, Humboldt, Tenn. (five-year term)

Stewardship Board

Pastor Rich Ramsbacher, Culbertson, Mont. (five-year term)

Youth Board

Dan Antal, Park River, N.D. (five-year term)

Board of Publications and Parish Education

Bonnie Handsaker, Radcliffe, Iowa (five-year term)



Commission on Evangelism

Dean Hobelmann, Republic, Kan. (five-year term)

ARC Board

Voted on by corporation members

There were not enough members of the corporation present to form a quorum at conference. Results (one layman/one pastor) will be available following the corporation's annual meeting on July 22 at the ARC, Osceola, Wis.

FLAPS Board of Managers

Voted on by corporation members

Kevin Hoops, Byron, Kan. (five-year term)

Budget Analysis Committee

Nathan Dalager, Argyle, Minn. (three-year term)

Allen Twedt, Portland, N.D. (three-year term)

2009 Colloquy Committee

Pastor Thomas Gilman, Lakeville, Minn.

Pastor James L. Johnson, Camarillo, Calif.

Pastor Al Monson, Mesa, Ariz.

Pastor Lloyd Quanbeck, Minot, N.D.

Pastor Don Voorhees, Dannebrog, Neb.

2009 Nominating Committee

Eastern North Dakota

Kermit Berge

Western N.D./

Eastern Montana

Mark Gustafson

South Dakota

Mike McCarlson

Lake Superior

Pastor David Johnson

Northwestern

Minnesota

Roland Deschene

North Central

Minnesota

Roger Tollefson

Southwest Central

Minnesota

Miles Mondt

Nebraska/Colorado/

Kansas

Mark Keller

Minneapolis

Pastor Nick Dyrud

Central Tri-State

Pastor Joe Ocker

Northern Michigan

Pastor Tom Schierkolk

South Central

Pastor Craig Scavo

Southwestern

Pastor Paul Kneeland

Pacific Northwest

Tim Erhardt

Eastern

Pastor Brent Olson

Illinois

Steve Lehmann

LEFT: Volunteers found their way upstairs at the conference site where they counted votes taken on the conference floor for boards, committees and leadership positions within the AFLC.

Missions Corporation

(five-year terms)

Pastor Mark Antal, Park River, N.D.

Robert Christian, Newark, Ill.

Pastor Brian Davidson, Naknek, Alaska

Pastor Eugene Enderlein, Plymouth, Minn.

Tom Fugleberg, Roseau, Minn.

LuVerne Hagen, Badger, Minn.

Pastor Herb Hoff, Salinas, Calif.

David Jameson, Earlville, Ill.

Willis Kettelhut, Deshler, Neb.

Dwight Kiefert, Valley City, N.D.

Carol Knapp, Willmar, Minn.

Pastor George Knapp, Willmar, Minn.

Kevin Lee, Beulah, N.D.

Lay Pastor Jerry Nelson, La Crosse, Wis.

Pastor Tom Olson, Newark, Ohio

Wayne Olson, Blue Earth, Minn.

LeRoy Schierkolk, Prairie Farm, Wis.

Pastor Tom Schierkolk, Eben Junction, Mich.

LaVern Thompson, Fergus Falls, Minn.

Wayne Walker, Kenyon, Minn.

(one term of four years)

Don Hanson, Ray, N.D.

Schools Corporation

(five-year terms)

Pastor Jon Benson, Upsala, Minn.

Arne Berge, Binford, N.D.

Lay Pastor Bill Buck, Sinai, S.D.

Pastor Todd Erickson, Roseau, Minn.

Darrell Haugen, Binford, N.D.

Steve Jankord, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Pastor Gary Jorgenson,

East Grand Forks, Minn.

Pastor John Mundfrom, Eugene, Ore.

Pastor Brian Pearson, Ruskin, Fla.

Pastor Lloyd Quanbeck, Minot, N.D.

(one term of one year)

Pastor Kirk Flaa, Sioux Falls, S.D.

ARC Corporation

There were not enough members of the corporation present to form a quorum at conference. Results will be available following the corporation's annual meeting on July 22 at the ARC, Osceola, Wis.

2009 Committees*

Committee No. 1

(Administration)

Lester Carlson, Balsam Lake, Wis.

Pastor Richard Carr, Hagerstown, Md.

Jon Dryburgh, Grafton N.D.

David Ford, Dalton, Minn.

Jim Taylor, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Committee No. 2

(Schools)

Loiell Dyrud, Thief River Falls, Minn.

Scott Erickson, Badger, Minn.

Pastor Thomas Gilman, Lakeville, Minn.

Justin Jones, New Hope, Minn.

Paul Strand, Kenyon, Minn.

Committee No. 3

(Missions and Evangelism)

Roland Deschene, Argyle, Minn.

Pastor Greg Lenz, Chanhassen, Minn.

Kevin Olson, Eden Prairie, Minn.

Richard Stimson, Cleburne, Texas

Pastor Jonathan Unverzagt, Sparta, Wis.

Committee No. 4

(Publications and Parish Education)

Nathan Dalager, Argyle, Minn.

Pastor Rodney Johnson, Stanley, N.D.

Paula Nyman, Beulah, N.D.

Pastor Craig Scavo, Durant, Okla.

Scott Schauer, Oklahoma City, Okla.

Committee No. 5

(Stewardship and Pensions)

David Berg, St. Louis, Mo.

Jeanne Holman, Minneapolis, Minn.

Mike Schriver, Seward, Neb.

Pastor Gary Simons, Fargo, N.D.

Eldwyn VanBruggen, Mesa, Ariz.

* Committee members will meet on June 15, 2009, preceding the conference scheduled June 16-19 in Fergus Falls, Minn.



In {HIS} hands

The WMF convention

BY PHYLLIS PETERSON

The national Women's Missionary Federation gathered for its 46th annual convention on June 10 in Oklahoma City, Okla. Members of First Lutheran of Oklahoma City and Faith Lutheran of Durant, Okla., were our hosts. Our theme was, "My Times are in Your Hands," which was taken from Psalm 34:14-15a.

President Lorilee Mundfrom welcomed us. The Ambassadors, a student musical ministry group from the Association Free Lutheran Bible School, led us in a number of praise songs throughout the morning. Sherri Scavo, Durant, led devotions using our theme verses to challenge us. Sherri also led us in a brief memorial service, followed by a time of prayer. Our Bible study was led by Nancy Holcomb, the writer of our 2008 Bible study, "Gifts of Grace." We studied the peaks, pits and promises that David experienced in Psalm 31, and were encouraged to trust God through such times and thereby embrace them.

In our business session, Lois Grothe, Astoria, Ore., was elected treasurer and Molly Wiesen, Grafton, N.D., was re-elected to her position as second vice-president. Resolutions were adopted to strengthen our resolve to be in God's will and work at home and abroad.

During our noon luncheon we were entertained by Linda Mohagen, Reva, S.D., and her puppets. Noah Forsberg, Amarillo, Texas, favored us with several musical selections. Jane Rasmussen, our guest speaker from Maple Grove, Minn., shared several humorous quips, intertwined with Scripture concerning our time.

Our theme, "My Times are in Your Hands," was car-

ried through in the afternoon workshops as Sandy Weaver presented "Good Times Alert," Wendy Westlake presented "Hope for Hard Times," and Pastor Michael Brandt presented "Finishing Well."

Jana Heidebrecht was the guest musician at the banquet, favoring us with violin selections. Guest speaker Debbie Giles, who, along with her husband, Pastor Dan Giles have served for 23 years as AFLC missionaries, shared about God's work in Mexico and in their lives. Outgoing treasurer Lynn Wellumson, Williston, N.D., was honored for her years of service.

At the leadership breakfast on June 12, Lynn Wellumson presented a World Class Christian mini-workshop. Bethany Free Lutheran of Abercrombie, N.D., was the winner of a World Class Christian workshop.

The Ambassadors led in praise and devotions at the Mission Festival Service on Wednesday evening. Dr. Lyle Mattson, Greenbush, Minn., a member of the World Mission Committee, spoke and showed slides about his mission trip to India. World Missions Director Del Palmer brought video greetings from our missionaries. He also acknowledged the resignation of missionaries Dan and Debbie Giles. A reception was held for the Giles following the service.

Offerings received by the WMF were divided between World Missions, Home Missions and the WMF General Fund.

Peterson is a member of Valley Free Lutheran, Portland, N.D.

PICTURED CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Noah Forsberg sang at the WMF luncheon. Dr. Lyle Mattson, World Missions Committee member, spoke at the mission festival service. Workshop attendees listen to Sandy Weaver. Retiring missionary

Debbie Giles spoke at the WMF banquet. Nancy Holcomb led a Bible study. Wendy Westlake presented an afternoon workshop. There was time for fellowship. Linda Mohagen entertains with her puppets.

Traveling to a village in Tanzania isn't a simple matter. In the countryside of this African nation, the roads are sometimes little more than dirt paths, about the width of one vehicle. They are often full of deep ruts and potholes, with plenty of curves and hills over which to travel. A Toyota Land Cruiser is the vehicle of choice for handling the rough roads, and it is the type of vehicle Jesse Long and Ben Jore rent as they do their weekend ministry.

Jesse and Ben serve in Tanzania as short-term missionaries with AFLC World Missions. They recently finished their second year of teaching at the Waama Bible College in the town of Mbulu. On weekends they often travel to villages and show the *Jesus* film. This past May I had the opportunity to visit them and join them on a weekend trip.

After three hours on the Tanzanian roads we got to the first village. The Land Cruiser had been full of passengers. Besides Ben, Jesse and myself, there were Bible college students from the villages we were visiting, the driver and others in need of a ride.

We showed the film in one village on Friday night and another on Saturday. The first night's showing was in Swahili, the national language of Tanzania. Many people in the villages, however, are more comfortable speaking their tribal language, so the second night's showing was in Iraqw.

The villages we visited have no electricity or running water. To show the movie a gas-powered generator was brought along. A white sheet was hung over some poles and a screen was put up. The DVD player, projector and speaker were all hooked up.

On Saturday evening we set up on a patch of ground next to their little church building. I didn't see many homes or huts around. But out there in the bush, with no city lights shining, I could see all kinds of stars up in the sky.

I'm not sure where they came from, but people started arriving, a couple on bikes, but most by foot. By the time we showed the movie about 250 people were there, sitting on the ground. There was a wind blowing and we were at an elevation of around 5,000 feet, so it got to be a little bit of a chilly evening. The people stayed, though, to watch the movie. For some it might have been the first time they saw moving pictures. For some it might have been the first time they heard a clear presentation of the good news of Christ.

The movie is taken from the Gospel of Luke. It tells of Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection. At the end an invitation is given to receive Jesus as Lord and Savior and turn your life over to Him. A man responded to that invitation that Saturday night. He came forward and kneeled and the leader of the local congregation spoke and prayed with him.

I looked up at the stars later that evening. I couldn't begin to count the number I could see, but the Bible says regarding the Lord, "He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name" (Psalm 147:4, NIV). He is majestic and awesome beyond our comprehension. And yet that night He was interested in what was going on in a remote village in Tanzania. The One

who knows the names of all those stars was rejoicing over one sinner who repented (Luke 15:10).

"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?" (Psalm 8:3-4). I was a little amazed that we had found that village and gotten there, but that was nothing compared to the incredible truth that God noticed that village and was present that night. He touched a life. He helped somebody see his sin and need, understand His truth and respond to His great love and plan of salvation. The Creator of the stars, in His grace, came down and called somebody to be His child.



a starry night in africa



by pastor craig johnson
editor

[DOING] MISSIONS

BY PASTOR CRAIG WENTZEL

I'd like to share how the annual conference was an eye-opener to me about missions and a blessing as I saw the Lord working right in front of me.

While traveling down to Oklahoma on the Partners In Mission Outreach bus, and also during the conference, I was blessed to observe a World Missions Committee member (whom I have always thought to be quiet) using *every* opportunity to talk with people about Jesus. I came away from the conference realizing that the important thing is to be *doing* missions rather than just *talking* about missions. I was inspired to pray for opportunities and courage to visit with people when I flew back home.

On the flight from Oklahoma City to Denver, my seat mate dozed the whole flight and then made a business call. That's the way I usually am — all wrapped up in my own little world.

On the flight from Denver to Fargo, I was asked to change seats just before boarding. On the plane, I was seated next to a tall, mustached guy from Colorado Springs, Colo., who offered me a pinch of snuff. He was kind of a tough, no-nonsense, straight-shooting type of guy who trained horses for fun. I discovered he was a realtor, going to Moorhead, Minn., to pick up a motorcycle he had purchased.

When he found out I was a pastor, he asked me why we preachers didn't speak the truth of God's Word from the pulpit. He felt that everyone was saying that "God is love," but "love" has become so watered down that a better substitute for "love" is "truth." I asked if he followed the teachings of a particular church and he said he didn't because he

believed the Sabbath was Saturday, not Sunday, as it says in Scripture. So he worships in his own home, with a few others. He challenged me to also go by what the Word of God says instead of by what a church says.

As we shared "aha!" moments of understanding that the Lord had given each of us, he related how, in training horses, he walks up behind a horse in the corral, whistling, waving his arm and cracking a rope to make the horse aware of him and uncomfortable ... until, finally, when he calls the horse will come to him freely. He realized that is like the Lord's gentle dealing with us until we come to Him when He calls us.

As we shared about spiritual things, our hearts were drawn to each other. I told him I felt that the Lord had put us together in answer to prayer, and he said that he had been dreading the flight, but had really enjoyed it. Before we landed, we prayed for each other. When we parted, he was no longer serious and gruff, but warm and smiling.

Missions is not something we can always plan, but rather an open door that the Lord can lead us to, and through! I learned the meaning of Colossians 4:5-6: "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person."

Lord, grant that we *always* see the opportunity.

Wentzel, vice chairman of the World Missions Committee, serves Zoar Free Lutheran, Hampden, N.D., and Living Word Lutheran, Edmore, N.D.



SHEPHERD *quality*

BY PASTOR JEROME NIKUNEN

I remember the first night I was on call during my chaplain residency in a 350-bed hospital in Peoria, Ill. Another resident chaplain and I were sharing a table in the cafeteria with several doctors and nurses and, as might be expected, the part faith and prayer played in healing became the topic of discussion. The doctors and nurses were aware that prayer and faith are important, but they didn't quite understand the different roles a chaplain or pastor played compared to the medical personnel.

When a patient enters a hospital or becomes a resident of a nursing home, they become the object of someone else's care. While I realize that most medical personnel are caring people, they have a tendency to relate to patients and residents as objects of care and focus specifically on their diseases, treatments, and vital signs. To them the person in question might have become the heart patient in room 10, the one with cancer in bed three, or the resident with Alzheimer's in the special unit. This way of relating causes patients to feel lost, diminished, and out of touch.

A pastor or chaplain knows the patient or resident as a whole person — not only as a sick person — and certainly not as a disease. The pastor or chaplain is the one person who enters their rooms and does not have to *do* something to them. Patients are not the objects of our treatment. It is a powerful reminder that they are fully human beings created in the image of God.

Pastors must be reminded of the importance of pastoral visitation in hospitals and nursing homes — as well as to the shut-in — over and over again throughout their ministries. I am always deeply saddened when I hear someone



say, "My pastor has not been to visit me." The first question, of course, is, "Do they know you are here?" Most of the time the pastor has been notified.

Because pastors have been with parishioners in more secure places, our physical presence with them in this time and place gives them more security and helps lessen the panic and anxiety as we remind them of the One who has promised never to leave them or forsake them (Hebrews 13:5). The Lord is our shepherd and is with us even though we walk through the darkest valley of our lives (Psalm 23). Our pastoral caring serves as a living reminder of the everlasting care of the Good Shepherd. As our Good Shepherd, Jesus searches out the strayed, the lost, and the fallen.

The pastoral act of visiting a parishioner communicates that seeking quality of God. What an opportunity for seeking the lost could be wasted

if pastors neglect this shepherding relationship with the members of the flock with whom we have been entrusted!

And may I add a word to the member in the pew? Visitation is not something which only the pastor or the visitation committee should be doing! The Lord would have each one of us reaching out in this way. I often think of the beautiful example of an elderly couple in one of the congregations I've had the privilege of serving. Instead of going home after church on Sunday and taking a nap, every Sunday afternoon would find them going up and down the halls of the local hospital and nursing home sharing the love of Christ as they visited each patient and resident. If only the Lord would find us all so faithful!

Nikunen, president of AFLC Division of Institutional Chaplaincy, lives in Winger, Minn.



Members of Faith Lutheran, Durant, Okla., celebrated the congregation's 10th anniversary on June 15. Pictured, from left, are Pastor Roy Johnson, Northome, Minn. (formerly Wichita Falls, Texas), Pastor Craig Scavo (currently serving), Pastor Paul Nash, director of Home Missions, Pastor Gary Jorgenson, East Grand Forks, Minn. (first full-time pastor), Pastor Jerry Peterson, Oklahoma City, Okla., and Pastor Elden Nelson, AFLC president.

Summer Institute of Theology slated for Aug. 4-8

The Summer Institute of Theology is scheduled for Aug. 4-8 on the campus of the AFLC Schools, Plymouth, Minn. Classes offered include "Studies in the Gospel of Mark," by Pastor Jerry Moan; "The Lord's Supper," by Dr. Francis Monseth; "Missions and the Congregation," by Pastor Del Palmer; and "History of Lutheran Pietism," by Pastor Robert Lee.

Registration is \$20. Tuition, per credit hour, is \$25. If you wish to audit the courses, the cost is \$18 per credit hour. Housing is available on campus, as well as morning and noon meals for an additional fee. For more information about the institute, contact AFLTS at (763) 544-9501.

Letter to the Editor

I have just returned from my first AFLC annual conference. I was delighted to see what the AFLC stands for. I was amazed at all the areas the AFLC is involved with: FLAPS (Free Lutheran Association of Pilot Supporters), PIMO (Partners in Mission Outreach), ARC (Association Retreat Center, FLY (Free Lutheran Youth), and a close relationship with the missionaries and so many more.

The ministry in Alaska seems so interesting to me. We were told at conference that there are about 120 villages that have not heard of Jesus. Many people living there suffer from physical and emotional abuse. The only way to get to many of them is by plane. The radio station that is now part of the AFLC is working to get the Word to them. What a challenge this ministry is going to be.

I liked the emphasis on prayer during the business meetings. Prayer is so vital and to conduct church business this way is wonderful.

I also liked the stand on the inerrancy of the Bible. I grew up with the knowledge that the Bible was the inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God. That was huge for me to realize the AFLC is what I can completely feel at home with.

It was a wonderful trip. I enjoyed the bus (PIMO) from North Dakota to Oklahoma and getting to know everyone.

— Marilyn Wagner
Zion Lutheran
Tioga, N.D.

Labor Day retreat at Wilderness Bible Camp

Pastor Jim Christenson, Badger, Minn., will be the special speaker at the Labor Day retreat scheduled for Aug. 30-Sept. 1 at Wilderness Bible Camp near Lake Park, Minn.

For more information on the retreat, contact Nathan Dalager at (218) 437-6035.

Klempay will highlight organ dedication concert

AFLC Schools will host a concert to dedicate the complete installation of the Wicks pipe organ. The concert is scheduled for 4 p.m. Sept. 14 in the campus chapel, with guest organist Dr. Desiderius Klempay performing.

A native of Pancevo, Yugoslavia, Klempay has been principal organist at Wooddale Church in Eden Prairie, Minn., since 1988. He received a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in Organ Performance from the University of Minnesota and an Organ Diploma from the Mozarteum Conservatory in Salzburg, Austria.

A lunch will follow the concert and an offering will be taken to help retire the remaining debt on the organ installation project.

Golf Scramble will help benefit AFLBS students

AFLC Schools will host a golf tournament to help raise funds for new and returning AFLBS student scholarships.

The AFLBS Scramble is scheduled for Aug. 11 at Cedar Creek Golf Course, Albertville, Minn. The tournament starts at 10 a.m. Awards will be given out after the tournament, followed by lunch.

The tournament is a four-person team format, at a cost of \$340 per team. Other sponsorship options include an event sponsor level of \$1,000 (includes golf for four), clubhouse sponsor level of \$500 (includes golf for two), hole sponsor level of \$300 (includes golf for one), and single registration of \$100 (after July 23).

For more information on the event, contact AFLBS at (763) 544-9501.

More pictures from the annual conference in Oklahoma City



TOP: St. Luke's United Methodist Church, Oklahoma City, was the site of the annual conference business meetings. The church is located just two blocks from host congregation First Lutheran.

MIDDLE LEFT: The organist from St. Luke's United Methodist gives a short clinic on the church's pipe organ to conference attendees following a business session.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Prayer is a key focus for all annual conference meetings.

LEFT: The AFLC's Commission on Evangelism hosted a banquet at Oklahoma's state capitol rotunda during Rekindling the Fire, an annual event for pastors and their wives, which precedes the annual conference.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Pastor Brian Davidson has accepted an interim call to serve as the radio station manager at KAKN, Naknek, Alaska. He will arrive in Alaska on August 7. Pastor Jeff Swanson, will work with the Naknek and South Naknek congregations.

Pastor David Nelson has accepted a call to serve Ebenezer Free Lutheran, Humboldt, Tenn. Nelson had served Christian Free Lutheran, Wheatland, Iowa.

Pastor Tom Olson has accepted a call to serve St. John's Lutheran, Newark, Ohio. Olson, who leaves his position at Faith Lutheran, Mineral Point, Wis., began his work in Newark in August.

Kvam Free Lutheran, rural Dalton, MN, will celebrate the congregation's 140th anniversary on Aug. 10. The service begins at 10:30 a.m., followed by a dinner and afternoon program at 2 p.m. A cordial welcome is given to anyone who would like to attend the congregation's special day.

Members of **St John Evangelical Lutheran**, Milford, Ill., dedicated a new parish hall to the work of the Lord during a special service on June 1. Pastor Elden Nelson, AFLC president, was the guest speaker for the event.

Todd Waldie has accepted a call to serve as youth and family coordinator at Christ the King Lutheran, Pipestone, Minn. Waldie, a 2004 graduate of AFLBS, has been serving as interim youth director at Calvary Free Lutheran, Fergus Falls, Minn. He begins his work in Pipestone in August.

Pastor Andrew Coyle was ordained June 8 at Word of Life Free Lutheran, Mankato, Minn., with Pastor Elden Nelson officiating. Coyle, a 2008 graduate of AFLTS, has accepted a call to serve Salem Lutheran, Radcliffe, Iowa, and St. Paul's Lutheran, Jewell, Iowa.

Lay Pastor Paul Kneeland has accepted a call to serve Abiding Savior Free Lutheran, Tucson, Ariz. He previously served as the youth minister at Abiding Savior Free Lutheran, Sioux Falls, S.D.

Pastor Eric Rasmussen was ordained and installed July 13 at Calvary Free Lutheran, Fergus Falls, Minn., with Pastor Elden Nelson officiating. Rasmussen, a 2008 graduate of AFLTS, accepted a call to serve Calvary Free Lutheran as the associate pastor of youth and family ministry.

May/June memorials

All funds

Oscar Ostert

AFLBS

Kurt Blake

Corrine Nansen

Joanne Jorgenson Grubb (3)

Randy Strand

Annie Holen

AFLTS

Margaret Harbo

Joanne Jorgenson Grubb (2)

General Fund

Maynard Davidson

Home Missions

Vicky Kopp

Nora Nelson

Joanne Jorgenson Grubb

Howard Schenk

Maynard Brown

Dorothy Krueger

Jim Wulfekuhle

Parish Education

Dr. Mary Lindquist

Douglas Stone

J. Ed Mathistad

Joanne Jorgenson Grubb

Vision

Joanne Jorgenson Grubb

Erling Hoseth

WMF

Genevieve Jensen

Carol Nelson

World Missions

Mrs. Willard Setness

Youth Ministries

Joanne Jorgenson Grubb

... in honor of

AFLTS

Albin and Carol Haugen

World Missions

Quam and Hafvenstein wedding

Fall retreat at the ARC for classics

The Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis., will host one AFLC event this fall under the theme: "God's Plan of Salvation" (Ephesians 2:4-5).

The **Classics' Retreat** (for those 55+) will be Sept. 19-21 with Pastor Richard and Clara Gunderson speaking and Pastor Roger and Rose David leading worship. The cost is \$75 per person and \$125 per couple.

For more information on the retreat, call (800) 294-2877 or visit the ARC's Web site at www.arc-aflc.org.

AFLC BENEVOLENCES Jan. 1- June 30, 2008

FUND	TOTAL (Subsidy)	REC'D IN JUNE	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$360,331	\$24,083	\$178,436	50
Evangelism	113,084	5,560	42,934	38
Youth Ministries	71,249	9,339	49,839	70
Parish Education	116,771	5,398	53,902	46
Seminary	220,252	11,505	90,824	41
Bible School	346,706	20,953	156,409	45
Home Missions	332,985	27,501	135,181	41
World Missions	288,948	13,740	148,220	51
Personal Support	457,495	32,777	232,007	51
TOTALS	\$2,307,821	\$150,856	\$1,087,752	47
TOTALS 2007	\$2,220,688	\$175,522	\$1,091,428	49

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.

counting the COSTS

Before the start of my final year as a student at the Free Lutheran Seminary, a donation was made to help students with tuition. Prior to that time, however, the seminary had not been charging tuition. But members of the Board of Trustees had been considering doing so in order to meet expenses. The decision was made to begin charging tuition and to use the donation to help provide financial aid. For us students things became more expensive that year. Some of us joked that we hoped nobody else gave us financial aid. We couldn't afford it.



Pastor Craig Johnson

A couple of years ago the AFLC Schools received the gift of a pipe organ. Over the past year it has been installed in the campus chapel. This has required a lot of labor and some remodeling. Some of this work would have been needed even without the pipe organ. The cost of the project was \$280,000. The debt has been reduced to \$134,000. We give thanks for the gift of the organ and the hard

work that has been done. We pray gifts will come in so that this debt, along with the debt on Heritage Hall, may soon be eliminated.

AFLC Home Missions received a gift this past year of two church buildings, two parsonages, an airplane, an airplane hanger and the radio station KAKN, all located in Naknek and South Naknek, Alaska. It is a special opportunity to be involved in an important area of mission work. We give thanks for the gift, but we recognize, as with other gifts, expenses will be involved. Alaska can be a costly place to live and work. Supporting workers, maintaining property and doing ministry there will incur a number of ongoing expenses. We pray our congregations will support this work with prayers and gifts.

Jesus said, "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?" (Luke 14:28, NIV). The context of that verse is a call to consider the cost of being Jesus' disciple. The principle can be applied, also, to the ongoing life of serving Christ. As we step into new areas of

service we need to consider the costs and ask whether we're willing to make the sacrifices that might be necessary.

In some ways counting the costs may seem to go against the call to take steps of faith; to "live by faith, not by sight" (II Corinthians 5:7). Both counting the cost and living by faith are part of Scripture. Both play a role in making decisions in the body of Christ.

Some people are by nature cost-counters. When everybody else is getting carried away by how good an idea sounds, they're looking at the church's budget, crunching numbers and asking, "Can we afford it?"

Other people are quick to step out in faith. They dream big dreams. What others call a risk they see as a great opportunity.

We need both the risk-takers and the cost-counters in the body of Christ. We need those who inspire and also those who offer practical wisdom.

The cost-counters remind congregations and departments of our church body to be realistic when we budget. If God provides more than we expect we'll give thanks, but we won't spend it until God provides it. Billy Graham encouraged his association to have the philosophy, "Whatever God provides, we will live within the budget."

The risk-takers encourage us to set goals higher than simply keeping the doors open another year. We serve a great God who wants us to take the good news of Jesus to all the world. He promises to meet all our needs "according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

We need both the risk-takers and the cost-counters in the body of Christ. We need those who inspire and also those who offer practical wisdom. We need those who dream dreams and those who count nickels. When the various parts of the body respect one another and work together, Christ is honored and His Church is blessed.

building the base

BY PASTOR RICH CARR

My wife, Brenda, and I encountered many blessings while attending the annual conference. Besides the usual joy found in coming together as a community of like-minded believers, the informative presentations, and the fun of traveling together, I discovered that Oklahoma City is a wonderful town that contains more than just roaming cowboys, covered wagons, and great BBQ.

On the recommendation of a friend from seminary, Brenda and I took a tour of the Oklahoma City Memorial Museum. At first I had my reservations about touring a museum dedicated to the events that transpired around the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, yet I felt compelled to see what the museum had to offer.

When we left the conference to tour the national monument, we figured we had plenty of time to see the museum, head back to the hotel to change, then make it back to the church service that night. More than two hours later they were practically shoving us out the door when the museum closed.

I knew of the events of April 19, 1995, and felt bad about what happened when I saw the devastation on TV after the bombing, but I never really realized the degree of the horror people experienced as a result of that bomb. What gripped both of us were the testimonies of the sur-



SALT & LIGHT

vivors and the recorded video footage of the event. In one testimony at the museum, a Vietnam veteran who endured some of the harshest realities of that war is still to this day brought to his knees in fear and trembling whenever a loud noise triggers his memory of the bombing. In one short second the lives of 168 people were taken, and hundreds more struggle with living to this day.

I was reminded that Christians are called to be the salt and light in this world. When we stop being that salt and light, culture and mankind automatically spirals downward. What would have happened if one Christian would have led Timothy McVeigh to Christ? What terrible event will happen in the future because believers have not taken to heart God's calling to spread the good news?

Now, more than ever, we need godly men and women to stand up and claim responsibility for our sinful culture. We need to stand up, confessing our sins, and turn to God as a nation in repentance. Repentance that leads to revival needs to start with believers before it happens in our culture. Let us join together and turn to God in prayer and fasting, seeking His mercy before another event reminds us of our nation's sinfulness, and our apathy to it.

Carr serves Christ Community, Hagerstown, Md.