

The Lutheran AMBASSADOR

August 25, 1998



Aim high:

*Training people in God's
Word in Sunday school.*

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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

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COVER: The 1998 AFLBS Majesty team with youth of the Pacific Northwest District on top of Mt. Pilchuck, Washington. Mt. Baker is in the background. Photo by Dan Crowell of Soundview Aerial Photography.

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For editorial inquiries and information:
The Lutheran Ambassador, P.O. Box 446, Bruce, SD 57220; phone 605-627-5188; e-mail craigj@teleport.com

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

Wherever is heard an encouraging word

Let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching. — Hebrews 10:25

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What does it mean to encourage someone spiritually? We can encourage others on two levels. Those who are using their gifts

can be encouraged to continue. Those who are living through pressing circumstances can be encouraged with the promises of God.

How do we encourage those who are using their spiritual gifts to keep up the good work? One church I visited had cards in the pew. These cards were specifically meant to be used for encouragement. They were preprinted postcards ready to be filled out and mailed. Often we are in church when we remember how a person has ministered to us spiritually. When that happened in this particular church, people were to take out a card, jot down a note of encouragement and send it to the person. I wonder how many people would persevere in serving the Lord if they knew how they were affecting the lives of others?

Sometimes people have specific gifts and talents and don't even know it. They should be encouraged to serve the Lord as well. Wednesday evenings we have a group of Bible school students come to work with our youth. One evening the team had each person tape a piece of paper to his or her back. Then they told each of the youth to go around and write a quality or gift demonstrated by the person with the paper on his or her back. It was a great encouragement to know the gifts that others see in us.

Let us be faithful in encouraging others to their face. God reminds us, "An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him

up" (Proverbs 12:25).

There are also those around us that need encouragement because they are experiencing hard situations in life. How good it is to be able to share the promises of God with them.

Recently a very strong storm blew through our community. Some people had trees to clean up. Others had major portions of their homes destroyed. Almost everyone was without power for an extended period of time. What a comfort to be able to share God's promises with those who trust Him. In the midst of devastating times we can encourage them that God is there. He says, "I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you" (Isaiah 41:13). No other encouragement can compare to the certainty and power of God's promises.

As God has refreshed and encouraged you, be faithful in passing that same encouragement on to others. "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (II Corinthians 1:3-4).



— **Pastor Del Palmer**
Faith Lutheran
Shakopee, Minnesota

sound bites

You should also take pains to urge governing authorities and parents to rule wisely and educate their children. They must be shown

1 that they are obliged to do so, and that they are guilty of damnable sin if they do not do so, for by such neglect they undermine and lay waste both the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world and are the worst enemies of God and man.

— Martin Luther

The Sunday school, more than any other organization, influenced and prepared him (Dwight L. Moody) for a life of future service. It was

4 through a Sunday school teacher, Edward Kimball, that he experienced conversion to Jesus Christ. It was in the Sunday school of the First Baptist Church

that he met his bride-to-be, lovely Emma Revell. It was the Sunday school that nurtured and developed the raw gifts possessed by the dynamic evangelist.

— George & Donald Sweeting

6

The teacher has to be able to stop dispensing information long enough to listen to the children, listen and encourage the children's questions.

— Jane Healy

2

My responsibility is to teach God's Word; His is to change people. I

have to learn to teach by faith — just as I'm to do everything else in my life by faith — rather than by sight. I must trust God for results, for change. I must believe that His Word will not return to Him void; it will accomplish his purpose.

— Joseph Bayly

Because our society is changing, some have suggested the age of the Sunday school is past. But the future of Sunday school is bright, and I

3

believe God will continue to use the Sunday school as the evangelistic and educational arm of the church. Still, the Sunday school must adapt to continue its influence.

— Elmer Towns

Every time I stand up to teach the Bible, I'm overcome with how ridiculous it is that I should be trying to communicate God's Word to the class. It would be hopeless, except for one thing: The Holy Spirit is in me, teaching through me; and He is also in the men and women

5

in my class who listen.
— Donald Grey Barnhouse

Sunday School with Jesus

As Jesus went around teaching about the kingdom of God, people wanted to hear. His classroom was anywhere and everywhere. His audience was everyone — grandparents, children with parents and children without parents, beggars, tax collectors, neighbors, strangers, religious leaders, immoral, needy and spiritually poor; even a little boy with a “brown bag” lunch. His Sunday school offered fellowship, compassion, miracles, healing, words of life, a choice to believe or not to believe, leadership by the Great Shepherd, thanksgiving, fulfillment, order, abundance, assigned work, confrontation and more.

As we think of Jesus’ Sunday school, what are some ways we can offer more of what He offered in our Sunday schools today?

Keeping the family together for Sunday school

One way some of the aspects of Jesus’ Sunday school could be offered is in an intergenerational Sunday school. It’s not a new idea. It was God’s idea first — to place His people in families to share, care and love from one generation to the next. The church is His family. He is our Father and we are His children from the youngest to the oldest.

Intergenerational Sunday school is a family affair. It is inclusive versus age separation and division. It involves children and adults sharing strengths and weaknesses through mutual interaction and fellowship.

Intergenerational Sunday school is a faith community raising children and family in the ways of the kingdom of God. Single parents are assisted by the congregation. Grandparents and seniors, without close relatives living nearby, are included in the “family.” Single adults are encouraged and

learn about family life. Families in the body who need help raising, loving, leading and encouraging their family unit find support. Children have the opportunity to be accountable to and supported by many adults. They also are taught to be responsible to younger children, while feeling needed and valued for their giftedness by all ages.

Small churches who have just a few children in each grade level may find this a creative alternative. A congregation may want to try this for a particular evening with a group gathering together for an intergenerational activity. It would be nice to hear how it works for your congregation, large or small. Are we ready for a new challenge?

The challenge of doing something different

The biggest challenge for many of us may be a new way of thinking about Sunday school. Can we change the way Sunday school has been done for years? This may be a new paradigm for some. Staffing may be an issue. Where are the laborers? Do they feel comfortable working and learning with children? Does our fellowship have people of vision and adventure — those who would participate in “the exchanges of love that will make a profit for God’s kingdom,” as Eugene Peterson states in *Praying with Jesus*?

What about curriculum? Is it possible to find ready-made materials or is it “create your own” for your particular size, culture and character of church?

While curriculum which addresses Sunday school as an intergenerational body, geared to teach all ages in the same setting is lacking, some vacation Bible school material is designed for a family setting, children and adults together. Also Bible bookstores as well as the AFLC Parish Education

— Nancy Green
Spencer Creek Lutheran
Eugene, Oregon

Department have large amounts of Sunday school helps. Youth pastor helps, crowd breakers and games, Bible games, object lessons, science discoveries, story-telling recipes and puzzles are all available. With some creativity, these can be adapted for intergenerational use.

The way it worked in one church

One church tried an intergenerational Sunday school with great success. It was entitled, "Family Clustering Sunday School." The group consisted of 22 people, including single parents, grandparents, families (moms, dads and children), single adults and children without parents. Two women spent two to three hours together in preparation for each session.

The group met twice a month for two hours on Wednesday evenings for a brown bag dinner and fellowship. The time included eating together, a time of learning through a Bible story, art and personal application. It involved total group activities and a small group time where there was one rule: no one could be in the same small group as a member of their immediate family and each small group was intergenerational.

The results were wonderful as it strengthened the members of the Family Clustering Sunday School through the relationships developed and also contributed to the health and strength of the fellowship of the entire congregation.


One of the small children who had been attending the sessions came running through the sanctuary of the church one day, looking for her mother. Not finding her she became distressed until she spotted a "grandparent" couple she recognized from the group and went to sit with them, content once again and happy. She had part of her "family."

In Sunday school our goal is that *We Would See Jesus and Hear Him*, as Pastor Lars Stalsbroten entitled his two books. We seek to enrich our lives, families and churches by inviting Jesus to enter in and be with us. How better to do that than to do it together as God's little children, through and with all of the generations.



Bringing up a child in the Word of God

What is a parent's role?



Newest members of Grace Lutheran Cradle Roll, Valley City, North Dakota.

I remember October 25, 1992 quite clearly. As a new mother I was slightly overwhelmed with what the pastor was saying to us. Our two-week-old son slept as the water was sprinkled and the Word was said. Our service of baptism offers an admonition to the parents that baptism is a gracious gift of faith, but that this gift will be lost if the child is not brought up in the Word of God. The commitment to bring the child up in the Word is then asked of the child's sponsors and of the whole congregation. Are we as a fellowship fulfilling the commitment we make when a child is brought to baptism?

We as parents, sponsors and church members have a responsibility to be an example to our children, to keep on learning more about Him, and then to teach and train up a child in the way he should go, so when he is old he will not depart from it.

Be an example

"Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Philippians 1:27).

What kind of example are you on Sunday morning? How do you spend the Sunday school hour? Are you reading the Sunday paper? Are you in adult Bible class? Are you teaching or spending time preparing to worship? Our children need to see a Christian example. They watch every move we make and will grow up to be like us in many ways.

What kind of example are you in prayer? Let them hear you pray for their teachers and their friends. Then from their childhood they will learn the importance of prayer.

What kind of example are you during the week? As we continue our walk through the week, our children must not see a difference between our Sunday behavior and our everyday behavior.

Christ was the perfect example. We see by His actions the importance of studying the Scriptures, gathering together to be under the teaching and preaching of it, and being in continual fellowship with the Father. We certainly cannot live up to His perfection, but with His help, we can grow in spiritual wisdom.

Keep on learning

"By wisdom is a house built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures" (Proverbs 24:3,4)

I know many of us feel that the more we learn of Scripture, the more we realize how much we don't know. This does not offer an excuse, however, for neglecting the study of the Word. Bible study is central to the growth of an individual Christian.

Wisdom is not gained overnight. It takes a lifetime of study to grow in knowledge. As we share this knowledge with our children

— Jan Strand
Our Saviour's Lutheran
Zumbrota, Minnesota

our hearts will continue to hunger for learning more about Him. Once again they will learn by watching us. As they see us continue in the study of His Word they will see that this is a lifetime endeavor.

Memorization is key. As we help our children learn their verses for Sunday school, learn it along with them and then add a few more verses from the text for yourself. Challenge yourself to learn a whole chapter!

"You shall teach them (God's commandments) diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on your doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:7-9)

Be a teacher

As we take these verses from Deuteronomy literally, we are to teach the Word while sitting, walking, lying down and rising up. From morning to night in all things we are to be teachers. Questions about lessons learned, reviewing memory work, and daily prayers are all responsibilities of us as parents. Hopefully many parents desire to teach Sunday school. Some of us may feel inadequate to serve in this way. But God is faithful to use us beyond anything we think we are able to do.

This is not to say that only parents are to assume teaching roles. Often a child will listen to someone other than their parents in a group situation such as Sunday school. So, we complete the picture of training a child. It becomes the responsibility of all of us. We set the example, we must grow in wisdom, and each of us assumes the role of teacher.

I was overwhelmed that day over five years ago when I realized my responsibilities. As we have had another little one baptized since then, I realize that God is there, ready to help when I don't know how to be a good example, when I don't learn as I should, and when I fail as a teacher. Thanks be to God that He sent us the perfect example that we might learn of Him and teach our children about Jesus.



My Turn in the Nursery

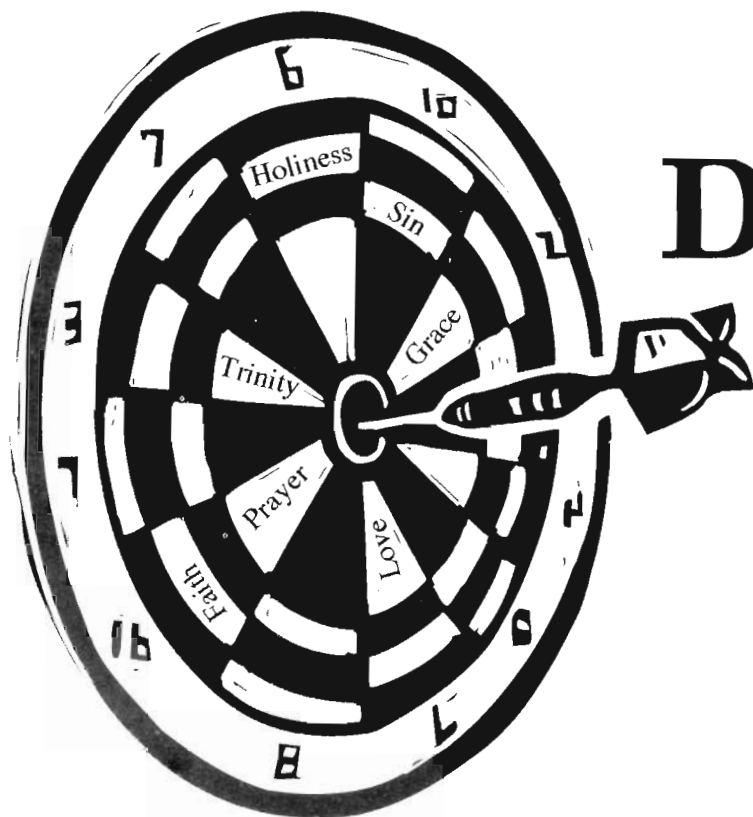
Last Sunday was my turn in the nursery to work.
My heart wasn't in it and my feelings were hurt.
A child from its mother did not want to part.
It cried a lot with its broken heart.

I prayed that soon the hour would end.
That I could relax — no more children to tend.
Soon the hour was over — it felt good to be free.
I said to myself, "Once a quarter is too much for me!"

That very next Sunday, as I sat in the pew,
A very good sermon but visitors were few.
But down came a woman and her soul was saved,
And she was the mother of the crying babe.

Then it dawned on me that I had been a part
Of one being saved — giving God her heart!
From that day on, I never would dread,
Working in the nursery with children, while souls
were being fed.

— Helmar Lutheran Newsletter
Newark, Illinois



Doctrine for Kids?

Yes, children need to know that Jesus loves them (an often taught truth), but there's so much more: Who is God? What is mercy? What is grace? Who is Jesus? Why did He come? Why do children need Him? How may a child receive Him as personal Savior?

How do we teach these things? Here are some suggestions we have tried:

Start with preparation

Teachers start early on the lesson and pray much. Study the lesson and think seriously: What is it really about? What is the context and setting? What are we getting at? What exactly does it teach children? What is the intended result?

Teach children to pray

We want to teach not only about prayer and the general "bless us" or "gimme" prayers. God is so much more than a provider. Let's praise Him, thank Him, and intercede for others too. The Lord's Prayer is the perfect prayer, but do the children know what it means?

They can memorize

They can do it! Let them know you expect it! They will retain the Bible verses in their memory and God will bring them to mind when needed. Be sure they understand the meaning of the verses. Use repetition and review for best results.

Teach reverence for God

He is holy. Also encourage children to respect God's house (the church) and the teacher. Attention is necessary for learning. Respect, order and warmth will help make Sunday school a good place to be.

S Since the word *doctrine* usually isn't in our daily vocabulary, let's define it. Webster says, "...principle accepted by a body of believers." For us that means **Bible teaching** because the

Bible is God's inerrant Holy Word, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Curriculum and other books are indeed helpful but they were written by people. Go to the Bible for depth and answers. God's Word is exciting and alive and relevant for today.

God commands that children be taught (Deuteronomy 4:9), and our primary purpose is for them to learn. They need to learn so that they might be prepared for today and for eternity. Becoming a child of God and having the assurance of eternal life is important as well as urgent. When one of my regular fifth graders was missing one Sunday, I learned he was hospitalized. Within a few days we attended his funeral. Time may be so short!

Children need to come to Christ, and then be taught so that they might grow in Him. The Bible has so much in it to do this and to nourish them in their daily walk and to help them resist temptations which are so prevalent today.

A reformation of youth ministry

— Pastor John Kent
Rancho San Diego Lutheran
El Cajon, California

Who should we blame when our youth no longer want to be a part of the church? We have been quick to blame our modern

culture and the fact that, "Things aren't what they used to be." We look at drugs, television, music and we say, "Those are the culprits that tear our kids from the church."

I believe that these are certainly factors but they are not the only factors. We must be willing to look at ourselves as well.

It just may be that our youth are in need of more than discussions on premarital sex, drugs and peer pressure. Maybe we have been trying for too long to dab the blood off a gaping wound that needs far deeper attention. J. I. Packer wrote, "Disregard the study of God's Word and you sentence yourself to stumble and blunder through life blindfolded, as it were, with no sense of direction and understanding of what surrounds you. This way you can waste your life and lose your soul." This is also true when we consider our youth. If we don't properly train

Serving the meat of God's Word to our teens

our kids to know the depth of God and His Word they will most certainly, "stumble and blunder" their way to eternal damnation.

We are too often moved to action by what our kids are telling us they want in their youth groups. They may say, "Why can't we do more games and go on more trips?" Or perhaps we hear, "Do we have to study the Bible so much?"

If Jesus would have taken a poll of those in that crowded house the day the paralytic was let down through the roof, about what everyone wanted Him to do for the man, it's likely forgiving his sins would not have been a top priority. We must not get our youth ministry strategy from our kids. It must come from God and His Word alone. The only thing we really have to offer our youth is, "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2).

We need to be patiently teaching

our kids important doctrines like God's holiness, God's sovereignty, the sinful corruption of mankind, justification by faith alone and the sanctification that we are to be growing in. Some would say these categories of study are either too lofty or too lackluster to be discussed with our youth in any depth. Or the charge may be made that they just don't apply to the lives of our kids. If this is true then the fault is ours and not our kids'. We must show them how they apply. We must not allow these important truths to lack the luster that they indeed have. Teach them at a level that our kids can understand, yes, but teach them nonetheless.

Let us not be frugal in giving the meat of God's Word to our kids, fearing that they will choke on it. Perhaps it is just what they need to become healthy. The Psalmist says, "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth" (Psalm 119:103). If this is

(continued on next page)

Be available

Children need a listening ear. Others ask questions or share concerns one-to-one that they wouldn't do in class. These are helping and teaching opportunities. It's good to be there for them. Developing a genuine caring attitude helps establish trust and confidence.

When our son began Sunday school, the beginners' teacher was one of the finest Christian examples I have ever met. The love of Jesus radiated from her face. Little lap-sitters deeply loved her and she loved them. What a fine introduction to Sunday school!

Visualize truths

Involving the children helps maintain interest. Perhaps Johnny can illustrate the crossing of the Red Sea or Old Testament

battles better than the teacher can! One of mine could. I expected him to go to West Point and become a general in the army but instead he went to Bible school — a wise choice indeed.

Illustrate from real life

Illustrations hold interest and help apply the Bible lessons to the children. Jesus used parables to teach Bible truths.

Sunday school teacher — you have an awesome privilege and responsibility to teach God's truths. In a changing world we can trust God's unchanging Word. Let us all learn and teach Bible doctrine which is "Able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 3:15).



— Kathy Hilbert
Christian Free Lutheran
Wheatland, Iowa

The joy of teaching

A testimony from a teacher's heart

For many years I taught preschool classes. I felt I was not qualified, but I would pray about it and God always gave me the inspiration and helps to go with the curriculum.

Now I am a grandmother and it's like just adding a few more grandchildren to love and care for. My three-years-old students have asked if we could pray about their loved ones and friends! It is amazing how the Lord works in their small hearts and minds.

Teaching helps me grow as a Christian, too. The Scriptures we learn are familiar yet fresh for me. Our favorite verse is Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind to one another." Together we thank Him that Jesus is alive and listening as we learn to pray and call on His name.

Each Bible story is practical and applicable to my life. Their young compassionate hearts have reached to minister to my heart. The Lord has always been faithful to give

me an idea those times when I thought I had exhausted all ideas.

The songs we enjoy together have made me appreciate all the songs I learned in my childhood. My mother was a teacher and she felt bonded to her students too. Years later, many have shared things they remembered learning in her class. Those early years are important times of establishing foundation lessons in faith.

Christmas is a highlight in my class. We practice about a month ahead for our program. The children never tire of singing to Jesus and about His birth. God's only Son was born to save us. What an opportunity to share the gospel to open and hungry hearts.

Teachers are ordinary people with an extraordinary God who gives all gifts. Sunday school is training for becoming a loving, caring adult with Jesus as your life's guide. I'm thankful to Him for all He's done for me and is still doing.



SERVING THE MEAT——

true then we have nothing to fear in serving God's Word regularly and heartily without apology.

Four suggestions to consider as we look at our ministry to youth:

Doctrine is our friend.

Our kids are able to handle more. They already wrestle with life's problems. We must hand them the rudder that will keep them from being tossed about in life's stormy sea. Paul told his friend Titus what I think he would tell us, "You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1).

We speak for God's Word.

In our attempts to package the gospel we often resort to trying to compete with what the world offers. This is not our task and it is a fool's errand as well. Most churches lack the funds to put on a show like, "Ozzie and

Harriet," let alone MTV. Yet we try to compete for the attention of our kids using all kinds of glitz and technique. We must be fully persuaded that the gospel is our only product (1 Corinthians 2:2) and the One who draws men is God alone (John 6:44).

Time is of the essence.

We have our young people for such a limited time each week. We must take care that we are not better at teaching "ping-pong" than we are at teaching "providence" or we will only wind up grooming mediocre basement-athletes instead of mature men and women of God.

"What works?" is not a good question.

We cannot allow our ministries to youth to be governed by pragmatism. We know for instance, in a ridiculous example, that giving out one hundred dollar bills at each youth meeting would probably draw

a good crowd. We also know that just because that works does not make it the right way to do youth ministry.

Look not so much to what works according to a worldly standard of success and instead focus on what God says needs to be done. "Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" (1 Corinthians 1:20). Step away from the trendy and move toward what is essential. God is the one who gives the increase, and even though a work may appear successful, "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who labor on it, labor in vain" (Psalm 127:1).

If we do not teach them the fullness of God and His Word, we are just becoming a part of the problem with our youth and not the solution. May God keep us from this!



Give it all you've got

Encouragement for Sunday school teachers

It is that time of year again when we are reminded of our responsibility to "train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Ah, yes, Sunday school.

Have you volunteered to help with a class, music or perhaps the nursery? Prayerfully consider whether God would have you use your time and talents in this area.

Trust in Jesus as you prepare

For those who accept the challenge to serve, remember God's promise in Matthew 28:20, "And surely I am with you always." God does not ask us to go anywhere He cannot be, nor does He ask us to do anything He cannot equip us to do. Claim the promise in Philippians 4:19, "And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus." Ask God for wisdom, guidance and strength. He will provide.

Prepare well for teaching and pray for your students by name. Trust in the One who has promised: "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26). He is faithful.

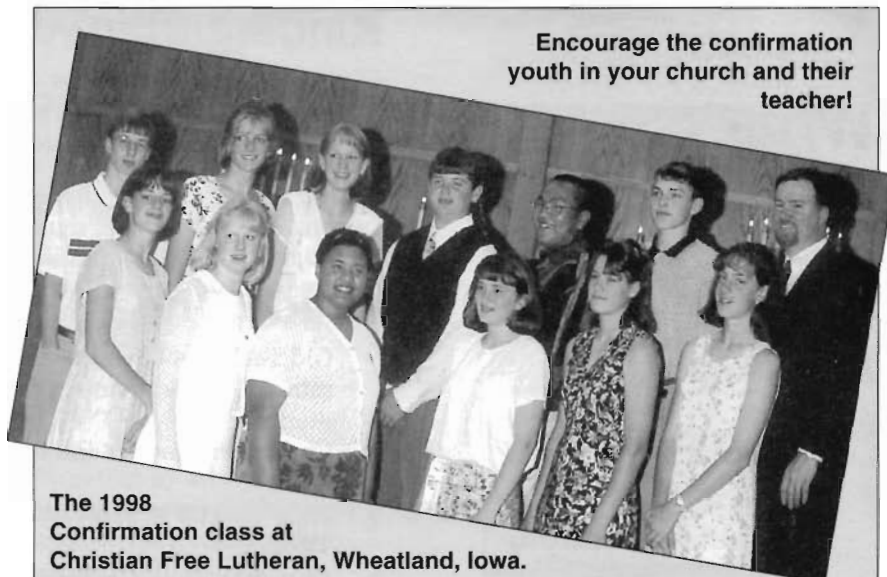
Share Jesus as you teach

Once you are with the children, be enthusiastic. You're sharing the "good news of great joy" (Luke 2:10). Your enthusiasm will be contagious. Paul encouraged us, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men" (Colossians 3:23).

Remember the lessons you learned as a child? Likely what comes to your mind are things seen or experienced, rather than things you read or heard about. Become familiar with visual aids (puppets, pictures, skits, action songs, crafts, etc.) and with younger children, keep it short. Check out the resources in your church library or from your pastor. Use the helps available from the AFLC Parish Education Department. And visit your local Christian bookstore.

Teens need to be able to express them-

Encourage the confirmation
youth in your church and their
teacher!



The 1998
Confirmation class at
Christian Free Lutheran, Wheatland, Iowa.

selves and interact with you and each other. Having a discussion involves more than the teacher talking and the students listening. Become involved with them in activities you might do, don't be a spectator. No matter what age you work with, let them see Jesus in you, not just hear about Him from you.

Count on Jesus to work through His Word

There will be days when you feel that you haven't accomplished a thing in the Sunday school hour, but be encouraged. God's Word promises in I Corinthians 15:58b, "Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

Recently, our congregation celebrated 100 years of ministry. One of the former members, an adult now, came back and shared his testimony and encouraged us in our continued ministry, especially the Sunday school teachers. The things he had learned as a child in Sunday school are what has held him firm in his faith. He was certain that his former Sunday school teachers had felt discouraged with him and his classmates as children. Live and teach the Word, and God will do the rest.

So, be encouraged, give it all you've got. "Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1-2). And "may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word" (II Thessalonians 2:16-17).

— Cheryl Aakre
Our Savior's
Lutheran
Argyle, Minnesota



What's happening in AFLC Parish Education

Available from AFLC Parish Education.

Phone: (612) 545-5631

Fax: (612) 545-0079

E-mail: parished@aflc.org

Web site: www.aflc.org

AFLC Parish Education exists for the purpose of serving the local congregation by providing biblical Lutheran educational and devotional resources to encourage diligent and faithful teaching of the Word of God in homes and churches.

One of the primary roles of AFLC Parish Education is to write and publish Sunday school teaching materials. The Ambassador Sunday School Curriculum series is currently in the process of being completely revised. Much of this work is being done by volunteers in the AFLC.

Here's an update on the current work:

Kindergarten – Tell Me the Story of Jesus

- > New Testament lessons on the life of Jesus, emphasizing that Jesus loves me, Jesus cares for me, and Jesus died for me.
- > All three quarters of student books and teacher manuals were completed this year.
- > *Thanks be to God for bringing this to completion!*

Grade One – Teach Me God's Word

- > Old Testament lessons about God's power in creation, man's fall into sin, God's promise of a Savior, and God's lovingkindness to all generations.
- > Children memorize the books of the Bible and learn a summary of each book.
- > First quarter student books and teacher manuals available in August, 1998.
- > *Pray for volunteers and the parish education staff as there is still much work to be completed on the second and third quarters. It is important that the books are ready on time for Sunday school classes.*

Grade Three - The Lord's Prayer

- > Children learn what prayer is and how to pray.
- > A study of each petition in the Lord's Prayer and what it means to us.
- > Outline and objectives for all three quarters have been completed.
- > The first quarter of Bible lessons has been written and is in the process of being edited.
- > *Pray for wisdom in the writing and editing of Bible lessons.*
- > *Pray for volunteers who are beginning to create activities and illustrations for Bible lessons.*
- > *Pray for God's continuing provision of volunteers and finances to print Sunday school curriculum according to God's timing.*

Grade Five and Preschool

- > In the beginning stages of planning and study.
- > *Pray for God's provision of volunteer workers in each area that is needed.*

Other book projects

Romans Bible Study

Adult study concentrating on the first eight chapters of Romans. Being edited to prepare for printing.

Romans: A Devotional Commentary (C. O. Rosenius)

Devotional reading from the Book of Romans for laypeople. Permission granted to reprint. Being prepared for printing.

Infant Baptism (J. N. Kildahl)

Christian baptism on the basis of Scripture. Permission granted to reprint. Being prepared for printing.

Free and Living Congregations

Designed for laypeople to clearly understand and communicate the heritage, distinctives and vision of the AFLC. Planning has begun and some writing has been done.

The Process of Writing

Ambassador Sunday School Curriculum

In a world of continuing compromise within the church, it is vital to have solid teaching materials available that hold to the inerrancy of Scripture and teach salvation by grace through faith in Christ Jesus alone. Meeting this need can be an overwhelming task for our small church body, which produces most of its materials through the means of volunteers. Our curriculum is written primarily by people in our congregations who are students of the Word and have a desire to see God's Word taught in its truth and purity.

The board of parish education is actively involved in the work of writing and revising curriculum. General outlines of curriculum are formulated by the board. Then Bible lessons are written from a given text by a volunteer and are submitted to the board for editing. The texts are studied during regular board meetings along with the Bible lessons. Revisions are made with great care being taken to accurately present the text.

Other volunteer workers submit artwork for Bible lesson illustrations, create activity ideas and artwork, and select music for each lesson. Still others are involved in researching Bible background studies for the teacher or designing lesson plans to help the teacher with history and geography, creative methods, and Lutheran doctrine. The parish education office oversees all these volunteers and coordinates their work.

The student books are designed in our office with assistance from a local graphic artist who works with preparing the full-color illustrations and activities and converting them to an electronic format for printing. The teacher manuals are also created in our office. After many months of unlimited hours of editing and reworking, the materials are finally submitted to the printer. About a month later, the new books are received from the printer and are ready to be sent out to churches.

We are thankful to God for His gracious provision of faithful workers in so many different areas. We pray that as they give of their time and talents to the glory of God, they will be enriched and blessed through their study of the Word.

Pray for many men and women who are contributing in the following areas:

- **Bible Lessons** – study given Bible texts and write age-appropriate lessons for student book.
- **Bible Background Study** – research and write historical and biographical information and doctrinal emphasis of given Bible text for teacher manual study.
- **Visual Arts** – create illustrations for Bible lessons in student book.
- **Activities** – create age-appropriate learning activity ideas and illustrate them for student book.
- **Music** – select recommendations for each Bible lesson and give creative ways to teach music.
- **Teacher Manual** – write age-appropriate lesson plans for each Bible text with a detailed sequence for teaching the lesson, including use of activities and music, Bible memory, and lesson review.
- **Computer** – word processing and reformatting layout for reprinting of teacher manuals.

The process



needs you



wherever you are.



Help us grow



won't you

The blessing of volunteers

Testimonies from those who have been involved in producing the Ambassador Sunday School Curriculum

I am amazed and surprised at how “new” these lessons have become to me. I have heard these stories since childhood, but the Lord has made them fresh and alive to me as I search for ways to make them real for the children who will read and study them.

One day I was reviewing the story of Joseph. It struck me how young Joseph was when he was taken away so suddenly from his family. If it had been me, would I not have become a bitter, angry person knowing God had allowed my own family to treat me in such a way? Yet Joseph’s testimony of forgiveness and mercy toward his brothers and of complete trust in God rings so clear! It became my desire to make this very clear as well to the young children who will hear and learn of Joseph too.

Priscilla Horn
Astoria, Oregon
Grade one teacher manual writer
Pastor’s wife and mother of two

God’s Word says, “The unfolding of Your words gives light” Psalm 119:130. Nothing is more profitable for reading and study than the Word of God. It does indeed give light. Light is that which overcomes the darkness. Light is that which lifts the burden of discouragement. Light is what illuminates the path ahead. We thank the Lord for the light that He alone can give. Thank you parish education department for allowing us to benefit from increased light as we have studied God’s Word. May God’s Holy Light always shine within our hearts.

Pastor Ted and Dee Berkas
Wallace, South Dakota
Grade one Bible background writers
Serving AFLC congregations in interim ministry

I have sketched and painted since a child. The Lord gave me the talent and a special time and place to hone it. My one sister was severely handicapped with cerebral palsy. We lived in a cabin deep in a forest and my father would be gone for long periods of time to work in shipyards during World War II. My mother’s attention was devoted to my crippled sister.

I spent much time reading Bible stories and drawing. I longed to know this God, who made the beautiful woods and His Son who loved me. I was left to my imagination there in the wonder of nature with my cherished books, paper, pencils and crayons.

Later I was privileged to study with a fine artist and man of God, Dr. Lyle Lush, an Australian missionary, theologian and accomplished artist. I am blessed by these circumstances that have, most importantly, brought me into a relationship with my Lord.

Now I have the opportunity to illustrate the stories of eternal truth and the challenge of bringing these stories to the young minds so that they will have these pressed deep in their hearts unto salvation. The story of baby Moses has truly amazed me as again I see God’s deliverance. God’s plan is thrilling. I was assured again of my God’s omnipotence and eternal love and grace.

Doris K. McDowell-Masters
Lake Stevens, Washington
Grade one Bible lesson artist
Semi-retired due to health difficulties, freelance artist

What a challenge to try to visually depict the resurrected Christ and to communicate the fact that He invites all of us who are His children to join Him in His heavenly kingdom! This very message was the theme of one of the lessons I had to illustrate. I prayed for God’s guidance in creating images in my head and then in transferring those ideas onto paper. As I read the simple text of the lesson and watched the picture take shape beneath my hand, I was filled with a renewed realization of my Savior’s love for me and of the blessed promise of an eternal home with Him.

When I was first asked to create the illustrations for the kindergarten level Sunday school material, I felt greatly honored; but I had little idea of all that it would entail. Each illustration took time to research, envision and develop, but every effort made the events of the life of Jesus become more real to me. Yes, the experience proved to be challenging in several ways, but each finished picture resulted in great rewards for me and taught me lessons that I hope are passed on to the children who learn from these lessons and see the illustrations.

Liz Welsch
Amery, Wisconsin
Kindergarten Bible lesson artist
1996 AFLBS graduate studying
art at Northwestern College

Pastor Richard Snipstead, 1928-1998

He was a young pastor serving the Lutheran Free Church congregations that made up the Greenbush, Minnesota parish. His convictions as to what was right and his opposition to what was going on in his church body caused him to take a stand. He helped with the communication between the congregations who did not wish to be part of the merger that was happening in the early 1960s. This led to his playing an influential role in the founding in 1962 of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, serving as the group's first secretary. He was Pastor Richard Snipstead who passed away July 16 at the age of 70.

He was born in Canada, May 21, 1928, and attended Luther Seminary in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, graduating in 1953. That same year he was ordained in the Lutheran Free Church and married Leone Joel. Before serving the Greenbush parish from 1960 to 1964, the Snipsteads served a home mission church to the Hungarian immigrant community in Saskatoon from 1954 to 1960. They also served the AFLC congregation in Ferndale, Washington on two separate occasions: 1964 to 1968 and 1975 to 1978.

In between the times of service in Ferndale, Pastor Snipstead was dean of the Association Free Lutheran Bible School. He was the Bible school's first full-time employee, serving as dean from 1968 to 1975. In 1978 Pastor Snipstead was elected the second president of the AFLC. He served in that position until March, 1992 when he resigned and was removed from the AFLC clergy roster, because of moral failure.

The passing of one like Pastor Snipstead, who played an influential role in the history of our church body and the lives of many of us, is a time for remembering. We remember the Word of God he preached. We remember people he led to Christ; ones he pastored and encouraged; others of us he ordained and taught. He was used by God to impact lives for the cause of Christ, even though, like the rest of us, he was a sinful and weak vessel. God does put "this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us" (II Corinthians 4:7, NIV).

It is a time for us to remember as well that those who may seem to be doing fine on the outside, are possibly facing temptations and challenges of which we are unaware. This does not mean we should be suspicious investigators. We should, however, be encouragers, ministering God's Word to all, never assuming that someone is so mature in the faith they no longer need to hear the sternness of God's law and the sweetness of His gospel.

It is a time for us to remember that God forgives. In his last message to the AFLC, in the April 7, 1998 *Lutheran Ambassador*, Pastor Snipstead wrote: "I want to confess to all of you that I have lived in sin, even in recent years. I realize the anguish and grief I have caused my family, and all of you in the AFLC as well. As I confess this sin, I ask for your forgiveness. I pray for your continued fellowship. I have truly confessed my sin to God, and committed my life wholly to Christ."

Paul gives a pretty rough list of types of people, and then declares: "And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:11, NIV).

The best of our deeds will not cover up or wash away our sins. But the worst of our deeds will be forgiven when we come to Christ in repentance and faith.

Pastor Snipstead was preceded in death by his wife, Leone, and his son, David.

Possibly the best gift Pastor Snipstead and his wife gave to our church body are their five surviving children who are all active members of AFLC congregations: Karen Floan, Fertile, Minnesota; Anne Presteng, Grafton, North Dakota; Pastor Steve Snipstead, Kalispell, Montana; Gwen Berge, Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Wendy Westlake, Osceola, Wisconsin. May they be much in our prayers.

— Pastor Craig Johnson
Editor, *The Lutheran Ambassador*

1998 Leadership Training Conference

The 1998 Leadership Training Conference was held at the Association Retreat Center July 20-25. With a focus on strengthening the local church youth group and youth ministry, the training time was titled, "Body Building Boot Camp." The 170 students, up from the 150 of the previous conference, was a new record number of youth attending this biennial conference.

Along with the activities of a team building obstacle course, rock climbing, canoeing, and firehose soccer, were the spiritually challenging training activities. The students prepared and led the worship services, prepared and shared their evening room devotions, and led five backyard Bible clubs with the help of four Minneapolis area congregations. One unchurched family brought their son to a club and the mother said, "My son has never been

so excited about an activity before. Can the students come to my house next week and teach these lessons?"

One of the teens reflected on the week and said, "I really enjoyed how close I have become to the Lord this week. It was wonderful to be surrounded by many Christian friends who love the Lord." Praise the Lord for making His presence known at this year's leadership training conference!

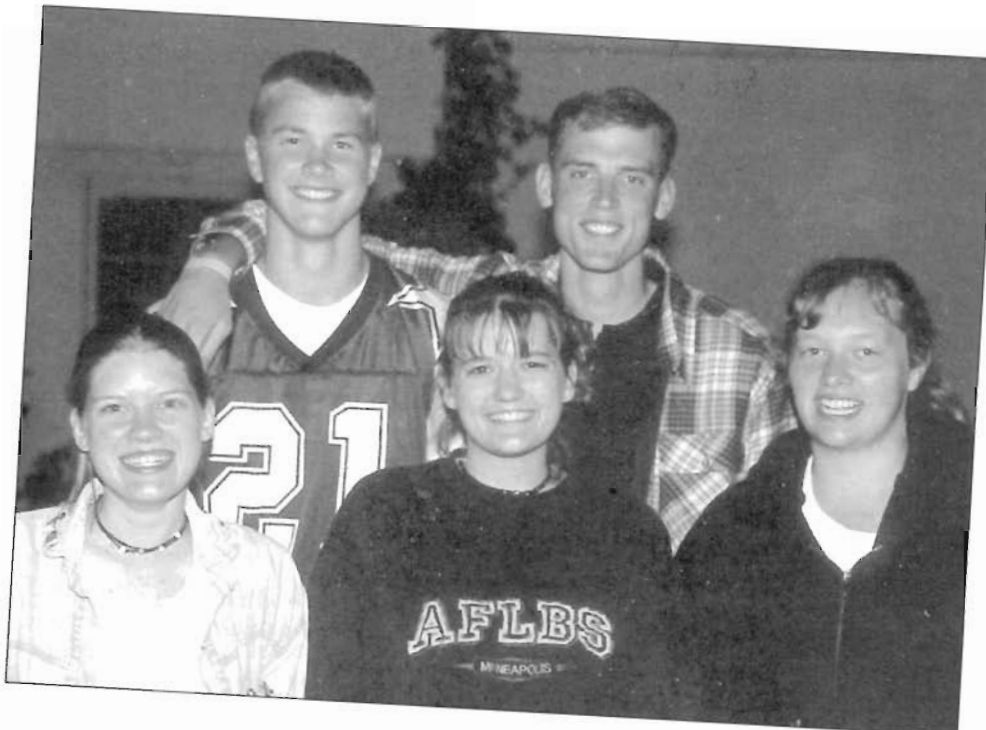
— **Pastor Kevin Olson**
Youth Ministries Director

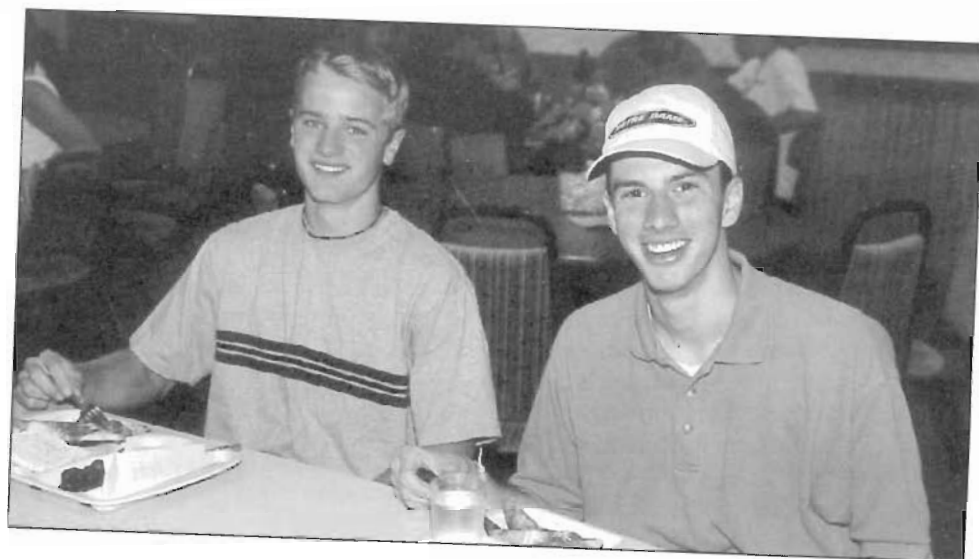


What God taught me at the Leadership Conference ...

My whole life I have had a challenge with sharing my faith by speaking and singing. Every time I have tried, the Holy Spirit fills me so much that I would be overwhelmed to the point of tears and the sharing would end. I've felt ashamed of those tears and prayed that the Lord would make them go away. This week the Lord has shown me never to be ashamed of what He has given me. Instead, I should use it so it will bless others, just as someone blessed me this week.

— **Laura Finstrom**
Glyndon, Minnesota





Thursday was the best night for me. I realized the holiness of God and my sinfulness. So much joy has filled me because of what Jesus has done for me. Thank you Lord!

— Nathan Weaver
Onalaska, Wisconsin

What was really special to me was that all the girls were always there for each other, no matter what. I made a lot of good friends this week that I hope to keep in touch with. The reason that these friends are so special is that we have one main thing in common — Jesus!

— Sarah Rolf
Valley City, North Dakota

God has shown Himself to me in so many ways this week. There are the friends I've made and just opening up to them. I've witnessed what others do, especially through the sermons and watching Kevin Olson reach out to the teens.

— Joel Knox
Whitefish, Montana

The Holy Spirit has shown me where He wants me to be in my relationship with Christ. I am awed at His power to provide for us. I am inspired to grow more deeply in Christ and be all I can be for Him.

— Monica Olsen
Dupree, South Dakota

I started out full of hatred and loneliness. I had no friends. I got to know God and started to lose my hatred. I asked God for at least one good friend that I could talk to about God. He didn't only answer it, but He gave four friends to talk to. I thank God for answering my prayers.

— Wayne Hook
Beulah, North Dakota

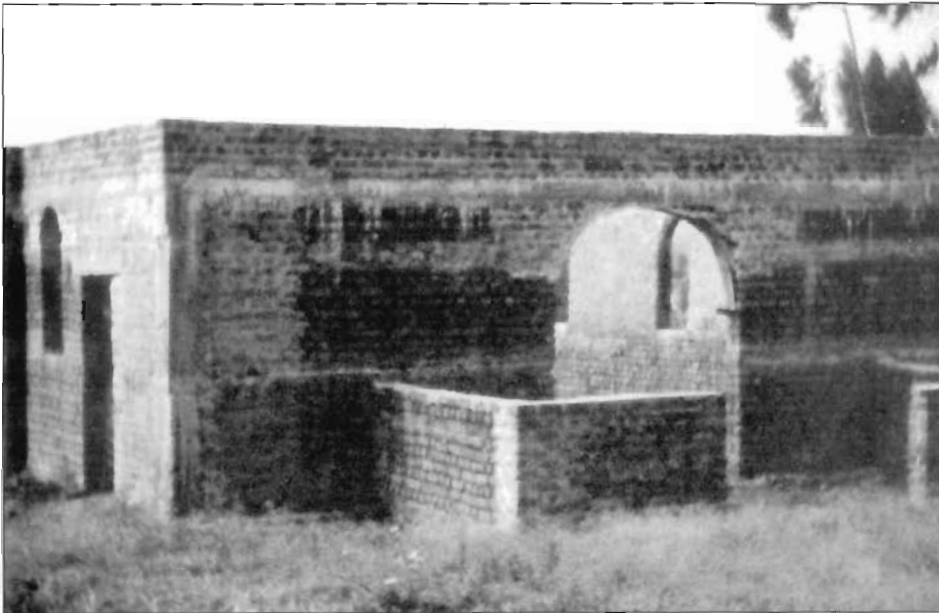
Jesus has always been in my heart, but lately my life has just been passing by me quickly. I found my relationship with Jesus drifting apart. I was excited to come to camp and spend time listening to Him at the sessions and evening services. I'm so glad to praise God. He helped me to see Jesus again!

— Erika Jensen
Cumberland, Wisconsin

This week at the leadership conference has given me the opportunity to recommit my life to Christ. Kevin Olson's foundation workshops and sermons have also helped me see what I have been missing in all my life. My pastor, Rodney Johnson, is also one of the people in my life that has brought me closer to Christ.

— Tami Jo LeRohl
Stanley, North Dakota





The Daudi congregation building sits with no roof or glass windows. Due to a lack of finances, some Tanzania congregations are left with unfinished buildings.

Tanzania

For six weeks this summer, the Lord gave me the privilege of visiting the African nation of Tanzania. Our five-member FLY Team was made up of either current or former AFLBS students, Jesse Purcell, Rachel Jordan, Tracy Lumpio, Holly Roed, and Donald Zeh. We appreciate the many prayers and financial support for us to go. The Lord provided abundantly through many people. The primary purpose of this team was to establish a relationship between the AFLC and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of

Tanzania (ELCT) - Mbulu Diocese.

We left Minneapolis on June 6 for the Kilimanjaro Airport in Tanzania. The next six weeks were spent at the Haydom Lutheran Hospital and at Waama Lutheran Bible School. We saw a traditional funeral, a Bible school graduation, visited many churches and participated in both a wedding and a youth camp. We shared our testimonies and sang songs. We visited with Dr. Norvald and Anna Yri and with Pastor Zakaria Axwesso and his family. We also made various contacts with officials in the Mbulu Diocese and pastors, evangelists,

Youth

students and some of the Norwegian missionaries.

The experience made a lasting impression on my heart. I saw the Lord provide for each of our needs. He kept us relatively healthy. When I came down with malaria, the Lord provided Pastor Zakaria to calm my fears, the hospital where I was tested and the medicine to cure it. He watched over us in all our situations.

I was impressed with how people would walk miles to worship together in church for several hours. Most of the churches we visited on Sundays would fill to capacity with people hungry to hear the Lord's Word. They had little in material things but yet they seemed so satisfied and so hospitable. This was true with the many people who we visited.

I thank God for putting the five of us together on this first Tanzania team and for showing His love for each of us. Pray with us for the churches and people in Tanzania, that the Lord's Word will continue to be taught in that county. Psalm 34:4 says, "I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears" (NIV).

— Donald Zeh
AFLBS student
Loveland, Colorado

Scenes from the youth leadership conference



mission teams return

Brazil

Six weeks ahead of us, three plane changes, 13 suitcases, and a lot of prayer and we were off to Curitiba, Brazil. Sarah Nystrom, Ben Hagenbuch, Emily Baker and myself departed on a trip that would not only affect the people we met but each of us as well. Our theme verse was Acts 20:24, "However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the task the Lord Jesus has given me — the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace."

The focus of this trip was not just to do work projects or even see a new culture, but to build relationships and share the gospel. The Lord gave us many opportunities to do just that. We helped with a vacation Bible school in Campo Grande, attended a young adult camp in Bateis, and joined in skits and songs with the Campo Mourão Bible school students.

We stood in awe of God's creation at Iguaçu Falls. No words can express that sight.

Jesus provided and protected us during our bus travels. There was always someone who offered to look out for us and make sure we got off at the right spot.

I saw Jesus in the children. They

were the most open to the gospel.

When I came back to the States it was with a heart of thankfulness; being content with what I have and thankful for what God has given me. We also are thankful for one another

and all who made this experience possible. Each missionary graciously hosted us and we thank God for all.

— Anna Mattson
AFLBS student
Greenbush, Minnesota

Excerpts from Emily Baker's diary

June 11 — English picnic at the ARCA. They asked us questions in English. That evening we watched the kids during a couples' banquet. At 10:30 p.m. Anna and I went with Paul Abel to bring a man and his baby to the hospital. Paul is quite a driver!

June 19 — Went to the Miriam Infant Home in the morning. The kids are so cute and they cling to you. Ate lunch at the Bible school then went to town with Sonja Dahl. Had a program tonight with the Bible school students.

June 21 — Went to Sunday school in Londrina. We sang and Ben gave his testimony. After lunch we handed out more tracts. The students did a one-day VBS for the kids. There the church service is at night. At 7:30 p.m. the church was packed. We sang and I gave my testimony. We left for the three-hour drive back to Campo Mourão.

June 26 — Another day of work! Painted some more. It's coming along. We have four rooms plus the hallway and ceiling. Quit around five. At 8 p.m. we went to an English school for college-age and young adults. We sang and answered questions.

June 28 — Attended Sunday school at Lar Parana church with David Nelson, pastor. We gave our testimonies and sang. English picnic in afternoon. Went to Central Church in the evening where Connely Dyrud is the pastor. Sarah gave her testimony.

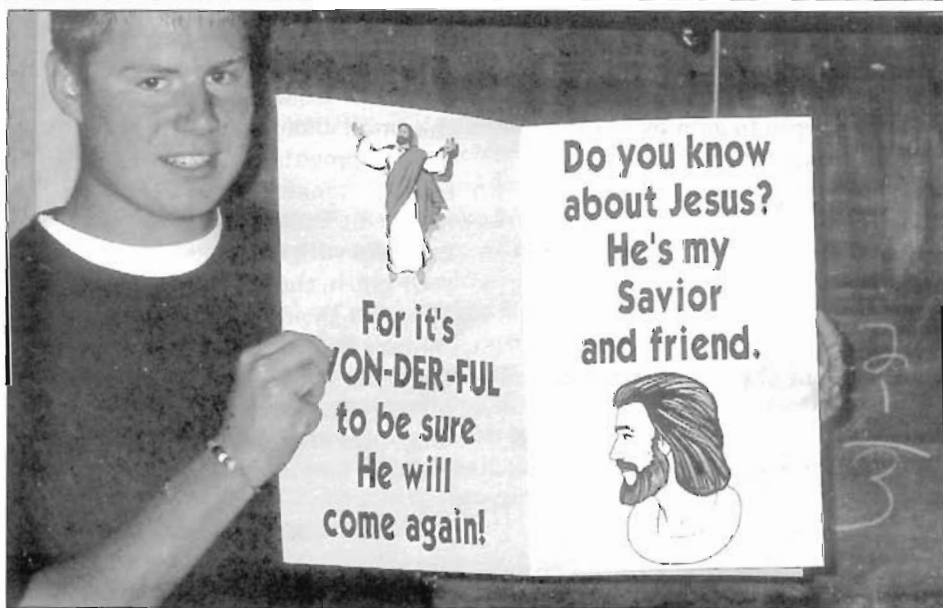
June 30 — Finished cleaning the dorm. Took the bus to Campo Grande (12 hours). Got there around 5 a.m. the next day. Jonathan Abel picked us up and we went to their house and crashed for a few hours.

July 3 — First day of VBS at their church. Had about 25 kids. (More kids came each day!) I told the story of Joseph and how he ended up in Egypt. I used flannel-graph. Went to church at 7 p.m. Jonathan is showing movies on the End Times this weekend. We sang before the movie.

July 10 — Saw Itaipu Dam with Paul and Becky Abel and their family. Walked into Paraguay and spent a half a day there. It's very dirty. Went to Lutheran church in Foz de Iguaçu and cleaned behind the church.

July 14 — Back in Bateias with Paul and Becky Abel. VBS starts. We helped with crafts and games.

July 18 — Full day of camp at the ARCA and talent show at night. We started packing to return home.



A day in the life of a Brazilian Bible school student

Karina Rossa is one of the forty-three students at the Brazilian Free Lutheran Bible School and Seminary this year. Eighteen years old, this young woman from the tiny town of Bateais has committed her life to serving Jesus Christ. A member of Pastor Paul Abel's congregation, Karina came to prepare for better serving her home congregation and their growing needs.

To become better acquainted with this student, let's accompany her on a typical day in the life at the Brazilian Bible school.

The bell rings loud and clear at 7:30 a.m.; the students who live on campus get up, dress and dash off to breakfast by the 7:45 bell. Hot chocolate milk, coffee, bread and jam provides their morning nourishment. At 8 a.m. sharp the Pietistic Hour, led by Pastor Agricio begins. This one hour daily devotional includes Bible reading, praise and prayer for the school, teachers and students. "The time spent on our knees praying for one another is a special blessing," Karina shares.

At 9 a.m. the bell rings once again signaling that study hours have begun. Tuesday mornings include training for Children's Ministry Outreach. Thursday mornings the students provide Bible stories and crafts for the children at the Miriam Infant Home. Extra Greek classes are also available for students who need additional help. The remaining morning hours are for study and homework preparation.



Karina Rossa and Ivanilda at the school's library.

Karina joins the rest of the campus students and staff for lunch at noon. Beans, rice, salads, and sometimes meat comprise the menu. Work hours begin at 1 p.m. Karina works on campus to help pay for her room and board. She keeps her hands busy with general cleaning. With the red Campo Mourao soil, her work involves washing many floors.

Supper at 6 p.m. finds the students with healthy appetites from a hard day's work. When the dishes are washed and the floor is swept, Karina takes a quick shower, grabs her books and is off to class by the 7:15 p.m. bell. Missions, Doctrine, Christian Education, New and Old Testament, are just some of the topics studied until 10:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday evenings.

Karina is a dedicated student who truly loves to learn. Asked what she hopes to gain by her time here she says, "to have a deeper knowledge of the Bible. I also want to be able to share my faith more clearly with my lost friends." Karina has been touched by the concern shown for her spiritual well-being by the pastors on staff. While she admits to not always appreciating counsel at the time it is given, she recognizes that it is for her good and necessary for her continued spiritual development.

After a long day Karina welcomes the ringing of the 11:30 p.m. lights out bell. But before she drifts

Pastor Mauritz Lundeen, Brandon, Minnesota, has resigned as pastor of Minnewaska Lutheran Church of Starbuck, Minnesota where he has served in his retirement for the past six years. The effective date of his resignation is yet to be determined.

Pastor J. Christian Andrews of the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department, Palmdale Station, attended the International Conference of Police Chaplains 25th Annual Training Seminar in Albuquerque, New Mexico, July 6-10, 1998. Over 650 law enforcement chaplains and their families attended. They represented a variety of denominations from the United States, Canada, Jamaica and Great Britain. Pastor Andrews serves an AFLC home mission congregation, Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran in Palmdale.

Astoria, Oregon — A dinner and fellowship time was held on July 19 at Bethany Lutheran to celebrate the 50th wedding anniversary of Pastor Ray and Doris Persson.

off to sleep she prays for God's direction for her future. Please remember Karina and the other students in your prayers also.

A current need for these Brazilian students is more books for the small campus library. With the sudden growth, the book supply is short and makes homework assignments difficult to complete. If you can help with this need, please send your gift to the AFLC World Missions Department, Attention: Library Project Fund, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441. Karina, and the other forty-plus students will be very grateful for your gift!



— **Missionaries David and Sarah Nelson**
Campo Mourao, Brazil

Bloomington, Minnesota —

Emmaus Lutheran held a dinner on July 12 in honor and appreciation of the nine and a half years Bob Halvorson served as their youth director. He had taken a three-month sabbatical before choosing to pursue other work. Halvorson is the president of the Free Lutheran Youth and continues to lead that board as it plans next summer's FLY Convention, June 28-July 3, 1999, in Estes Park, Colorado.

Beresford, South Dakota —

Skrefsrud Lutheran Church held a "Celebration of New Beginning" on June 28, 1998. Former members, friends and the community joined with the congregation in the day's festivities which included a celebration service, dinner, ball game and an ice cream social.

Skrefsrud has had several beginnings since its organization in 1909. The mission-minded group joined the Hauge Synod. After a time of no Sunday school and Ladies' Aid, the early 1920s brought them back, and this time all services and activities were in the English language.

In June of 1996, Skrefsrud was at another crossroads. Attendance was small and the Sunday school and Luther League had both been discontinued for twelve years.



Four of the six young people recently baptized at the Campo Grande, Brazil congregation served by Johathan Abel.



Celebration at Skrefsrud Lutheran Church, Beresford, South Dakota.

Pastor Tom Gilman of Redeemer Free Lutheran of Canton preached every other Sunday. By fall it seemed possible to start Sunday school again and services every Sunday. That December, the congregation enjoyed its first Sunday school Christmas program after many years.

In 1997 the congregation voted

to affiliate with the AFLC. They share Pastor Gilman with the Canton church and it is now renewing its mission emphasis. Skrefsrud Lutheran is looking forward to celebrating its 90th Anniversary in 1999 with its mission statement: "A beacon on the hill, standing firm on the Word of God, so that all would know Jesus."



The church is without doors or windows. Sweaters and stocking caps help ward off a chilly night breeze.

Crystal, Minnesota —

Medicine Lake Lutheran Academy has been awarded a \$2,500 grant from Aid Association for Lutherans. The grant is from an AAL Church and Education Resources program that helps to fund the start of new Lutheran schools. "We are pleased to help launch a new Lutheran high school in this area," said Juanita Harder, manager of AAL Education Benefits.

The academy is adding tenth grade this coming school year.

The academy also recently received \$700 from Lutheran Brotherhood through the Member Matching Gift program. The latest payment matches seven gifts from Lutheran Brotherhood members. Since the beginning of the Primary Partners program in 1987, \$5,950 has been received by Medicine Lake Lutheran Academy.

Education news of interest

Hindu politicians in India are preparing a bill harmful to Christian education. The bill calls for all schools in the country to conform to the concept that India should be a Hindu nation, according to a ministry in the country. Reportedly, the proposed legislation calls for the rewriting of India's history books and the closure of non-Hindu religious schools. Christian schools are prevalent in southern India and many are so well respected that Hindu and Muslim children are on waiting lists to attend, the ministry said.

*(Used by permission of
www.ReligionToday.com.)*

Recently the government of Hungary passed a law requiring the teaching of Christianity. The law requires that children, 16 years or younger, learn about the life of Christ, at least three Bible stories and the basis of Christianity. Campus Crusade for Christ has been approached for help in developing the course.

*(The source for the above story is
the Minnesota Family Council.)*

Wheatland, Iowa —

Christian Free Lutheran has conducted a summer children's ministry on Wednesday afternoons from 1 to 3 p.m. K.I.C.K. (Kids in Christ's Kingdom) offered activities, snacks and Bible stories for children in the community, ages 6 to 12.

Faith, South Dakota —

Bethel Lutheran Youth Group planned and conducted a "Mini-Camp" for children on Sunday, July 26, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The teens led the Bible story and music times and organized "stations" where the children worked on Bible memorization, crafts, games and snacks.

Pastor Ivars Krafts, Circle Pines, Minnesota, was ordained on August 2, 1998 at Maranatha Free Lutheran in Spring Lake Park, Minnesota. Pastor Krafts is a 1998 FLS graduate and is serving Faith Lutheran in Minneapolis.

Seminary Intern Craig

Benson, now of Radcliffe, Iowa, is serving his year of internship at Salem Lutheran Church in rural Radcliffe.

Seminary Intern David

Johnson, Richfield, Minnesota, is serving his year of internship at Maranatha Free Lutheran in Spring Lake Park, Minnesota.

Pastor David Johnson,

Ortley, South Dakota, has resigned as pastor of Ortley Free Lutheran

and Calvary Lutheran in Wallace, in order to accept the call from Amery Free Lutheran in Amery, Wisconsin. He expects to begin his new ministry in October, 1998.

TV ratings system a failure, according to a parents' group

In spite of widespread viewer displeasure with foul-mouthed, sexually-oriented television programming, the networks have not reduced the amount of objectionable content. Instead, they adopted a ratings system that supposedly would help parents steer their children away from raunchy or otherwise adult fare. The original system, implemented in January 1997, included only age-based ratings; after those were roundly denounced as vague and ineffective, content ratings were added in October.

But according to a new study by the Parents' Television Council (PTC), the ratings system, even with its expanded, "improved" content version, continues to fail. This study, the PTC's third examination of the ratings system and family hour content, looked at three weeks of programming from October and November 1997 and found that, in practice, the ratings are meaningless.

*(The above story used by
permission of the EP News Service.)*

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (7 months) – January 1 - July 1998

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN APRIL	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$224,870.00	\$22,618.51	157,538.83	70
Seminary	112,558.00	6,232.20	49,857.02	44
Bible School	180,678.00	20,111.08	80,409.66	45
Home Missions.	260,263.00	16,395.79	122,648.32	47
World Missions.	420,686.00	30,346.36	214,478.43	51
Capital Investment	16,276.00	3,074.85	9,020.15	55
Parish Education	50,335.00	3,213.78	32,097.20	54
Church Extension	18,092.00	6,561.29	12,754.42	97
TOTALS	\$1,278,758.00	98,553.36	678,804.03	53
TOTALS 1997	1,223,905.00	85,899.31	581,112.77	47
Goal 58%				

The making of a good Sunday school teacher

The theme of the article was, “the ingredients that would make for the perfect football player.” The writer asserted that the perfect player would have the heart of this athlete, the head of this other one, the arm of another and so forth.

In a similar vein, let us consider, what makes for a good Sunday school teacher?

As we consider the ingredients of a good teacher, we need to start with the heart. The teacher needs to have a heart that is overflowing with love — love for the Lord, love for God’s Word and love for people.

With I Corinthians 13:1-3 as our authority we can say: “If a teacher has the greatest material in the world, but has not love, it is nothing more than pretty pictures and slick graphics. If she has attended years worth of Christian education training seminars, but has not love, she is nothing. If she is extremely musical and also gifted in using visual aids, but has not love, she accomplishes nothing.”

The heart of the teacher needs to be soft; not hard and impenetrable. It comes from the Lord and is undivided, one of flesh and not of stone (Ezekiel 11:19). It is touched by the needs of the students and, like the heart of Jesus, goes out to those who hurt (Luke 7:13).

The good teacher has eyes that see beyond the surface. The students may come with a smile and a quick answer of “fine” when asked how they are doing, but inwardly they are hurting and confused. The teacher is not simply satisfied with an adequate outward appearance. He looks for inner transformation. He strives to see the problems of the heart and administer healing.

The hands of this teacher are empty. They are not holding onto the goods of this world. They are free and open and ready to serve. They are willing to get dirty. They reach out and touch and lift up the student who is down and discouraged.

The feet of the teacher are on the move. They do not stay in one place, waiting for the students to come to him. They go out to where the potential students are. They walk the sidewalks of the community. They go searching for ones who have yet to hear the good news of Jesus. “I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice” (John 10:16, NIV).

The knees of the teacher have been on the floor as she has spent much time in prayer. A good teacher is a praying teacher. She knows she is in desperate need of God. A lesson can be put together to hold a class’ attention. A head can be filled with knowledge and a smile generated. But to change a life a good teacher needs the Lord. And so a good teacher prays ... and prays ... and prays.

The ears of the good teacher are always open. He heeds the message of James 1:19, “Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” A good teacher is first of all a good learner, and learning comes from listening. The good teacher listens to God first and foremost, and also listens to her students.

The good teacher’s mouth is used carefully. “He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity” (Proverbs 21:23, NIV). He knows his mouth has great potential for both good and evil. “The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, ... but the mouth of a fool invites ruin” (Proverbs 10:11,14, NIV).

The brain of the good teacher does not function on auto pilot, concerned only with: “How have we always done it before? What is everybody else doing? I better do the same.” The good teacher thinks and ponders. She considers what God’s call is for her and her students for this time and place. She respects those who have gone before and she strives to learn from them, but she sees that God also calls for her to be creative. She doesn’t ask first what is the easiest way of preparing for and teaching the class, but what is the best.

If you are saying, “I’ve been asked to teach Sunday school but I don’t have these qualities,” good. You are very likely ready to be used. On the other hand, if you figure you’ll be a great teacher because of your experience and skills and the church is lucky to have you, maybe you shouldn’t teach. The good teacher looks in dependence to Christ and not himself. He has the attitude of Paul who said, “Who is equal to such a task? ... Not that we are competent to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God” (II Corinthians 2:16, 3:5 NIV).

God can give us what we need. He can make us competent. He can teach the wonderful Word of God, through us.

— *Pastor Craig Johnson*

**Who is
equal to
such a
task?**

SOMETHING TO SHARE

The last-minute bite

It has been a long day on the water with the sun reflecting and beating on poor you in your boat. Your expectations started out high for this day of fishing, but the fish have not cooperated. You begin to think of the comforts at home and prepare to end this “fun” when all of a sudden you get a hit and the battle is on!

Your partner watches with envy as you land the pike. He is nearly unaware of the jerks on his line. He grins with delight as he enters his own battle. And so it continues those last minutes as those black storm clouds roll in from the west and the lightning finally drives you off the lake. What happened to bring such a change and produce this last-minute bite? The approaching low-pressure system caused the mouths of the fish to open.

The man was in his seventies and hadn't been to church for years. Now death breathed on his bed. The family gathered three times, expecting each time to be the end. Several of those relationships needed mending. There, with the clouds of eternal night approaching, he asked God

and some family members for forgiveness.

His son stopped by a few days later to relate this story to me and asked if I would preach at his father's funeral. At that time his dad was still alive but not able to communicate much. I thought it would sure be good to meet this man alive before I had his funeral, but the roads were bad the next day and I had appointments already scheduled. I asked God for guidance.

The next morning the roads were good and I called the hospital. He was much better, so I drove in to Minneapolis. I found him able to talk and he was thankful I had come. I shared about sin and forgiveness and sensed he was hungry for the Word.

I don't know that man's heart, but it seemed in those last hours of life, a change occurred. I urged him to trust in Christ's finished work of paying the price for his sins and to seek the forgiveness and salvation only found in Jesus.

Amazing, isn't it?

This man had little hunger for God and no peace all his life, but

during those last hours, as death approached, the mouth of the soul began to open.

Lesson: Hang in there for the last-minute bite and be ready to share the Word whenever you have the opportunity. You never know when it may be someone's last chance to respond to the gospel. You never know what needs in their life are making them hungry for eternal life and peace in their soul. What a merciful God we have that will accept sinners even a moment before the clouds of death drive us from this earth.

Don't give up!



— *Pastor Lyndon Korhonen*
Good Shepherd Lutheran
Cokato, Minnesota