

The Lutheran AMBASSADOR

August 4, 1998

**Report
of the
36th Annual
Conference**

**Our new
evangelist**

**A farm mortgage
and the birth
of a seminary**



Pastor Robert and Gloria Lee.

Pastor Lee was re-elected to his third three-year term as AFLC president.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

August 4, 1998
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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

Encouragement to pray

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'"

"For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'"

And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly."
— Luke 18:1-8

God wants us to come to Him in prayer. To emphasize that, Jesus told this parable so that His disciples would not give up praying. Christ then encouraged them by promising that God would answer. Far too often we become discouraged in our prayer life because we fail to focus on God's promise to answer.

For many years this parable puzzled me until I noticed Jesus explains that God is exactly opposite of this unjust judge. Ponder the differences in the way this judge answers requests and the way God answers them.

This judge didn't care about men. But God encourages us, "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

The judge wanted her to keep her distance. He would be happy never to see her again. In contrast, God instructs us to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

The widow was a stranger to the judge. But we are God's children that He loves. He reminds us that at times we may be "rejected by men but (we are) chosen by God and precious to him" (1 Peter 2:4).

She came to an unjust judge. We

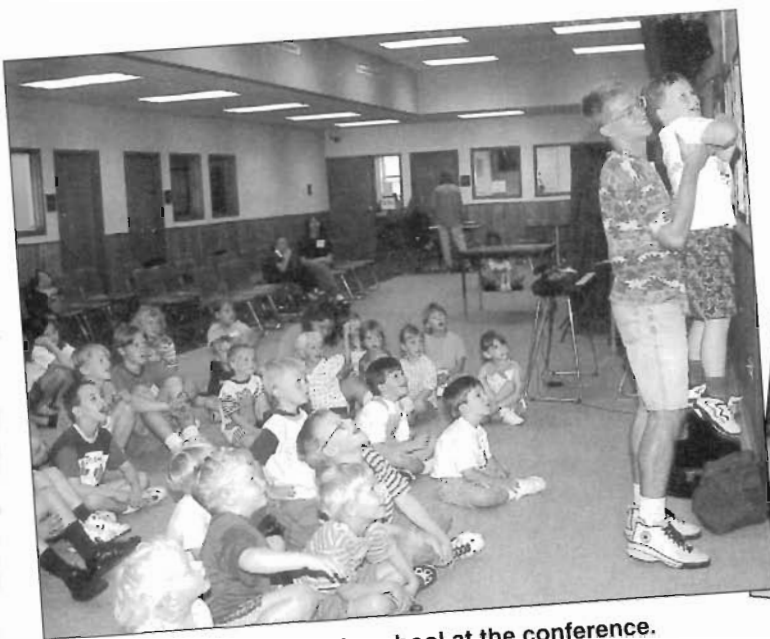
come to a righteous father who views it as His glory to regard those in need. The Lord lets us see this aspect of His nature promising that "he keeps the widow's boundaries intact" (Proverbs 15:25).

The judge answered her request only because he was afraid otherwise she would never quit bothering him. Jesus promises that God will not put us off, but will answer our requests quickly, because we are His chosen people.

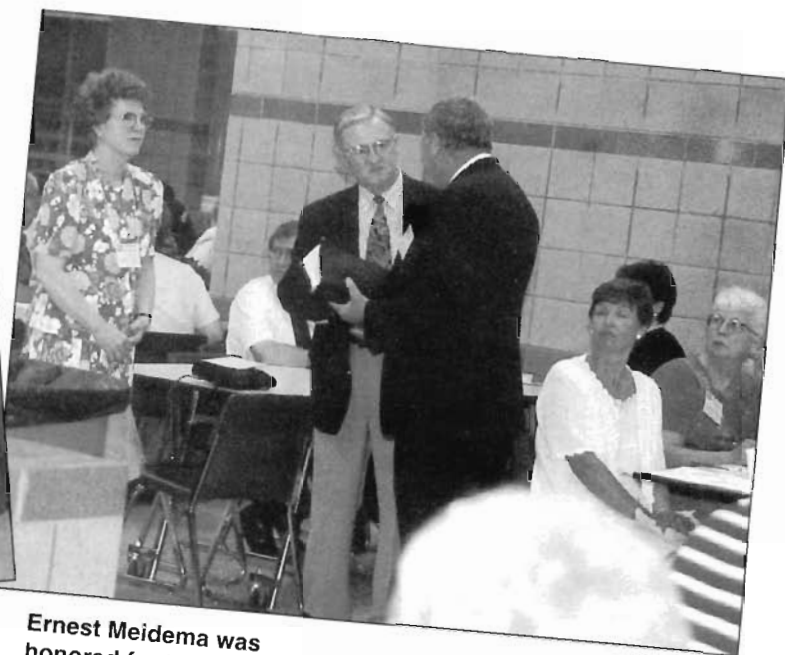
Christ tells us this parable so that we will not give up on prayer. God's greatest desire is to come into our lives and have fellowship with us. He stands at the door of your heart desiring interaction with you saying, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). Will you share your life with Him today?



— Pastor Del Palmer
Faith Lutheran
Shakopee, Minnesota



Vacation Bible school at the conference.



Ernest Meidema was honored for his years as director of development.



The WMF breakfast.



Pastor Tim and Evonne Skramstad, the host pastor and his wife.

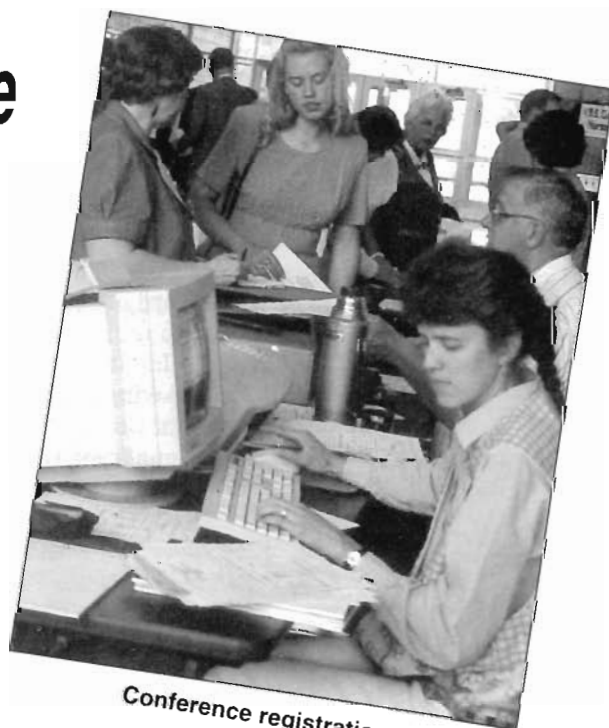


Pastor Tim and Renata Hinrichs.

Glimpses of the 1998 conference



Pastor Kevin Olson, Brenda Stilley and Amy and Joshua Skogerboe and baby Seth.



Conference registration.



Rejoicing in a great heritage:

Report of the
36th AFLC
Annual Conference

Members of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations gathered in Red Wing, Minnesota June 17 to 21 to give thanks for their "great heritage." This does not mean they told stories of what people in the church body had accomplished in years gone by. Rather, the 470 registered delegates rejoiced in the truth expressed in the theme for the 36th Annual Conference that "God's Word is our great heritage."

Worship centered on the Word

At the opening worship service of the conference Pastor James L. Johnson, dean of the Association Free Lutheran Bible School, shared from the story recorded in II Chronicles of King Josiah of Judah rediscovering the Word of God. He stated that we as well need to rediscover the Bible, respond to it and relay it to others. "We need to become a Bible-loving people so that we can relay the Word of God to a Bible-lacking people."

Annual conference in the AFLC is meant to be a time above all for worship and spiritual renewal. Thus, worship services were held each evening with messages from God's Word shared by Pastor Paul Nash, AFLC Home Missions Director; Jon Dryburgh of Grand Forks, North Dakota; and Wade Mobley, on staff at AFLBS. Pastor Lyle Aadahl of Byron, Minnesota brought the message during the Sunday morning communion service and Dr. Francis Monseth, dean of the Free Lutheran Semi-

nary preached during the closing worship service of the conference on Sunday morning. Prayer hours were also held during each day of the conference. Those were led by Pastor Christian Oswood of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Guidance sought from the Word

Pastor Robert Lee, with 94 percent of the vote, was elected to his third three-year-term as president of the association. Pastor Elden Nelson, who serves an AFLC congregation in Willmar, Minnesota, was elected to his third one-year-term as vice president. Pastor Brian Davidson, who recently began serving an AFLC congregation in Weslaco, Texas, was elected secretary of the AFLC.

In his report to the conference Pastor Lee commented regarding the "discussion in various ecumenical circles" concerning the doctrine of justification. He stated: "The AFLC is not involved in any of this dialogue, but that does not mean that we do not need to discuss these important issues. An informal survey taken earlier this year at the National Religious Broadcasters convention included the statement: 'Justification is the process by which I am made holy by God's Spirit.' Ninety-two percent of the respondents agreed with this statement, which is basically the Roman Catholic position that we are infused with righteousness rather than having Christ's righteousness imputed to us and received by faith alone. Would the percentage be different among us?"

"If God's Word is our great heritage, and

if justification by grace through faith is the central doctrine of God's Word, then it is vital that we are crystal clear on the subject in our preaching and teaching. If not, our people will be enslaved in legalism or emotionalism, struggling to achieve for themselves the blessed assurance of salvation that only comes from looking to Jesus alone.

"Christ for me, not Christ in me, is the basis for our faith and it is essential to spiritual health that this distinction be maintained."

Pastor Lee and the coordinating committee reported on growth in the AFLC, but with the reminder that "Our primary concern is for kingdom growth, however, not merely statistical increases." Nine congregations new to the AFLC were placed on the congregational roster during the previous year, while three withdrew their affiliation.

Pastor Timothy Skramstad, director of AFLC military chaplains, shared that one of the new pastors added to the AFLC Fellowship Roster during the past year was Chaplain Mark Benz, who serves as an active duty Army chaplain at Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas.

Eric Westlake, director of the Association Retreat Center, reported to the conference that the number of bookings of the ARC during the past year had nearly doubled. He asked for prayer as plans are made for the construction of a new multipurpose building having a 16,000 square foot auditorium with a seating capacity of 1,200 people. The building will double as a full-size gym or two practice gyms.



Pastor Richard Anderson and Loiell Dyrud.

Budgets

The work of the budget analysis committee was discussed as part of the reports of various departments. The committee stated their ongoing goals include: "consistency in the budget process, fairness to all departments, clarity in reporting to the conference and systematic improvement of the budget process." They have advocated that receipts from the previous year be a prime consideration in determining the amount of subsidy needs to request from the conference.

It was illustrated with statistics that, while the amount of budget requests of the various departments has fluctuated over the years, the amount given to the work of the AFLC has shown a consistent, steady

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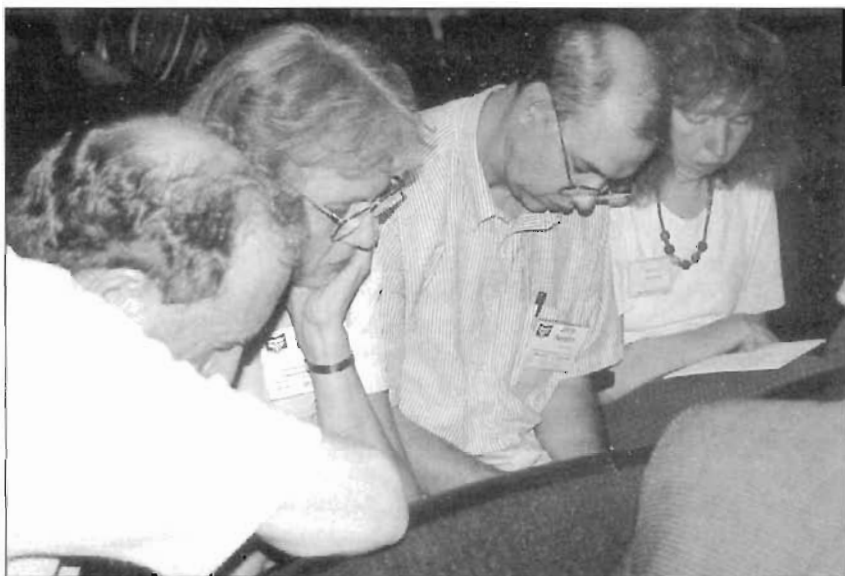


The 1998 conference committees met on Wednesday, June 17 to prepare conference resolutions.

CONFERENCE

increase. They encouraged "restraint in increasing the budget without clearly establishing the funding source for the increase."

Some budget requests approved by the committee were for lower amounts than previous years, in particular that of the department of world missions. This is due to the fact that some things that had been part of previous budget requests are now covered by designated giving. It was desired that individuals and congregations know that the amount requested in the budgets does not reflect the total funds needed to operate the work of the various departments.



Pastor Dick and Audrey Gilmore and Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Nelson of LaCrosse, Wisconsin. The prayer time was held at 11:30 each day.



Pastor John Mundfrom, Beulah, North Dakota, with Margaret and Pastor Gerald Mundfrom (far right) and Pastor Gene and Sylvia Sundby, Outlook, Saskatchewan.

Missions and evangelism

In the area of world missions the conference resolved that church planting remain the primary focus of AFLC World Missions, but that new auxiliary ministries be considered as God gives direction and financial resources. The world missions committee was encouraged to continue to pursue opportunities in the countries of Mozambique and Portugal.

Pastor Paul Nash, director of AFLC Home Missions, and Pastor Allen Monson, chairman of the home missions committee, reported on the work of strengthening home mission congregations. They also told of new opportunities in Naknek, Alaska; Pitt Meadows, British Columbia, Canada; Durant, Oklahoma; and Phoenix, Arizona. Pastor Tom Olson and his family have been placed on loan from the AFLC to a Lutheran mission society and recently moved to Alaska, serving congregations there under the AFLC Home Missions prayer umbrella. Bible study groups have formed in British Columbia and Arizona with the hope that congregations will soon develop.

The Partners in Mission Outreach, a ministry that has been involved in bus trips doing short-term mission work in Mexico, reported on plans for their first trip to a home missions site. A November trip from the Midwest to the Phoenix, Arizona area is being planned.

The 1996 Annual Conference encouraged the AFLC Commission on Evangelism to seek a full-time evangelist/director of evangelism for the association. The 1998 confer-



Ruth Wagley, Spokane, Washington, and Kirstin Molstre, Bethel Park, Pennsylvania.

ence resolved to give thanks to God for Pastor Jim Rasmussen's acceptance of the call to the position and to pray for his ministry. The conference also approved the commission's seeking of designated giving to meet their anticipated expenses of \$96,000 a year.

Parish education

In his report to the conference, Pastor Phil Haugen spoke of the parish education board's desire "to produce Christian education material that is biblically sound. May God help us to rightly divide law and gospel in every lesson written, so that the hearts of our children would continually be converted; continually convicted of sin and continually directed to Jesus, the Savior."

The director of parish education, Marian Christopherson expressed thanks to God for progress in the revision of the Ambassador Sunday school material. During the past year all three quarters of kindergarten student books and teacher manuals were completed. Work on grade one material is in progress and will be completed as God provides the necessary funds and workers. Preliminary work has also begun on grades three and five. She also shared regarding the many other resources and materials the department has available.

Youth work

In the discussion regarding youth work in the AFLC, the chairman of the youth board, Pastor Lloyd Quanbeck, spoke of the tremendous growth in the numbers of youth attending the national youth events, but also a disturbing number of AFLC congregations — approximately forty percent — who stated in a recent phone survey that they have no regular youth meetings. He also spoke of "a critical need this year for financial support for AFLC Youth Ministries to grow." The subsidy from the AFLC General Fund for youth work is being reduced from \$27,000 to \$18,000 for the year 1999. This is part of the under \$60,000 total budget for youth ministry. The hope is that the difference for the next year will be met by designated giving.

Pastor Kevin Olson, the director of AFLC Youth Ministries shared on the needs of youth as well as stories of encouragement of how God is at work in the lives of youth on the congregational, district, national and international levels.

Seminary and Bible school

Much of the discussion concerning the AFLC's seminary and Bible school involved
(continued on next page)



The Conference Choir directed by seminarian Gary Haug.



Pastor John and Nannette Kent, El Cajon, California.



Pastor Wayne Hjermstad, Faith, South Dakota, Al Brazier, Greenbush, Minnesota, and Dean Crouthers, Nogales, Arizona.



AFLBS gospel teams led the youth and children's classes during conference.



Vision 2004 Project Director Tonnes Pollestad and a Welsch Co. representative.

CONFERENCE

the proposed plans for new building construction on campus. The seminary had 18 students enrolled during the past year. AFLBS surpassed its previous high number of students with 140 attending full time. Expectations are for between 150 and 160 students enrolling in the fall of 1998. That will fill up all the available space on campus.

The AFLC Schools' Board of Trustees has been at work on a project called Vision 2004. A video that has been produced was shown. An update was given concerning meetings that have been going on with city officials and the state of the current building plans. The conference approved phase one of the project with the resolution that construction is to begin when 75 percent of the cost of the project has been raised in cash or pledges.

Sent forth to share the Word

At the conclusion of the Wednesday evening worship service Pastor Jim Ras-

mussen was commissioned as the new AFLC Evangelist/Director of Evangelism. Prayer was sought for him and during the week for the other areas of the association's work.

A highlight of the conference for the pastors was the Friday evening banquet. Author and speaker Edith Schaeffer, the wife of the late Francis Schaeffer, shared. She spoke of hospitality which "begins with whoever is next to you." She encouraged those listening to "do more than you think is sensible. ... Hospitality is giving of one's self. ... The Lord gives us strength for what we have to do."

Thanks was given for the congregation of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church of Zumbrota, Minnesota and their pastor Tim Skramstad for hosting the conference. Invitations were received and accepted to hold the 1999 Annual Conference in Fergus Falls, Minnesota and the conference in 2000 in Ocean-side, California.



Carol Knapp, Willmar, Minnesota.



Members of the Board of Trustees of AFLC schools.



AFLC Youth Ministries Director Kevin Olson and AFLBS Dean James L. Johnson.



Pastor Lyndon and Linda Korhonen, Cokato, Minnesota.



Pastor Mark Olson, Arlington, South Dakota.



Pastor Allen and Ness, Broadhead, Wisconsin, and Pastor David Hinrichs, Ortonville, Minnesota.



Edith Schaeffer, Rochester, Minnesota, and Dr. Francis and Ellen Monseth, Rogers, Minnesota.



Pastor Brian Davidson, Weslaco, Texas, is the new AFLC secretary.



Mr. Ken Williams, Ishpeming, Michigan; Pastor Richard Fredrick, Windom, Minnesota, and Pastor Larry Haagensohn, Loveland, Colorado.

Nine congregations joined the AFLC since last annual conference

Good Shepherd Lutheran,
Lincoln, Illinois
Grace Lutheran,
Buckley, Washington
Living Word Lutheran,
Windom, Minnesota
Lord of the Harvest Lutheran,
Fairbank, Iowa
Paradise Lutheran,
Canfield, Ohio
Rancho San Diego Lutheran,
El Cajon, California
St. Matthias Lutheran,
Shoreline, Washington
Skrefsrud Lutheran,
Beresford, South Dakota
Willamette Free Lutheran,
Beaverton, Oregon

Three congregations withdrew their affiliation from the AFLC

Christ Lutheran,
Savannah, Georgia
Faith Lutheran,
London, Minnesota
Hope Lutheran,
Wyoming, Minnesota



Clyde Lundgren, Bethel Park, Pennsylvania, was one of many who served as a teller.

1998 Conference elections

Elected	Position	Term in years
Rev. Robert Lee Minneapolis, Minnesota	President	3
Rev. Elden Nelson Kandiyohi, Minnesota	Vice President	1
Rev. Brian Davidson Weslaco, Texas	Secretary	1
Rev. Kenneth Moland Kirkland, Washington	Coordinating Committee	5
Rev. Wayne Hjermstad Faith, South Dakota	Commission on Evangelism	3
Rev. Michael Brandt Sioux Falls, South Dakota	Commission on Evangelism	2
Michael McCarlson Webster, South Dakota	Commission on Evangelism	5
Charlotte Qualley Brockton, Montana	Publications and Parish Education	5
Paul Kneeland Kalispell, Montana	Youth Board	5
Brenda Stilley Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	Youth Board	1
Rev. Les Johnson Minnewaukan, North Dakota	Christian Academic Education Board	5
Arnold Johnson Larimore, North Dakota	Stewardship Board	4
Rev. James Fugleberg Fargo, North Dakota	Stewardship Board	5
LeRoy Sletten Larimore, North Dakota	Board of Pensions	5
Al Hatala Bethel Park, Pennsylvania	Budget Analysis	3
Joel Quanbeck Fargo, North Dakota	Budget Analysis	3

1999 Nominating Committee

Eastern ND	Gene Finstrom, Buxton, North Dakota
Western ND/Eastern MT	Wayne Duebner, Brockton, Montana
South Dakota	Mike McCarlson, Webster, South Dakota
Lake Superior	Tim Korhonen, Esko, Minnesota
Northwestern MN	Ferrell Erickson, Badger, Minnesota
North Central MN	Rev. George Knapp, Willmar, Minnesota
Nebraska/Colorado	Dr. Dan Mundfrom, Greeley, Colorado
Minneapolis	Robert Rudebusch, Lakeville, Minnesota
Central Tri-State	Paul Strand, Zumbrota, Minnesota
Northern MI	Walter Peterson, Ishpeming, Michigan
South Central	Rev. Brian Davidson, Weslaco, Texas
Southwestern	Dean Crouthers, Nogales, Arizona
Pacific Northwest	Rev. Martin Horn, Astoria, Oregon
Eastern	Rev. James Molstre, Bethel Park, Pennsylvania
Illinois	Stan Dale, Ottawa, Illinois

Missions Corporation

	Term
Rev. Mark Antal, Leeds, North Dakota	5
Rev. Peter Franz, Cloquet, Minnesota	
Rev. Philip Haugen, Culbertson, Montana	
Rev. Ton Schierkolk, Northome, Minnesota	
Rev. Tim Skramstad, Zumbrota, Minnesota	
Robert Christian, Newark, Illinois	
Dave Jameson, Ottawa, Illinois	
Clyde Lundgren, Bethel Park, Pennsylvania	
Grace Syverson, Tioga, North Dakota	

Mission Committees

Home Missions

Rev. Al Monson, Lakeville, Minnesota	5
Rev. Mike Crowell, Lake Stevens, Washington	3
Eldwyn Van Bruggen, Valley City, North Dakota	5

World Missions

Rev. Jeff Swanson, Newark, Illinois	5
Rev. Tom Tuura, St. James, Minnesota	1
Vernon Russum, Grafton, North Dakota	5

Schools Corporation

Rev. Jon Benson, Upsala, Minnesota	5
Arne Berge, Binford, North Dakota	
Rev. Frank Cherney, Tucson, Arizona	
Rev. Bruce Dalager, Grand Forks, North Dakota	
Rev. Craig Johnson, Beaverton, Oregon	
Rev. Gary Jorgenson, Ottawa, Illinois	
Rev. James Molstre, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	
Rev. John Mundfrom, Beulah, North Dakota	
Rev. Brian Pearson, Montgomery, Illinois	
Ralph Peterson, Portland, North Dakota	

Board of Trustees

Rev. Mark Olson, Arlington, South Dakota	5
Emory Flaten, Newfolden, Minnesota	5

ARC Corporation (Nominated)

	Term
(There was no report to conference from the board on action taken.)	
Arne Anderson, Dassel, Minnesota	5
Dale Bentley, Mounds View, Minnesota	
Rev. Michael Brandt, Sioux Falls, South Dakota	
Ernie Hilbert, Wheatland, Iowa	
Rev. David Johnson, Ortley, South Dakota	
Steve Johnson, Upsala, Minnesota	
Dan Nelson, Kandiyohi, Minnesota	
Rev. Joel Rolf, Valley City, North Dakota	
Cliff Seldal, DeKalb, Illinois	
Pastor Ken Thoreson, Argyle, Minnesota	
Dennis Parsely, Pipestone, Minnesota	2

1999 Committee #1

George Hartman, Dalton, Minnesota
Dale Jacobson, Dickinson, North Dakota
Rev. Del Palmer, Shakopee, Minnesota
Jim Taylor, Bethel Park, Pennsylvania
Peter Ward, Brooklyn Park, Minnesota

1999 Committee #2

Dr. C.O. Castledine, Windom, Minnesota
Rev. Tim Johnson, Fertile, Minnesota
Rev. Al Magnuson, Reva, South Dakota
Clyde Lundgren, Bethel Park, Pennsylvania
Loran Tungseth, Fergus Falls, Minnesota

1999 Committee #3

Rev. Frank Cherney, Tucson, Arizona
Keith Croonquist, Loveland, Colorado
Wayne Duebner, Brockton, Montana
Dean Peterson, St. James, Minnesota
Rev. David Skordahl, Dalton, Minnesota

1999 Committee #4

Glenn Espe, Thief River Falls, Minnesota
Rev. Kevin Garner, Marsailles, Illinois
Rev. Ron Knutson, Kerkoven, Minnesota
Orville Lee, Mentor, Minnesota
Joel Zeltinger, Bismarck, North Dakota

1999 Committee #5

Ralph Johnson, Upsala, Minnesota
Randy Peterson, Tioga, North Dakota
Rev. Larry Severson, Roseau, Minnesota
Rev. Jon Wellumson, Williston, North Dakota
Art Wilson, Bethel Park, Pennsylvania

1999 Colloquy Committee

Rev. Michael Brandt, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
Rev. Rodney Johnson, Stanley, North Dakota
Rev. Leslie Johnson, Minnewaukan, North Dakota
Rev. Larry Severson, Roseau, Minnesota
Rev. Wendell Johnson, Cambridge, Minnesota



The 1998 Committee #1 (Administration) in Red Wing, Minnesota.

Meet the new AFLC evangelist

Briefly tell us your background.

I was born in 1951 to Roy and Beatrice (Dyrud) Rasmussen, and raised on a farm near McHenry, North Dakota. My parents loved Jesus and taught me by example what a Christian was. Our home was filled with laughter and a love for life. My mother was a prayer warrior and I know that it is because of God's grace and Mom's prayers that I am a born-again child of God.

After my studies at Association Free Lutheran Bible School and North Dakota State University, I graduated from the Free Lutheran Seminary in 1988.

I married Jane McCarlson in 1972 and we have four sons, the oldest was just married and our youngest is Caleb, 10. Each of our children are walking with the Lord and this is the greatest gift God could bless us with. We have served Victory and Grace Lutheran Parish in Park River and Edinburg, North Dakota since completing seminary.

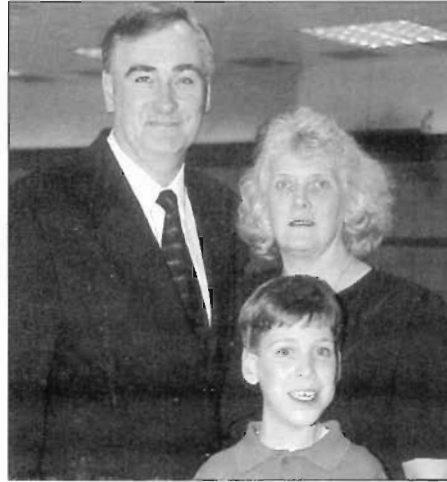
What is your testimony of faith?

I trace my spiritual life to a Bible camp near Tokio, North Dakota. It was between my eighth and ninth grade in school when I made a stand for Jesus. God has kept me from that day on. He shows His grace and mercy to me everyday. He is faithful! "Oh, the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgements, and His paths beyond tracing out!" (Romans 11:33).

I have come to realize I am nothing. In II Corinthians 3:4,5 it says, "Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our adequacy comes from God." What an exciting thought. God is the one that does the work through us and only because of Him can anything good be accomplished.

What are your goals as the new evangelist?

The first goal that I have, and I



AFLC Evangelist James Rasmussen with his wife Jane and son Caleb, at his commissioning service, June 17, 1998 at Red Wing, Minnesota.

know I share it with the evangelism commission, is that everything we do will honor Christ.

Second, we want to reach out to all the AFLC congregations and beyond with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Included in this is a teaching of lifestyle evangelism and equipping the saints for ministry. All Christians are called to reach the lost. Included in the teaching ministry is how to follow up with new Christians and disciple them.

Probably one of the most neglected aspects of evangelism is the preparation through prayer. I believe that if the people are praying before any message is shared, souls will be fed and souls will be convicted and souls will be converted to Jesus.

The evangelism commission desires to take a more active part in our AFLC Schools by teaching evangelism, follow-up and the importance of prayer preparation.

We also desire to develop, what we are calling, associate evangelists. These are your local pastors who are willing to be encouraged and place themselves under the authority of the commission to be supported by prayer and trained in some aspects of evangelism.

As you begin your new duties August 1, how do you expect to spend your time?

Practical needs require that I will spend time raising support for evangelism in the AFLC. Right now we have no money allocated for AFLC evangelism except through designated gifts. We are one hundred percent on our own and outside the budgeting process.

I will be preparing for weeks of evangelistic outreaches in local congregations and also seeking to bring into each district areawide weekend teaching and crusade meetings, much like we did in Minneapolis on May 1 and 2 this past spring. Much of our time this first year will be spent developing many aspects of our goals as a commission.

I will be available to go out for what we normally call special meetings. We desire commitments from the congregations that they will pray and prepare for six or more months. In the future we will ask for nine to twelve month times of prayer preparations before the meetings. I personally am committed to spending much time in prayer over the months and, Lord willing, years, that I will be the Evangelist/Director of Evangelism in the AFLC.

How can we pray for you?

I come to this position asking for continuous prayer coverage for myself and my family. My only strength is the Lord's. There is great spiritual warfare being waged against anyone who dares to step into an active role of bringing souls to Christ. Pray for us everyday!

I will need prayer for wisdom to know what my focus should be and where God is leading us. Pray for the evangelism commission and the future of evangelism in our AFLC.

Pastor Rasmussen's great-grandfather, Christian Hanson, was commissioned as the evangelist for the Hauge Synod in 1904, also in Red Wing. Peder Ljostveit wrote in "The Hauge Movement in America," that Evangelist Hanson had a holy glow of spiritual enthusiasm as he shared the crucified Savior among the people. This well-known lay-evangelist "had a salary of \$40 per month, which was looked upon as an unusually high salary."



Rosalie Paulson and Mary Pollestad led the Thursday morning inspiration.

The 36th Annual Convention of the Womens Mission Federation met in Red Wing, Minnesota at the high school. In the midst of the beautiful Mississippi River bluffs, we focused on the theme, "Let Us Fix Our Eyes on Jesus," from Hebrews 12:1,2.

Jan Strand of the host congregation in Zumbrota, Minnesota was our song leader for the day and also for the Thursday evening service. President Faith Nelson thanked the ladies from Our Saviour's Lutheran in Zumbrota, and the other WMF groups in the Central Tri-State District, for all their preparations.

Our morning prayer service was led by Erna Jochum, Bridgeville, Pennsylvania. Linda Korhonen from Cokato, Minnesota, sang "Seekers of Your Heart." The morning speaker was the 1998 Bible Study author, Lynn Wellumson of Williston, North Dakota. Lynn reminded us that Jesus is enough. We can always look to Him for hope as the author and finisher of our faith. She also shared how God has led in the formation and growth of the Christian school in Williston.

In the afternoon we were privileged to hear about the work of Pas-

The WMF Convention report

tor Tim and Renata Hinrichs in the Czech Republic and also Poland. Tim described this area's desperate need for knowledge of the Scripture and for revival. This fall they will be teaching in a new Bible school in Poland.

The Thursday morning prayer breakfast opened with devotions by Marlene Johnson, Amery, Wisconsin. Renata Hinrichs brought a greeting and Jane Rasmussen, the wife of our new evangelist, shared on our need to simply trust and rest in the Lord to work out His will. She also sang, "Abide in Me."

On Thursday evening, our speaker at the Mission Festival Service was Pastor Paul Nash, director of home missions. He admonished us concerning the necessity of prayer: 1) Prayer allows us to see God's way or His will; 2) Prayer allows us to adjust to God's way or fulfill His will; and 3) Prayer allows us to glorify or hallow the name of our Father. Missionaries Tim Hinrichs and John Abel also gave greetings at this service.

Offerings received during the convention were as follows: Home Missions — \$2,952; General Fund — \$3,028; and World Missions — \$3,921.

Lola Lindell of Ferndale, Washington was re-elected as first vice president and Marilyn Thoreson, Argyle, Minnesota was elected as secretary. Cheryl Aakre, Stephen, Minnesota was installed as the new executive secretary, an office which is filled by a letter of call. A special presentation and reception were given for the outgoing secretary, Karen Knudsvig, following the Mission Festival Service.

— **Rosalie Paulson**
WMF secretary



WMF President Faith Nelson and the morning speaker, Lynn Wellumson.



Bethel Erickson, Wadena, Minnesota, gathered her registration material.



Ruby Abel brought greetings from Brazil.

A tribute to Karen Knudsvig

"Serve the LORD with gladness;
Come before Him
with joyful singing.
Give thanks to Him;
bless His name.
For the LORD is good;"
— Psalm 100:2,4b,5a

Eleven years ago at the annual convention, the responsibilities of the position of executive secretary of the WMF became the part-time occupation of Karen Knudsvig, Buxton, North Dakota. From the mission field in Madagascar to parish work to teaching music, to the roles of wife and mother, the Lord's path for Karen through life has blessed and equipped her with special gifts to serve Him among women in the AFLC. Not the least of these gifts is a joyful spirit and the overflow of sisterly love.

Karen's term as executive secretary has encompassed a period of great growth for the AFLC as well as a broadening of the scope of the WMF. The job description of all the duties this secretarial position attends to is lengthy. Some of these tasks are: typing, printing and mailing the WMF president's bimonthly newsletter to all local WMF presidents and pastor's wives; organizing, printing and promoting awareness of new publications such as leaders' and members' handbooks, and the fall packet materials; preparing the annual WMF convention booklet; being available for speaking engagements at churches, rallies, etc. Then there is preparing the Bible study lessons to be sent to the printer.

Her successor, Cheryl Aakre has been spending time with Karen in preparation to begin her work on January 1, 1999. Cheryl remarked: "Karen does so much behind the scenes. I've seen how her vibrant faith and contagious personality is an asset to her work."

Support for the quantity of work and deadlines needing to be met has come from friends in Karen's church, Grandma Emma Knudsvig

A joyful servant



Karen Knudsvig

(now deceased), her husband Gerald, and daughter Sheila and Sara. We thank them for their willing service. Remember the Knudsvig family in your prayers and Karen as she moves on to new roles — mother-in-law and grandmother!

You have shown us Christ at

work in your life. You have served with gladness, worked faithfully, and your kindness to all is an example worthy for all of us to imitate. Thank you, Karen.

— **Rosalie Paulson**
WMF secretary



National WMF officers (seated L. to R.) Lola Lindell, Rosalie Paulson, Cheryl Aakre, Marilyn Thoreson; **(standing)** Karen Knudsvig, Joanne Benson, Faith Nelson and Mary Pollestad.

Meet the new WMF Executive Secretary

I look back on the first eleven years of my life in Madagascar and I am amazed at how my parents raised us. We enjoyed one to two hours of generated electricity in the evenings. I have five siblings and it was the responsibility of my oldest brother to act as guardian when we went off to school at the age of six. Because we were apart so much, family times were extremely special. Our month break each year in December was a highlight of my childhood.

In 1967, my parents, Missionaries Milo and Edith Gudim, returned to the United States. I graduated from Barnesville, Minnesota High School and Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. I married Leif Aakre of Stephen, Minnesota. We farm in Stephen, raising small grains, soybeans and sugar beets. We have spent the past ten years

home-educating our four sons, ages seven to 17. I enjoy music, gardening, camping and following my sons' activities in my spare time.

What a contrast to those years in Madagascar!

While growing up in Africa and Minnesota, I had special older ladies who had time, or made time, to mentor me. Their lives were good examples and I had the privilege to know them.

Today we are caught in a whirlwind. There is incredible pressure economically. Younger moms often are too busy with the daily grind, and priorities eventually shift. Good things replace the best and time spent with the Lord and in His service keep sliding away. At age 41, I'm the youngest by far, of the quilters at my local congregation, Our Savior's Lutheran of Argyle, Minnesota. I wonder how many quilts we will be sending to wrap around

shivering souls ten years from now? Who will have time to serve? Who will take time to mentor that impressionable young lady in our confirmation class?

This is my concern as I begin serving as your national Women's Missionary Federation Executive Secretary. I pray the ministry of the WMF is alive and well in your congregation. If not, may we encourage one another to consider our priorities and by God's grace return to a time when the Lord and His Church were more important in our lives and that of our family's life.



Cheryl D. Aakre

Cheryl D. Aakre was installed as the third AFLC national WMF Executive Secretary during the Thursday evening service at the annual conference in Red Wing, Minnesota. She succeeds Judith Wold and Karen Knudsvig. Besides being active in her local church, she has worked with the Northern Minnesota District of the AFLC and is on the Christian Academic Education Board of the AFLC. She wrote, "I received Christ as my Savior as a young girl and committed my life to Christ in junior high. I know I am a sinner saved by God's grace, not perfect by any means, but forgiven. One of my favorite passages of Scripture is Lamentations 3:22-24 — "God's mercies are new every morning." I praise Him for His faithfulness.

It's just a simple tract. And yet I consider it one of the treasures passed on to me from my father-in-law, Clarence Wall. It is the autobiography and testimony of Clarence's grandfather, Hans

A farm mortgage and the birth of a seminary



— by Pastor Jerry Moan
Professor, AFLC Schools

Markusson Sande (1837-1893), who is remembered as one of the founders of Red Wing Seminary.

With the 1998 AFLC Annual Conference recently held in Red Wing, Minnesota, I couldn't help but think about the beginning of this school one hundred twenty years ago. Several of our AFLC congregations trace their roots to the Hauge Synod and this seminary which served the church for nearly fifty years.

Though he was not schooled as a theologian, Nils N. Ronning, who translated Sande's life-story into English, regarded him as "one of the finest examples of the Haugeans in the pioneer days of the West." The Haugeans, he notes, stressed conviction of sin, repentance, a living faith in Jesus Christ, assurance of the forgiveness of sin, and public and private testimony.

Here's what happened. After the followers of Elling Eielson and members of the Hauge Synod had made several vain attempts to start a church school, Andrew Ellingson heard that potential property for Red Wing Seminary was for sale. He hurried to Rev. Ostin Hanson (Sande's pastor) and told him about this. (Hanson was a pioneer pastor serving Hauge and Emmanuel Lutheran churches of Kenyon and Aspelund, Minnesota. He was also the president of the Hauge Synod.) The two men went to Sande and, practical man that he was, Sande realized the golden opportunity.

Sande was urged to travel to as many Hauge congregations as possible to see if there was still support for starting a seminary after four faltering attempts. He found a warm response among the people, most of whom still lived in small log houses or even in dugouts. Sande urged them to dig "deep into [their] pockets," and they did just that.

With this great need for a seminary burning in his heart, Sande hurried home. He placed a mortgage on his own old farm and secured an option on the property for Red Wing Seminary in his own name. The school opened as the property of the Hauge Synod in 1879.

Ronning notes that as a result,

the name of Hans Markusson Sande became a household word throughout the Synod. And yet, as Sande relates the story of his life, he says virtually nothing about his efforts to obtain Red Wing Seminary for the Hauge Synod. The following testimony is taken from Sande's autobiography:

"As it has pleased the good Lord to lay upon me a sickness which before long will end my days, I decided to write down a few facts concerning my life on this earth.

"I, Hans Markusson Sande, was born May 7, 1837 and baptized May 21 in Sande, Sogn, Norway. ... As soon as I was able, I was sent out among strangers to earn my food and clothing as errand boy and herdsman. As herdsman I spent my time in wild mountainous regions, where the whole day went by without seeing a single human soul. I often met a bear. The only weapon I had was a horn that made a great sound which I thought would scare any wild beast. God protected me.

"My parents were tenants and did their best to send me to school. It was hard for me to commit anything to memory. My teachers were not Christians and acted without reason in their treatment of the children. A switch with a knot at the end was often used to enforce their will.

"In the spring of 1852 two of my uncles went to America. Situated as I was, I had a great desire to go as I was tired of Norway, but what should I do? I had no money. I then asked my uncle to pay my ticket to America. I promised to repay him. He refused, but I did not give up. He finally decided to take me along. I found it exceedingly hard to leave my parents, sisters and brothers. Folks generally thought little of my venture. Only one person had left for America from this community before. I was 15 years old the day we left Bergen in a sailing vessel. We reached New York in one month and four days.

"I worked for Americans (in Wisconsin and Illinois) till the fall of 1856. Then I decided to take a trip to

Goodhue County, Minnesota. Here I could see a future for both young and old. A friend and I started a business venture, but this did not succeed. I made seventy-five cents on the deal — I was very discouraged. Man proposes, but God disposes.

"The Good Shepherd came again with His gracious call, 'Hans, Hans, where are you now? Has it paid you to serve the devil? Are you going to continue in the same way? Your means you have now destroyed, but this is not the worst part of it. All you have left is a bruised conscience because there is no peace for the wicked,' says the Lord. I became very humble and accepted Christ as my Saviour.

"My feelings can best be described in the words of the poet: 'Now I will be what you want me to be. I close you into my heart with all your gifts and grace.' And to the praise of God I can say that till today I am His child Despite all my failures, God has forgiven all my sins because of Jesus' precious blood that cleanses from all sin.



Elling Eilson

"... As a young boy I had the opportunity to make some observations. I observed the parties who represented the State Church of Norway and Haugeans. A bitter fight was carried on. At one meeting a big stone was brought, intended to be aimed at Pastor Eielson, but he was not present. Some of the pastors who claimed to be shepherds and leaders caused a lot of trouble. It would take only common sense to decide which was right.

"There was a good reason why Eielson and his friends organized a

church body of their own. This was called the Eielson Synod. Later on most of them withdrew and called themselves the Hauge Synod. I have been a member of this Synod all my life and have done my church work there.

"It was not the outward organization that caused me to join them. In this regard it was very simple, but I experienced something higher and nobler. In it there was a grain of salt that proved a blessing to young and old. This was the simple and childlike use of God's Word in private and public, in song and in prayer that God fed His children.

"... God says, 'The Word shall not return void.' It is well known that the Hauge Synod has had a slow growth and has had many struggles. A new organization always has difficulties. The main issue that seemed so hopeless was the establishing of a church school. Should there be any future for the Synod, young men would have to be educated as pastors. After much effort we were able to purchase a building — namely Red Wing Seminary."

The final farewell included in Sande's life-testimony anticipates the joys of that "better country":

"Farewell to relatives and friends. I was with you, but no more. I have moved away from all that hurts, and now I enjoy eternal peace. Do not sorrow on my account. I am happy in heaven. Now I can with the voice of the angels sing the song of the Lamb, and of Him who walked to the cross and won for us a Paradise. Love, thanks, and praise to Jesus Christ! Here is no sorrow and no pain, but only joy and happiness. These joyous days will have no end but continue through eternity. O what a thankful song of victory! Here the time does not seem long. Come then dear ones. I am waiting for you, that we may all be together and find joy in this eternal Home. Here we shall never part, but dwell forever."



A light has been burning

A According to scientists, a star may have been born today in the far reaches of the universe. but we may not become aware of it for many years until its radiant light beams arrive in our sector. Even at the speed of light, in the vast expanse of God's creation, it may take a long time before we realize that His wondrous creative activity continues.

We were reminded at our recent annual conference about the story of King Josiah (II Kings 22), and Hilki-ah the High Priest, who discovered the Book of the Law in the House of the Lord. That discovery, and the reading of the Book, had an enormous impact on the king and the people. The result was not unlike a reformation, or at least a revival, of the kingdom whose king did what was right in the sight of the Lord.

Recently, a set of books arrived in my office from our parish education department. I found myself feeling that I was about to embark upon a great "discovery," perhaps a feeling not unlike the one which Hilki-ah experienced. The six volumes I received contain a vast collection of writings by Georg Sverdrup, portions of which we are now translating from the combined Danish/Norwegian language of his day. It was through the efforts and inspiration of Sverdrup, Hauge, Eielsen, and other truly evangelical pioneers, that the Lutheran Free Church was born.

As President Lee reported to the conference, the AFLC has experi-
(continued on next page)

AFLBS dean attends conference in Germany

Association Free Lutheran Bible School Dean James L. Johnson traveled to Erfurt, Germany, July 7 to 14 to attend the International Lutheran Bible Schools and Institutes Conference.

Pastor Johnson was one of approximately 70 directors and presidents of Lutheran Bible Schools attending the conference, held every four years. Gathering on the same grounds where Martin Luther attended seminary (Augustinerkloster), the Bible school directors traveled from Africa, the United States, the Scandinavian countries and Eastern Europe to discuss issues related to the Bible school movement and to encourage each other in the Lord.

The 1994 conference was held on the AFLBS campus.

Pastor Johnson led a workshop titled, "The Music Our Bible School Students Listen To: Should We Care?" Contending that Bible schools should, indeed, exercise caring discipline over music permitted on campus, Pastor Johnson used Scriptures such as I John 4:1, Hebrews 12:7-11 and Philippians 2:1-4 to assert that young believers need discipline and guidance. "Many of our students are young, tender plants in the Lord," he said. "Many had past addictions to destructive music and we need to lead them into uplifting, wholesome, spirit-empowered music."

Pastor Johnson attended the conference with fellow AFLC pastor, Don Richman, director of the East European Missions Network. Pastor Richman has been instrumental in networking evangelical Lutherans together to start new Bible schools in Europe. After the conference, the

two visited former AFLBS student Bohdan Hrobon ('95), president of the new Bible school in St. Martin, Slovakia. They also spent time in Dziegielów (pronounced Jang-GEL-ov), Poland, where founding president Giegorz (Greg) Giemza has patterned his Bible school much after AFLBS. AFLC missionary Tim Hinrichs will serve as Old Testament professor there this fall.

The conference also featured a major paper written by AFLTS Dean, Dr. Francis Monseth, titled, "Signs Of a Revival Of Biblical Authority In Lutheranism." Pastor Richman read the paper since Dr. Monseth was unable to attend.

Of approximately 150 Lutheran Bible Institutes worldwide, AFLBS currently holds the largest enrollment of those with two-year curriculums. The school expects 150 to 160 students this fall.



A LIGHT BURNING

enced a thirty-five percent growth in the number of congregations in the last eleven years, so it is no doubt safe to assume that many of our people are unaware of the brilliant contributions made by the likes of Georg Sverdrup. His scriptural interpretations and writings provided the foundation upon which the Lutheran Free Church was built, and it is on this same foundation the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations continues to be exist in our mission to the world.

These books that I am translating, were published around the turn of the century. At that time some pastors and lay leaders were relatively fluent in the combined language used in the writings. During those days, pressures were put upon many immigrant congregations to align themselves under the Scandinavian state churches which were controlled by aristocratic clergy. On the other hand, as a pastor, Georg Sverdrup, followed a more biblical model — one which stressed the

freedom of living congregations where pastors and people together recognized their significance as the Body of Christ.

During the formative years of the Lutheran Free Church, the above mentioned pioneers directly influenced the young church toward a realization of its servanthood. This was evident in its mission to the congregation itself, out of which would come the establishment of missions.

This mission, Pastor Sverdrup insists, is a holy conquest, with the distinct objective of freeing souls from the power and bond of the world. He considers it the congregation's response to Christ's command in Matthew 28:19, 20. In fact, the ultimate goal of congregations in mission is to establish other congregations sharing the same directive: they must seek to win people. Implicit in the definition of what a congregation really is all about, is the idea of the victorious, faith-producing entity which, when combined with other congregations, makes up

the kingdom of God on earth.

The congregation is to be on the "warpath" under a plan of conquest against the worldly powers. The congregation must be an extension of His mission or it may not survive.

A century has passed since these volumes were published. A lot of changes have occurred. Many of our people in the AFLC are concerned, if not alarmed, over the present state of affairs both within the church and without.

Discoveries create excitement, a new light appears! Is it too much to assume that the combined writings of Georg Sverdrup may affect at least the AFLC to a similar sense of excitement, albeit on a smaller scale? Before too long, as portions of these volumes are translated, and perhaps published, we will be enabled to evaluate the effect upon the congregation of this outstanding pioneer of our Christian faith.



— *Pastor Jan Horne
Faith Lutheran
Fairbury, Nebraska*

**AMBASSADOR HYMNALS
available**

Sixty red *Ambassador Hymnals* are available for the cost of shipping. Contact Pastor Fred Faughn at 135 Hampstead Ave. #308, Savannah, GA 31405, or call (912) 352-1978.

Pastor Steve Kneeland, Duluth, Minnesota, resigned as of

June 1, as pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church where he has served since 1988. Pastor Kneeland and his family continue to live in Duluth, for the present time.

Pastor John Kent, El Cajon, California, was approved as an AFLC home missions pastor at a recent home missions committee meeting. He serves Rancho San

Diego Lutheran, a non-subsidized home mission congregation.

Eben Junction, Michigan — Calvary Free Lutheran recently accepted new members into its fold. On June 21, 1998 seven people were warmly welcomed into the fellowship. They were: Bruce and Sandy Butler, Bill and Carol Perry, Kathy Johnson, Donna Stebelton and JoEllen Swajanen.

Problems and the Christian

— **Pastor Gerald Mundfrom**
Osceola, Wisconsin

The great goodness of God is emphasized much today. That is good but I am afraid it can be done in such a way as to overshadow the problems and the cross which God wills that we bear to the glory of His name and for the maturing of our life as a Christian.

The problems can be anything from the departing of a loved one, sickness, pain, old age, financial loss or a low income. The cross comes as a result of following Jesus all the way and may involve persecution, a burden for the lost and sorrow over the evil, sinful trend of today's society.

The Bible warns us that "In this world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33b). It also says that we can "glory in tribulation also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope" (Romans 5:3, 4). It is for our spiritual good that God permits and even leads us, at times, through a valley of tribulation.

Difficulties should not surprise us for Christianity is a warfare against sin and evil. A warfare is never easy nor pleasant.

Let us not forget God's goodness to us. His goodness, however, is not so much in giving us our every heart's desire, but, more so, in the fact that He is with us and helps us through the trying times

in our life. He says to us, "And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20).

We may become tempted to think it is a disgrace to have problems and be unhappy. We may think that should never happen if you have enough faith. Nowhere does the Bible say it is a sin to be unhappy or to carry a heavy heart.

After lamenting his sorrow and misery, Job concluded that he would come forth as gold (Job 23:10). He knew God would somehow work it all out for good.

We are not being completely honest in our witness for Jesus when we speak of life with Christ as being only a joyous experience and never say anything about the cross the Christian is expected to carry, or about the trying times we are facing and which Jesus helps us through. To teach that Christianity is only joy and happiness with no cross is very appealing to our flesh and to the world. This is exactly what the world is looking for. Many are those who fall for it.

When Jesus was on this earth He was known to weep at times. He carried a heavy heart as the people flocked to him for healing and bread, but rejected His teaching — and especially any teaching about His cross or the cross to be carried in following Him. Jesus never tried to hide His true feelings. When He wept, He did it openly for all to see.

We may begin to think that even if we feel unhappy, we are not to let others notice this, but should always appear joyous and optimistic. We have come to believe that this kind of joyous outlook on life is what wins others for Jesus. But what does the Bible teach? Romans 12:15b says that we are to weep with those that weep.

People may come to us with problems, and even though we are a Christian, we may not be able to do much to help them. But we can pray for them and with them, and we can weep with them and be sympathetic. God can use this, more than we may realize, in bringing hope to the heavyhearted. When we show sympathy and enter into their problems, it is helping them carry the heavy load on their hearts.

When the disciples were caught in a storm on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus did not try to still the storm from shore but He entered into the boat with them before stopping the storm. Should this not be an example for us to follow as we try to help and be a Christian witness to those all around us who are hurting in some way? Love, understanding and sympathy is entering into the problems of others so that the heart can begin being healed of its heaviness.



Pastor Everaldo Strom, Fergus Falls, Minnesota, is now available to provide pastoral care and training to home mission pastors and their families. Pastor Strom is a former classmate of the late Pastor John Strand, the first president of the AFLC. Pastor Strom is also a former president of The Church of the Lutheran Brethren. His son, Edward, is the pastor of Hauge and Emmanuel Lutheran churches in Kenyon, Minnesota. For more information on this new ministry, contact the home missions office at (612) 545-5631 or e-mail at HomeMis@aflc.org

Morris, Illinois — Bethlehem Lutheran Church will host the Lutheran Mission Societies' (Alaska Mission) 77th Annual Convention on August 21-23. The convention will begin with a service on Friday at 8 p.m. Saturday includes Bible study, missionary reports, election of officers and great fellowship. The congregation will serve an evening banquet.

The Alaska Mission has a church in Naknek, a mission in the village of South Naknek and KAKN Christian Radio Station. We encourage new people to come and learn how they can help get the gospel to the Northlands! For more information contact host pastor, Steve Lombardo at (812) 942-1145, or 942-2647; Missionary Tom Olson at (907) 246-6624; or Field Director, Pastor Curtis Nestegard at (907) 349-4737.

Pastor Wayne Hjermstad, Faith, South Dakota, has resigned as pastor of Bethel and Emmanuel Lutheran Churches in Faith and Eagle Butte, where he has served since 1991. He has accepted the call to serve Grace Lutheran Church in Bruce, South Dakota, and expects to begin his new ministry the first of September.

As of August 15, the new address for Solveig Hjermstad, assistant to the editor of *The Lutheran Ambassador*, will be Box 446, Bruce, SD 57220; phone (605) 627-5188.

Durant, Oklahoma — After several months of prayer, the congregation of Faith Lutheran Church is being formed. On Sunday mornings about 40 people are participating in worship, prayer and Bible studies at a Seventh Day Adventist Church building. The Wednesday evening prayer and Bible studies are held in the meeting rooms of a local bank. AFLC President Robert Lee and Home Missions Director Paul Nash have assisted the group in their beginning. Pastor Jerry Peterson of First Lutheran in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and Pastor Roy Johnson of Christ Lutheran in Wichita Falls, Texas are sharing interim pastor duties. The Home Missions Southern Barnabas Team spent a week with the congregation doing visitation work. AFLBS student Andrea Nelson, LaCrosse, Wisconsin, joined the Southern Barnabas Team in July to help them in their ministry.

Phoenix, Arizona — A group has been meeting in the greater Phoenix area for Bible study and prayer. Eldwyn Van Bruggen, Valley City, North Dakota has lead the group while "wintering" in Arizona. A \$35,000 legacy has been given to be used in helping a congregation start in this area. The Partners in Mission Outreach bus is scheduled to take a group of people interested in sharing their faith and efforts during a week of community visitation. This trip is expected to occur during one of the first two weeks of November, 1998. Contact the AFLC Home Missions office at (612) 545-5631 for more information as to how you can participate in this outreach opportunity.

Rebecca Welsch, Amery Wisconsin, and a 1998 AFLBS graduate, is spending a year as a short-term assistant to the Paul and Becky Abel family near Curitiba, Brazil. She replaces Heidi Quam, McIntosh, Minnesota, who returned to the States last May. The national WMF Board voted during the convention in June to support Rebecca.

Pastor Timothy and Janet Hurley, have a new address at 2304 Turner, Ponca City, OK 74604; phone — (580) 762-5356 (h), 762-4775 (o) or e-mail — brotim@poncacity.net

New arrivals on the mission field — While the AFLC Annual Conference was going on in Red Wing, Minnesota in June, two AFLC missionary families on the mission fields welcomed newborns into their families. Benjamin Luther was born to Missionaries David and Sarah Nelson in Campo Mourão, Brazil, and Kristie Joy was born to Missionaries Todd and Barb Schierkolk in Aguascalientes, Mexico.

The David Nelsons request prayer for the completion of their Rachel's adoption process. "Our lawyer said that by November it should be done. The challenge is that we are scheduled to fly out of Brazil in early December and other paperwork for her requires several months. There doesn't seem to be any obstacle holding the process back other than the normal red tape. We are weary by all the promises that have been broken in regards to the date of her adoption. We continue to trust, though, that the Lord has a plan in even the most frustrating of circumstances."

Puebla, Mexico — Missionaries Darwin and Mary Ann Jackson are concluding their formal language training and are preparing to work in evangelism and the training of evangelists. Darwin recently wrote, "I am now using only a Spanish Bible." They have also experienced firsthand the drought and fires devastating Mexico, but are rejoicing in the beginning of the rainy season. The Jacksons are working with Missionaries Dick and Clara Gunderson, also AFLC missionaries on loan to the World Missions Prayer League.

Pastor Thomas and Sharon Olson, have a new address at P.O. Box 450, Naknek, AK 99633; phone — (907) 246-6624.

Blessed be their memory

Dr. Uuras Saarnivaara, 90, passed away on May 10, 1998. Born in Finland, he graduated from the theological department of Helsinki University in 1930. He left Finland to teach at the Suomi Synod seminary in Hancock, Michigan, 1939-54. He returned to Finland to edit the *Sana*, a religious paper, and preached for the People's Bible Association and was the director of the Home Mission College, an institution established to train youth workers and evangelists. In 1964, he moved to Minneapolis to serve as professor at the newly formed Free Lutheran Seminary. In 1967, he was one of the founders of the Inter-Lutheran Seminary. For many years he taught in Minneapolis each fall semester while also teaching and preaching for The Finnish Lutheran Mission in his homeland. He was a prolific writer and many of his books have been translated into other languages. His final gift to the Finnish was a revised version of the Finnish Bible, *The People's Bible*, which is used by many as an alternative to the official Church translation.

Luther Monson, Apache Junction, Arizona, passed away July 7, 1998. He and his wife Adeline, were long-time supporters of home missions. Luther's prayer was that he would live long enough to see an AFLC church started in the Phoenix area. A congregation is in the beginning stages of forming in that area. His son is Rev. Allen Monson, pastor of Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran in Lakeville, Minnesota and chairman of the AFLC Home Missions Committee.

Pastor Richard Snipstead, 70, Osceola, Wisconsin, passed away July 16, 1998. He had served congregations in the AFLC. He was also AFLBS dean from 1968-75 and AFLC president from 1978-92.

Rev. Maynard G. Halvorson, 86, passed away on June 16, 1998. Funeral services were held at Fox River Lutheran Church, Norway, Illinois, and interment in the Fox River cemetery. During his 59 years of ministry, he served congregations in South Dakota, Minnesota, Illinois, Hawaii, and Utah; including two that are currently in the AFLC: Slim Buttes, Reva, South Dakota, and the Fox River Church. Also, for four of his retirement years he was the part-time visitation pastor for West Lisbon Lutheran Church, Newark, Illinois.

He is remembered by an often-quoted statement, "If you get to heaven before I do, tell Jesus I'm coming, too; and if I get there before you do, can I tell Him you're coming?"

Among his survivors is a sister, Veda Halvorson, a member of Word of Life, the AFLC congregation in Mankato, Minnesota.

Harvey P. Dyrud, 91, Newfolden, Minnesota, passed away on June 14, 1998. He is survived by his wife, Myrtle (Rasmussen), eleven children, 35 grandchildren, and 14 great grandchildren; his brother, Rev. Amos Dyrud, Minneapolis, and a sister Edel Gast, Warren, Minnesota.

A tribute to Harvey Dyrud

Harvey Dyrud was one of the fathers of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. He was a member of the original coordinating committee, called at first, the board of administration. More than that, he was one of those who in a particular way paved the way for the AFLC's formation through much prayer, both in his own prayer closet and as a member of groups of men and women gathered for that purpose.

Harvey Dyrud was one of those people who sensed in a way beyond the average that if big things are to happen for God's kingdom here it will be through much prayer.

One of his chief desires was that revival come to us also in this time. To that end he prayed much. The concern was for his own community, Newfolden, for his country and the world. He was intrigued by the spiritual growth in Korea and the prayer which bathes that nation.

Revival means, first, that Christians are aroused from lethargy and lukewarmness to spiritual fervor and zeal. Wrongs are made right, hearts are warmed, the love of the Lord shines through more brightly. In revival, the lost are convicted of sin and some, open to God's grace, cry to Him for salvation and are

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (6 months) - January 1 - June 30, 1998

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN APRIL	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$224,870.00	\$16,303.78	134,920.32	60
Seminary	112,558.00	6,859.76	43,624.82	39
Bible School	180,678.00	13,294.02	70,298.58	39
Home Missions	260,263.00	16,495.26	106,452.53	41
World Missions	420,686.00	37,766.02	184,132.07	44
Capital Investment	16,276.00	1,470.71	5,945.30	37
Parish Education	50,335.00	5,667.21	28,883.42	57
Church Extension	18,092.00	2,185.72	6,193.43	47
TOTALS	\$1,278,758.00	100,042.48	580,450.47	45
TOTALS 1997	1,223,905.00	57,245.24	495,213.46	40
Goal 50%				

Talking about money

W

We talked about money at this year's AFLC Annual Conference. That isn't big news. Money has probably been a topic of conversation to some extent at every annual conference. It is commonly discussed at congregational business meet-

ings and in family living rooms as well. It is also frequently a major topic running through our mind and weighing on our heart.

We do need to talk about money occasionally. But when we do so it is the example and teaching of Jesus we must follow, and not that of the world.

When Jesus died His only earthly possession was the robe He had been wearing. He stated earlier, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head" (Matthew 8:20, NIV).

The message is not that owning personal property is wrong. Numerous people in the Bible who are described as great examples of faithfulness to God owned many things. The message is that owning many things was not important to Jesus, and it shouldn't be to us. Winning in life is not determined by who owns the most toys.

Individuals, families and congregations can fall into the trap of thinking we must possess many of the right kind of things. Jesus said, "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15, NIV). Life isn't found in acquiring stuff but in knowing Christ.

Congregations can have spectacular buildings, great musical instruments and beautiful stained glass windows, but no appearance of true spiritual life. Others possess little of the world's goods, but they have a vibrant spirit because of their love for the Lord. Let us as individuals and congregations have much more concern about our relationship with Jesus than the goods we have or don't have. Let us also value people and congregations because of who they are, not because of what they have.

The goods we do have are to be managed well, but why? Is it so that we can get the best return, so that we can make more money, so that we can buy more things, thinking then we will find happiness? That is the motivation of the world, but not the goal of the child of God.

We want to manage well, to "Honor the Lord with your wealth" (Proverbs 3:9, NIV); not to gain more, but because of all that we have in Christ. The money in the checking account, the house, the car, all those

toys, all the congregation's money, all the AFLC's money — it all belongs to God. He gives us the privilege of managing it.

Our AFLC conferences aren't held at fancy resorts. It is not the most expensive and lavish hotels in town that fill up with AFLC people. Generally as a whole we might be considered a little bit tight, and I think that's fine. Whether the expenses are being paid by ourselves, our congregation or the AFLC, it is all God's money and we should take care, at all times, how we spend it.

We are at the same time to be a generous people. "One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper, he who refreshes others will himself

be refreshed" (Proverbs 11:24,25, NIV). The wallet should open up quickly when it is the needs of others that is involved; but open up more slowly and with caution when it concerns our own pleasures.

Money is something to be careful with but not to worry about. Jesus assures us, "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?" (Matthew 6:25, NIV).

The Bible does talk about money but not in the manner of the world. Instead of giving us extensive instruction in how to raise it and make more, God tells us, in regards to money, to

not love it nor make a big deal about how much we or someone else has or doesn't have. "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?" (Matthew 16:26, NIV).

While we are to be good managers of the money God has provided, we are also to walk by faith, not by our finances. It is tempting to make, "Do we have the funds?" the first question we ask as individuals, congregations and as a church body. We must first ask, "What is the call of God?"

At times we are called to take steps of faith, venturing into new ways of serving Christ, seeing not how the expenses will be paid for, but seeing clearly the promise and call of God. We can receive at those times the opportunity to see God's ability and desire to take care of His children.

God provides, therefore we manage well. God provides, therefore we do not fear. God provides, therefore we rejoice in having all that we need.

— **Pastor Craig Johnson**

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BUILDING THE BASE

The fish in God's aquarium: the gentle giant

In recent years, we have become sensitive to the plight of whales. Due to long-standing whaling practices, they have become an endangered species and many people have taken up their cause, even gathering to attempt to rescue beached whales. I wish we were as sensitive to the "whale" in God's aquarium of this world!

I suggested in earlier articles that we humans are the fish in God's aquarium who will be sorted into keepers or those who will be tossed away at the end of this age (Matthew 13:47-48). Right now, God is watching each of us, but He has not been content with staying behind the "glass wall" of eternity. Rather, He has wanted to have closer contact with these "beloved" creatures — His people whom "He takes pleasure in" (Psalm 149:4). Therefore, He has sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the "tank" with us. We could say that Jesus is the "whale" in God's aquarium — the picture of God's presence in Jesus.

1. He is big and powerful.

The Blue Whale is the largest animal that has ever lived. They may grow up to 100 feet long and weigh more than 100 short tons.

There is no one mightier than Jesus. "All things were created by Him and for Him" (Colossians 1:16). Sometimes He is referred to as God's right hand: "The Lord's right hand has done mighty things! (Psalm 118:15). Psalm 8:3 tells us Jesus formed the heavens with His "fingers" and He counts and names all 20 quintillion stars in the universe! "Lift up your eyes on high and see

who has created these stars, ... He calls then all by name; because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, not one of them is missing" (Isaiah 40:26).

2. He is of two worlds.

The whale lives in the water, but yet is not a fish. He is actually a warm-blooded, air-breathing mammal. Jesus is also of two worlds. He has two natures, both God and man. He is comfortable in both the spiritual and physical realms, but He was not really at home in our world. While in this earthly world, Jesus often spent time in prayer with His heavenly Father. He had to go into the "air" of eternity in order to breathe spiritually. Now, He is at home again with His Father in heaven.

3. Whales have almost no natural enemies.

One known enemy of the whale is demonstrated by the annual gathering of sharks in large numbers at the entrance to the lagoons of lower California to await the migration of the gray whales. Every December, they migrate from the Arctic to the coasts of Mexico to give birth and raise their young until March when they return to the Arctic Ocean. It is amazing that the sharks know when to wait for them and that they would want to harm the innocent whales.

It is also amazing that anyone would want to harm Jesus, but the "sharks" of our old nature always seem to react against the holiness of God. The old natures of the people in Jesus' day reacted against Him so strongly that they put Him to death on the cross.

4. There are two kinds of whales.

The baleen whales have no teeth, but rather plates in their mouths which they use to strain sea water for plankton, drifting masses of plants and shrimp-like animals, called krill. The others are toothed whales which do feed upon fish. Fish are safe from baleen whales which are gentle creatures, but the toothed whale will even take on the giant squid!

Likewise, Jesus has two sides to Him. One is the gentle Savior described in Isaiah 42:3, "A bruised reed He will not break, and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish." The other is the fearful side of Judge which the world will see when He returns someday and the sky will be "split apart" and all men will cry out to the mountains and the rocks: "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?" (Revelation 6:14-17).

Now is the time to know Jesus when He is a "gentle giant" and will show us His saving grace. There will be a time when the One whose quiet presence we take for granted in our world today will return in anger and "clean up" the aquarium of this world. Those who have rejected Him will be cast into the lake of fire and those who have loved His appearing will join the heavenly throng in everlasting joy and praise!

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