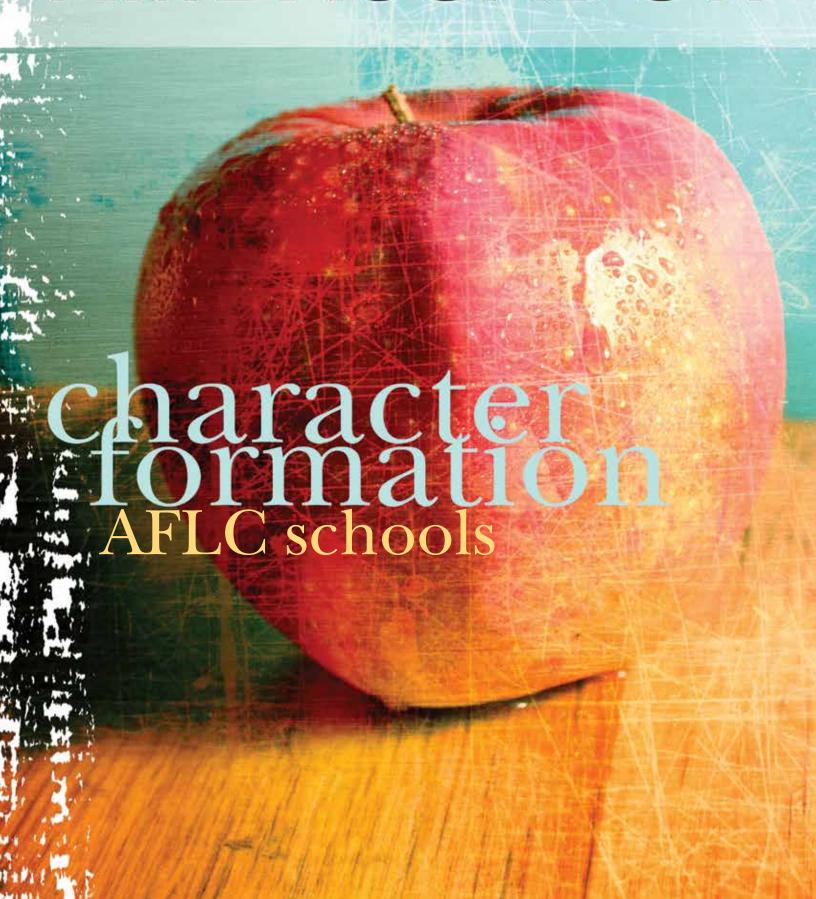
# THE LUTHERAN SADOR AND SADOR



## **Encouraging Word**

## The right direction

recently received a letter from a friend who lives with her husband and sons in Japan. It's a long way from her native home and family in Brazil, where I first knew her. It is amazing to see that the path God put her on led her to live in Japan and do God's work there among Japanese-Brazilians. She participates

Bible school helped prepare them for their lives as pastors and pastors' wives, teachers, business professionals, dads and moms, and leaders in their churches.

in a Portuguese-speaking church and leads Sunday school. She also opens up her home for alphabetizing classes and Bible story times during the week.

Three years ago my friend felt the need to have the children experience something she had as a child in Brazil — Bible camp. The camps have been a real success. It is amazing to see her zealousness for

the Lord and sharing Him with others.

I remember her as a young child, then as a teen, questioning her faith and place in life struggling. I also remember her during her year at Bible school and the struggles she faced and the victories she experienced. That year helped her develop a strong Christian foundation on which to live and share her faith. It is wonderful to now read her letters and hear her express such thankfulness to God for His faithfulness and goodness in the past and present. She knows He will be with her forever.

My friend, along with others who have been to Bible school, can attest to how their years there helped shape their lives, gave them vision, and prepared them for the future. Bible school helped prepare them for their lives as pastors and pastors' wives, teachers, business professionals, dads and moms, and leaders in their churches.

I am thankful that the AFLC realized early on the importance of providing youths with a strong Christian foundation through the establishment of a Bible school, not only here in the United States, but also on the mission field in Brazil. Growing up in Brazil, with my parents teaching at the Bible school there, I was brought in close proximity to the students who studied there throughout the years. Many came from humble beginnings. Through the opportunities given them at Bible school, they were able to advance their schooling and secure their places in the world. Most importantly, they have gone out into the world to be faithful witnesses to the gospel, the saving power of Jesus Christ. Just like my friend now sharing Jesus in Japan.

Bible School is a step in the right direction. Just wait and see where God places you in this world!

> — Carol Knapp Sunburg Free Lutheran Sunburg, Minn.

February 2006 Volume 44, Number 2



## .UTHERANAMBASSADOR

Editor

Pastor Craig Johnson craigi@teleport.com

**Managing Editor** 

**Editorial Board** 

Ruth Gunderson ruthg@aflc.org

Pastor John Mundfrom Oryen Benrud Pastor Jerry Moan Pastor James L. Johnson

The Lutheran Ambassador (USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413) is published monthly by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. AFLC headquarters and publications office is at 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441. Phone: (763) 545-5631; fax: 763-545-0079.

For subscription changes and information:

The Lutheran Ambassador, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441. 763-545-5631 or e-mail at luthamb@aflc.org

**Subscriptions rates:** 

\$17 a year, Group Rate, U. S.

\$18 a year, Individual, U. S.

\$20 a year, International

Periodicals postage paid at Minneapolis, MN, and additional mailing office.

Postmaster: Send address changes to The Lutheran Ambassador, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441

# we are and a fall remember we are I was surrounded

### By Manda Hegseth

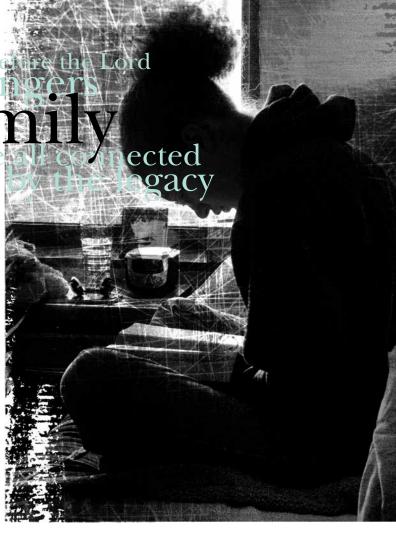
ALUMNI ... WHAT A VERY BIZARRE word for a place that continues to feel like home. I think I could easily speak for some alumni that AFLBS still feels so familiar and comfortable, just with different people and a few new buildings. Somehow, through all the changes, AFLBS still is like home and still beckons memories of the past with new memories to offer.

I remember when I stepped onto the AFLBS campus for the first time; I was welcomed with warm smiles and friendly handshakes. There was the awkward glances at people you knew you would learn to love, but at the same time they were still strangers and ... well, strange. I walked in, greeted new faces, and claimed a room that would soon become home.

It wasn't until a few months into the school year that it occurred to me: I was part of the heritage of the Association Free Lutheran Bible School. As I sat on my bed, covered with my blue sheets and my mom's homemade quilt, I realized that many alumni before me had owned that bed. The very floor could have held a crying sister prostrate before the Lord. Those walls had probably heard praises and pleas to God Almighty night after night. Dozens, if not hundreds of women had been in that room, with thousands of stories, thousands of laughs, and countless prayers. I was surrounded by history. I was surrounded by the legacy of women of God who surrendered two years of their lives to Christ at that school. I was awed.

As I focused on the history of the physical all around me, one thing became so clear — God is the God of us all. I could not get over how beautiful it was that God had reached each woman in the dorm, each man in the men's dorm, even every teacher and faculty member, and brought every one of us together for such a time. We were meant to meet, to become friends, and to eventually become a family on the campus. God was the reason we were all there. And looking at those who had come before us, it was obvious that we were all connected. From the first class of 1966, to my class of 2004, we are a family.

The familiar feeling soon became a strong calling of legacy on my life for future generations. I soon began to see some of the big picture that I was somehow part of,

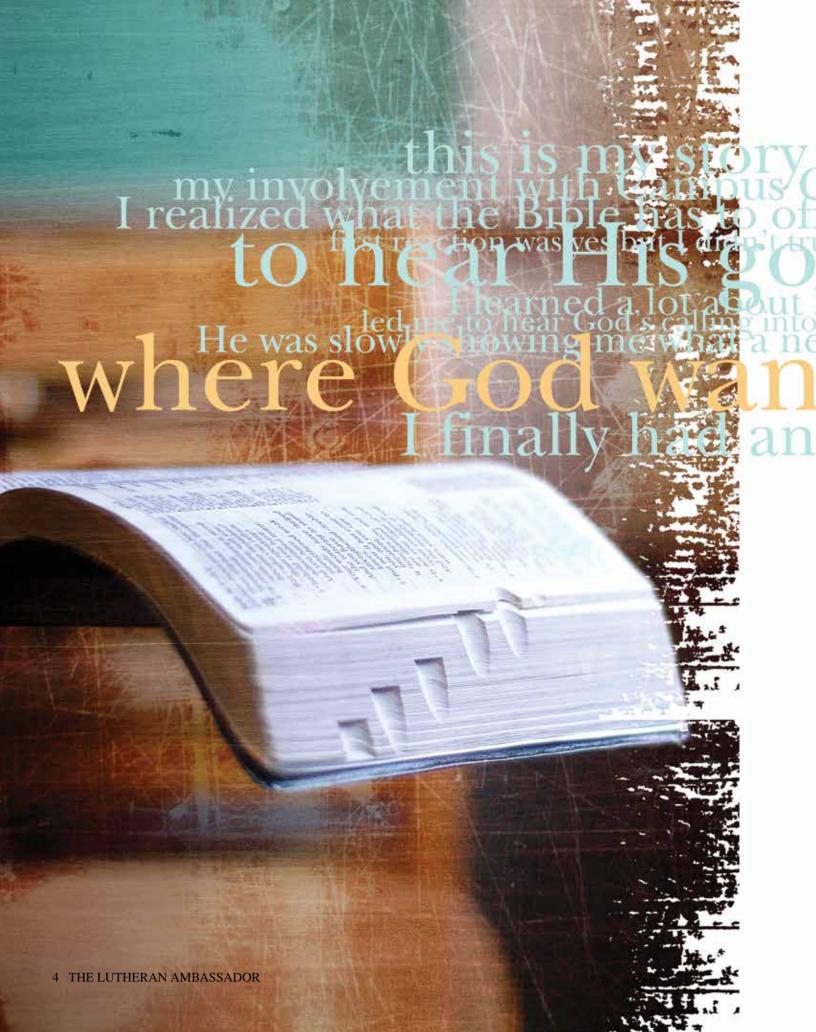


to further the Kingdom at AFLBS and outside of those safe walls. The next year and the year after that, my room, and my very bed would have a new owner. I felt blessed and honored to be part of this great line of saints, and to be included in God's great plan for the campus.

Whether you are an alumnus who has paved the path for future men and women of God, or a first-year student at AFLBS barely realizing you are finally there, remember we are all connected. We, as an AFLBS and AFLC family, even we, as the Body of Christ no matter what denomination, need to pray for each other. We need to pray that God would be honored and glorified in our homes, our churches, and our world. With each step we take, we are laying down the legacy and heritage of those who have been transformed in Christ and gone before us, with our very own steps among them.

So next time you step onto the AFLBS campus and feel that thrill of memories and familiarity climb your spine, don't forget about those who are still there and still coming, and don't forget the legacy of Christ contained on that sod.

Hegseth, currently a student at Northwestern College, St. Paul, Minn., is a 2004 graduate of AFLBS from Fergus Falls, Minn.





EACH SEMINARIAN HAS A UNIQUE STORY of his calling and time in seminary, and each seminarian could very easily point out to you the hand of God throughout. This is my story.

Before I came to seminary I knew that I was called to come and receive training, but I really didn't know why. I remember sitting in class the first few weeks hearing about other men who knew their purpose for being there. The obvious one is to become a pastor of a local congregation, but that is not the case for all. Since those first few weeks, my "why" is becoming much clearer to me. But to really understand how, I have to take you back a few years.

Like many current seminarians, I, too, had gone to AFLBS. When I began classes there, I started to realize what the Bible has to offer and say to the world today. I learned a great deal, but I really had no clear outlet to use it. Sure, I could talk to my friends and co-workers about what I was learning, but I knew that God was calling me to do more than bring His truths up in conversation. A better way to express His truths remained an enigma to me even as graduation from AFLBS approached.

During my last semester there, my friend, Nathan, talked me into staying in Minneapolis and going to a local community college (North Hennepin Community College) for general studies. Little did Nathan or I know, but God was using him to keep me in Minneapolis for a specific reason. That reason became unmistakable our second year at NHCC when I met a guy named Jake who worked with Campus Crusade for Christ. Jake had a vision for starting a student-led Christian organization on campus. He challenged me to be one of those students and to lead a Bible study. At first I

Continued on page 20

"What you have heard from me before many witnesses, entrust to faithful men where things make a school they have been men and women who have a reversible they have been men and women who have a reversible students come today with a wide range of study class by class, week by week, quarter by quart thousands of young people have matricular

THREE THINGS MAKE A SCHOOL: teachers, students and something to be taught and learned. And we could add a fourth, a place to meet.

Paul, writing to Timothy, his spiritual son, sets forth simply the first three necessities in these few words (II Timothy 2:2): "What you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

The faithful men able to teach are the teachers. The others, who are to be taught, are the students. And the subject matter is the teaching handed down from Paul to Timothy.

So that, in a nutshell, is what is involved in conducting Christian education for instruction, for edifying, for building up in the faith, whether it be in the home, Sunday school, confirmation class, vacation Bible school, our Association Free Lutheran Bible School or our theological seminary.

At the beginning of the Association, there

were people who urged the establishment of a Bible school by our fellowship. To open a college, either a two-year or a four-year school such as the Lutheran Free Church had in Augsburg College was impossible for our small group. But to have a Bible school, that, perhaps, could be achieved. And so it came to pass in 1966.

A faculty was assembled, 13 intrepid young people cast their lot with the new school, and the basic textbook was the Bible, as it remains to this day. Teachers at what became known as AFLBS may not have had a lot of advanced degrees among them, but they have been men and women who have a reverence for Scripture as the inspired Word of God.

By now, 40 years later, thousands of young people have matriculated at our school. Not all of them have come just out of high school, although the majority has been in that category. Perhaps

## By Pastor Raynard Huglen

o will be able to teach others also."

## erence for Scripture

ge, some less, nabits and disciplines ter, learning took place ted at our school

> the oldest student thus far was a 75-year-old retired pastor who attended in order to sit in on one particular class (Revelation). And there have been students of all ages in between.

> I was around AFLBS from 1972-77 and observed up to 400 students at close hand. It is likely some came with a more definite purpose in mind than others. Some had more Bible knowledge, some less, depending on whether or not they came from congregations with Bible classes all through high school, whether they had been to Bible camps and/or youth conventions, and whether they had been regular in church attendance and eager listeners to the preaching of their pastors.

> Students come today with a wide range of study habits and disciplines. For teachers, it is a challenge to face — even back in the '70s — junior classes with attendance as high as 77, all in one

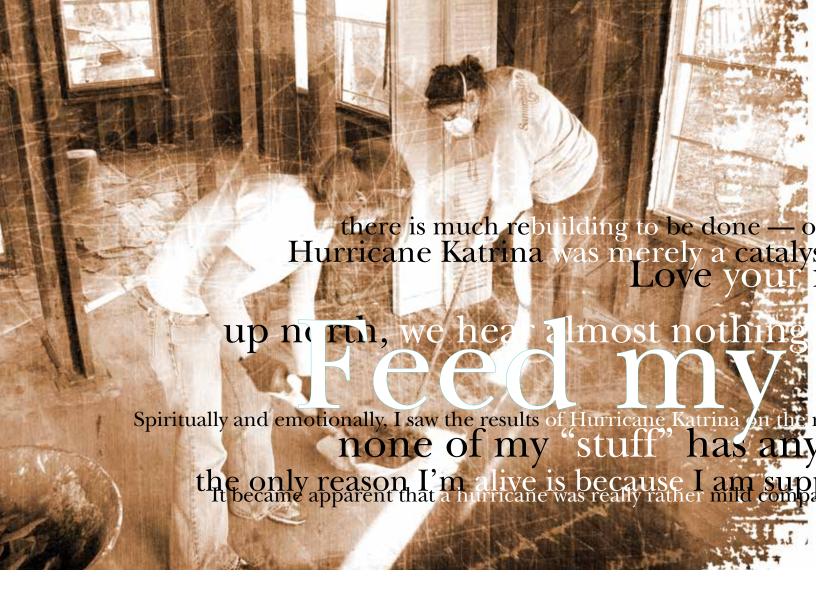
section. My own classes were in I Corinthians, Galatians and Philippians. Class by class, week by week, quarter by quarter, learning took place. Related subjects enlarged the students' knowledge — church history, doctrine, music, etc. They are building blocks to a well-rounded fund of Christian knowledge. If students apply themselves, the Holy Spirit is able to present workmen who don't need to be ashamed.

Paul wrote, "What you have heard from me before many witnesses." This is the deposit of faith, the body of truth passed on from age to age, which has come down to us also in 2006. A dedicated corps of teachers has received, yes, taken this sacred charge to pass on to the students of AFLBS the faith of fathers and mothers. The faith must be appropriated personally, to be sure, but we speak of the body of truth mentioned above, the Holy Scriptures.

In other translations of II Timothy 2:2, Paul speaks of the recipients of the message as "faithful" (RSV, NAS) or "reliable" (NIV) men, men you can trust (NEB), trustworthy (NLT). The Association, through the Board of Trustees, has entrusted an appointed faculty to teach at our Bible school. They are also chosen because they are able, competent, and qualified to teach. And in our experience they have been and are teachers because, as we said earlier, they have a reverence for the Bible and bow before it and the Lord Who has given it, and have a spirit of warmth for those who come to study at AFLBS.

Already 40 years of history? May the Lord grant many more.

Huglen, a retired AFLC pastor, lives in Newfolden, Minn.



It is kind of interesting how the news works. When something big, like a hurricane, happens, every news channel in the country is saturated with coverage on it. They are all vying for those amazing stories of close calls and perseverance, with accompanying videos that show the wind and tidal surges in all of their fury.

One thing I realized during a recent trip to Mississippi was that when the media feels its audience is bored of one news story, it will move on to the next eye-grabbing headline. So it is in the case of Hurricane Katrina.

The lack of Katrina coverage just before my trip shaped my idea of what was going on down there. Up north we hear almost nothing about it any more, but in Mississippi Katrina's devastation is still the main topic on the news. As the coverage dwindled, my interest in and concern for the people living down south also dwindled. In the back of my mind, I knew that there was still stuff happening down on the Gulf Coast, but really, as far as I was concerned, the Katrina story was over.

Boy, was I wrong. Hurricane Katrina was merely a catalyst; the first chapter in a book telling the story of the Gulf Coast's redemption. There is much rebuilding to be done — of the physical and the spiritual sort.

A group of 13 from AFLBS pulled onto the grounds of the United Methodist Assembly in Biloxi, Miss., on the morning of Jan. 2. The Samaritan's Purse organizers we were working for didn't have any jobs for us to do when we arrived, so we were able to go out and walk the beach, take pictures, and just hang out. On the beach, we found lots of rubble and pieces of broken souvenirs from nearby shops, along with other, more sobering pieces of junk. A baby's pacifier, some family photos, and a camera that was in use when it was swept away were just some of the items that littered the seashore. Reality started to sink in for me.

The next day, after devotions, we got our work assignments and headed out. Eight of us from our 13-person group went to the house of a woman named Renee to "mud it out." The other five went

## By Tim Johnson

f the physical and spiritual sort st; the first chapter neighbor

about it anymore

residents of Biloxi

real value

posed to be here led to other stuff she has faced

to the home of a 78-year-old war hero named Ed.

At Renee's house, we started our work by clearing debris from her property and cutting down and removing fallen trees. Once most of the outdoor work was finished, six of us went in and began tearing out moldy sheet rock, cabinets, and bathroom fixtures. The other two stayed outside and continued removing the trees and brush that still cluttered the lawn.

When Renee paid us a visit later on that day, it became apparent that a hurricane was really rather mild compared to other things she had faced. She is in the middle of a divorce. Her oldest son has been crippled from birth. Her second son's face and chest had been terribly burned by hot wax, and he had recently gotten out of jail, as well. Her youngest child, now 24, had been diagnosed with cancer not too long ago. With that in mind, along with her current circumstances after Katrina, we were greatly relieved to find out that she was a regular church attendee and a Christian since she was young. She was eager to let us know

that if God had not been there to hold her up, she didn't know what she would have done. God was her strength throughout everything. What a testimony!

Ed, on the other hand, was a little different. He's the kind of person you don't really talk to. You spend most of your time listening. He was chock full of stories; from war accounts to stories about his family. He could keep you entertained for weeks without ever repeating a story. I think entertainment was his specialty, as those who worked for him can confirm. Some of them thought it would be cool to bring him back with us and have him do stand-up comedy. He might have done it, too!

When Ed's guys weren't listening to him tell tales, they were spending their time hard at work on his roof, clearing debris and laying down new plywood and shingles. It was a slightly more demanding job than destroying everything up to four feet high as we did in Renee's house, so the roof was not quite completed when we left. But, when you consider that only two of the five people had any significant roofing experience, I think they did an awesome job.

Spiritually and emotionally, I saw the results of Hurricane Katrina on the residents of Biloxi and the surrounding neighborhoods. This storm was a catalyst toward revival in the hearts of those affected. People who came out alive all seemed to realize two basic things:

First, none of my "stuff" has any real value. It can be swept away in an instant, and it can be replaced in an instant. With this in mind, "things" become a worthless, unimportant novelty.

Second, the only reason I am alive is because I am supposed to be here. But why? How come I made it out alive while others didn't? Is there more to this life than I thought?

I want to leave you with a challenge. Jesus gave two basic commands throughout His ministry on earth. First, love the Lord our God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. This is the greatest commandment, and the second is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself. Did you hear that? Love your neighbor as yourself! "Feed my sheep," Jesus says. He also says that whatever we do to others, we do to Him. And whatever we don't do for others, we don't do for Him. We have it so good here in America, and I think that we all need to humble ourselves, sacrifice a little, and then buckle down and do the work that Christ gave us to do.

Johnson, a junior at AFLBS, is from Amery, Wis.



Warm Beach Camps & Conference Center Stanwood, Wash. — June 20-23

**Hosts:** Atonement Free Lutheran, Arlington, Wash.; Elim Free Lutheran, Lake Stevens, Wash.; Triumph Lutheran, Ferndale, Wash.; Calvary Lutheran, Everett, Wash.; Grace Lutheran, Buckley, Wash.; Our Redeemer Lutheran, Kirkland, Wash.; New Hope Free Lutheran, Snohomish, Wash.; Spencer Creek Lutheran, Eugene, Ore.; Bethany Lutheran, Astoria, Ore.; Stillwater Lutheran, Kalispell, Mont.; Faith Free Lutheran, Kalispell.

## **Conference registration**

Name:	
Spouse (	if attending):
Address:	
Phone (D	(E):
City / sta	te / zip:
Congreg	ation:
	pastor / visiting pastor / lay member / lay visitor

**Are you:** pastor / visiting pastor / lay member / lay visitor **Spouse:** pastor / visiting pastor / lay member / lay visitor

Registration: \$30 single, \$40 couple

Make checks for registration only payable to AFLC and send to 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441.

Registrations received after June 1 must add a \$5 late fee.

A downloadable copy of this form is available at www.aflc.org

## **Events planned for children, youths**

A full morning and afternoon schedule is being planned for all children and youths. Because Warm Beach is a Christian campground facility, it offers a wide variety of activities for the young while adults are in session, including:

- In the mornings, beginning Tuesday, group study and fellowship times for youths and VBS for children.
- Supervised activities in the afternoon, including a pool, open to all those staying in Warm Beach facilities.
- Putt-putt golf and horseback riding for an additional charge.
- Nursery care during all business sessions, as well as the WMF Convention and the pastors and wives banquet.

## They returned and took some things

Warm Beach Camps & Conference Center, Stanwood, Wash.

**AFLC** www.aflc.org

**Hosts** www.aflchurch.org

**Warm Beach** www.warmbeach.com

the King Bo

his of

e invite you to come to this year's annual conference in a setting of natural beauty. The Pacific Northwest offers the grandeur of the Cascade and Olympic mountain ranges, graced by the beauty of Puget Sound and the San Juan Islands. Because the conference site is 20 minutes from the nearest hotel or restaurants, we encourage you to lodge and eat on site.

AFLC Evangelism will host "Rekindling the Fire," an event for pastors and wives, on June 19. The WMF National Convention (page 15) will be held June 20. The annual conference begins with an opening service on the evening of June 20 and runs through June 23.

These four pages contain the registration form for **food** and housing. Please take your time to work through it step by step. If you have questions, please call Jan at (425) 231-3100, Meribeth at (360) 435-2213, or Atonement Free Lutheran at (360) 435-9191. To avoid a late fee of \$25, please return registrations by May 25.

We pray and trust that the upcoming conference will be a special event for all who can take part. Let us know how we can serve you. A downloadable copy of this form will be available at the AFLC's web site (listed above).

— The 2006 Annual Conference Committee Congregations in the Pacific Northwest

### WHO'S COMING?

Name(s)		Phone —	
Address —	City	State	— Zip ———
Tell us the number of youths or children who Youths, seventh grade and older, who Children, ages 4 through sixth grade, Children, younger than 4, who will be described by the control of	will take part in our program want to be involved in yout who will be involved in VBS cared for by the nursery or \	nming. See page 10 for phactivities:  S and children's activities	orogram details. 
For those traveling by air to SEA-TAC Airpor airport, between Seattle and Tacoma), you woption of renting a car or taking the Bellinghat transport van to Marysville (\$44 roundtrip per Marysville, we will provide shuttle service to Please check which you plan to do. You must own reservation with Bellingham Airporter.  Call (866) 235-5247 or visit www.airporter.	t (the Seattle vill have the am Airporter r person). From Warm Beach. st make your	I/we plan to drive (Dir and map at www.ward I/we are flying out and I/we are flying and plate Bellingham Airporter. service from Marysvil	mbeach.com)  d plan to rent a car  an to use the  We will need shuttle
If you plan on using the airporter, may we	have your flight and airp	orter information?	
# flying in your party: Airline: Airporter leaving SEA-TAC at:			

### **SECTION 6** Where do you plan to stay and eat?

Options available at Warm Beach Camp & Conference Center

- Olympic View Lodge: Motel-style rooms; one queensize bed and two day beds per room; linens included
- Cascadian Lodge: Lodge-style rooms; one double bed and two day beds per room; vanity in each room; central bath in each wing; linens available (\$8/person) or provide your own
- Mt. Baker Cabins: Family/dorm-style rooms; one double bed and four single bunk-style beds per room; two rooms
- share bath; four rooms per cabin; linens available (\$8/person) or provide your own
- Glacier & Whistler Lodges: Dormitory-style cabins; three sleeping rooms per lodge with central lobbies and baths; 10 single bunk-style beds per sleeping room; linens available (\$8/person) or provide your own
- Recreational vehicle/camping area: Electricity, water, and sewer available

#### If you plan to ...

- ... lodge in a Warm Beach facility with either the 3- or 4-night lodging/meal plan, complete parts 1 and 6
- ... lodge in a Warm Beach facility less than 3 nights and/or eat only selected meals, complete parts 3, 5 and 6
- ... camp in Warm Beach recreational vehicle area, complete parts 3, 5 and 6
- ... arrange your own off-site lodging and eat only selected meals, **see part 4** for hotel information, but also **complete parts 5 and 6**

## PART 1 Lodging and meals at Warm Beach

- 4 night/12 meal plan includes lodging Monday through Thursday nights and all meals beginning Monday dinner through Friday lunch (See Part 6 regarding special meals)
- 3 night/9 meal plan includes lodging Tuesday through Thursday nights and all meals beginning Tuesday dinner through Friday lunch (See Part 6 regarding special meals)

		4 night/12 meal Plan # People \$ Total	3 night/9 meal Plan # People \$ Total			
Olympic	Single Occ.* 13-Adult	\$418 X = \$289 X =	\$314 X = \$217 X =			
	5-12 0-4	\$152 X = \$24 X =	\$114 X = \$18 X =			
Cascadian/ Mt. Baker	Single Occ.* 13-Adult 5-12	\$320 X = \$225 X = \$148 X =	\$240 X = \$168 X = \$111 X =			
	0-4	\$24 X =	\$18 X =			
Glacier/ Whistler	13-Adult 5-12 0-4	\$168 X = \$134 X = \$24 X =	\$126 X = \$100 X = \$18 X =			
Whistler	0-4	\$24 X =	\$18 X =			

Linens are extra for all lodging except for Olympic. You may bring your own or have them provided for you.

Linens \$8 X \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_ \$8 X \_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_

Part 1 Total: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>\*</sup>Single Occ. means that a person wishes to occupy the room alone and the pricing is higher. If the room will be occupied by two or more people, please use the other pricing options.

## PART 2 Camping in Warm Beach RV area

		4 night/12 meal Plan		3 night/9 meal Plan		
		# People \$ Total		# People	\$ Total	
1	13-Adult	\$117 X	=	\$88 X	=	
5	5-12	\$94 X	=	\$71 X	=	
(	)-4	\$24 X	=	\$18 X	=	
Part 2 Total:						

PART 3 Part-time lodging (or extra nights not included in lodging/meal plans)

Which nights are you reserving lodging for? (Please circle) Sun Mon Tues Weds Thurs Fri

		# People	# Nights	\$ Total
Olympic	Single Occ.* 13-Adult	\$85 X \$56 X	· ·	=
	5-12	\$22 X	.,	 =
	0-4	\$6 X	3.4	=
Cascadian/	Single Occ.*	\$73 X	Χ	=
Mt. Baker	13-Adult	\$42 X	Χ	=
ma Danoi	5-12	\$21 X	Χ	=
	0-4	\$6 X	Χ	=
Glacier/	13-Adult	\$28 X	Χ	=
Whistler	5-12	\$21 X	Χ	=
Willotto	0-4	\$6 X	Χ	=
RV/Tent	13-Adult	\$11 X	Χ	=
sites	5-12	\$9 X	Χ	=
0.100	0-4	\$6 X	Χ	=

Part 3 Total:

Lodging off-site (The following is located at the I-5 Warm Beach exit, a 20-minute drive) Hawthorne Inn & Suites — Call (360) 657-0500 to make your reservations. Cost: \$89 single or double

Additional meal options (Part-timers or meals outside of lodging/meal plans)

Note: Monday lunch and Friday dinner are **not included** in the lodging/meal plans but may be added here.

(1) Write in the # of people for each meal; (2) total meals at right; and (3) write in totals in price chart on next page

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Total meals
Breakfast	Not offered					
Lunch						
Dinner						

Price chart for extra	Breakfasts	13-Adult 5-12 0-4		Meals X X X	\$	ice 66 = . 65 = . narge = .		Total
meals	Lunches	13-Adult 5-12 0-4		X	\$7	i.50 =		
	Dinners	13-Adult 5-12 0-4		X X	\$9	0.75 = 0.50 = harge =		
Part 5 Total:								
PART 6	Special meals and ba	anquets # Meals		Those <b>in</b> a plan		Those <b>not ir</b> a plan	l	\$ Total
	ekindling Fire banquet		_ X	\$10 credit	or	no charge	=	
Tuesday W Tuesday W Wednesday Wednesday Thursday A Thursday A Thursday P Thursday p Friday FLA	pastors and wives) MF luncheon MF banquet WMF advisory breakfast WMF Corporation lunch WMMO		X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X	no extra	or or or or or or or or or	\$8.50 \$10.75 \$6 \$8.50 \$10.75 \$6 \$8.50 \$16 \$6 \$8.50	= = = = = = = =	
Part 6 Total:							-	
Part 2 Total: (C Part 3 Total: (F Part 5 Total: (F Part 6 Total: (S	Totals  odging/meal packages at Warm Beach)  Part-time or add-on lodging)  Part-time or add-on meals)  Special meals and banquets)  ging/meal plans received afte							

Make checks payable to **AFLC PNW District** and mail with completed form to Atonement Free Lutheran Church, 6905 172nd St. NE, Arlington, WA 98223. Or fax to (360) 403-7521.

Balance due at conference ......

 the peoples, a feater. Surely you need of the peoples. Surely you summon nations you know and nations that do not know will hasten to you, because of ord your God, the Holy One nel, for he has endowed you blendor."

k the Lord while he may be

Seeking God's Perspective

mouth; It will not return to the sempty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. You will go out joy and be led forth in peace; mountains and hills will but song before you, and all the of the field will clap their Instead of the thornbush.

## WMF NATIONAL CONVENTION

## Warm Beach Camps & Conference Center Stanwood, Wash. — June 20

Name ————	———— Congregation —————
Address — C	Sity ————————————————————————————————————
Registration cost (\$7, please check) —	(Registration required. After June 1 must add a \$3 late fee.)
Luncheon (\$8.50, please check) ———	Banquet (\$10.75, please check)————
District presidents and national officers, please	net here <b>or on food/housing form</b> (page 14) if attending annual conference. register for Wednesday's advisory breakfast on page 14.  by. Please mark below, <b>or on page 11</b> , to assist in planning:
Number in nursery —	Number in VBS
	tion, visit www.aflc.org/women. Make checks payable to

## Transformed to serve

hen asked to write about being transformed, I doubted that I would be able to do it justice. "Have I been substantially transformed?" I won-

dered. "Is my life really used in service to others?" Self doubt is my constant companion. I began to think back over 34 years of service in the Kingdom since my graduation from Bible school, looking for signs in my life that the Lord was transforming me into a cheerful, humble, and useful servant — a transformation that seems like a daunting task, even for the Lord!

I thought back over our years in Ecuador, working among the Quichua Indians of the high Andes. Although there were good times, I mostly remember being afraid, discouraged, and overwhelmed. I felt faithless, weak, and too full of my own thoughts and feelings to be of much use to the Lord. Then I thought back over our years in Mexico. As well as some significant successes, there have been huge disappointments and setbacks. Yet, this time around I realize that my soul is full of peace and happiness and my faith is stable and strong! What has made the difference? What has transformed me into a (usually) cheerful, stable, faith-filled servant

in the face of the same kinds of difficulties and sorrows that we experienced in Ecuador?

I have a one-word answer that will seem like I'm saying too much and too little at the same time: GOD! I have learned to tell the difference between the facts of my life and the truth of God's Word concerning my situation and am learning to live in the reality of God's truth. He is real. He loves me. He is working out a wonderful plan in and through me at all times. He is trustworthy. His Word speaks power and healing into my life. I have been transformed by the experiential knowledge that a wonderful God is all around me. One of my favorite Bible verses is Hebrews 11:27: "... he (Moses) endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Taking

II Corinthians 2:15 into consideration as well, I would paraphrase it to read, "Debbie is enduring and even triumphing as she learns to see Him who is invisible!"

— By Debbie Giles Missionary to Mexico and keynote speaker of "Transformed to Serve" a WMF-sponsored day of spiritual renewal for young women at AFLBS and seminary wives THE YEAR IS 1968 OR THEREABOUTS and I'm a member of the church council, as I recall. Our pastor is looking to lighten the load of his congregational duties, maybe even to retire, or get into some kind of part-time pastoral work. He brings up the possibility of bringing an intern into the congregation. There is a good deal of discussion in the council as to cost and benefits, how and where to get our intern, what qualifications we would look for and how the intern would fit the congregation.

Our pastor says he has a line on a prospect who is retired out of the army and has felt the call to the ministry. Our congregation was a member of the American Lutheran Church, whose seminary is located in our town. There is direct communication back and forth between the school and our congregation. We call the man, and after he serves a short time our pastor does retire and takes a part-time social service job. The intern is called to be pastor and serves nearly 12 years and retires. As you can see, an intern replacing a retiring pastor is a distinct possibility. In this case it turns out to be a blessing to us.

Advance a couple of decades to the year 2002 or so, and my wife and I have transferred to an AFLC congregation. Again, I'm on the church council and a retired military man is being considered as an intern and is eventually called. In this instance, however, I have a better recollection of being associated with an intern. He was with us for a year as a part of the AFLTS program, was ordained and has moved on to pastor another congregation.

Though he has been gone almost a year, he remains vivid in our memories and is present in our prayers. He fit into the congregation from the start and blessed us as he visited shut-ins, taught catechism and vacation Bible school adult class, took his turn preaching and counseled young people, etc. The fact that he was an officer in the navy and had experience working with young people became a special blessing to us. As he served among us he was his own man, not trying to be a copy of our pastor. But because his ministry was, and is, founded in Scripture he was on the same page as our pastor. And being just out of seminary and a little younger, the people cut him a little slack and wanted him to succeed. Not only that but his view of society was, because of his background, just different enough from what our church was familiar with to add a little extra zip to our experiences with him.

There's another side of the intern story also. Undoubtedly having a man such as our pastor with years of experience, one who communicates easily with a younger man, as mentor, was a blessing to our intern. Added to that, when mutual love develops between the intern and the congregation, as happened with us, that is when the real work of the Spirit becomes apparent. Ears are opened, hearts are touched and God comes alive among the people. You see, as he tried to cooperate with us and we tried to encourage and bless his efforts, the Holy Spirit blessed us.

Yes, one of God's many blessings to our congregation was the presence of our intern for a year, and one year is just the right amount of time if only because of this one thing: our intern did not become beholden to any one group within our congregation and we could accept a candid, even critical point of view. That is a blessing.

Klein is a deacon at Peace Lutheran Church, Canal Winchester, Ohio

when mutual
He was we had expended that is well as he tried to cooperate to it.

He was well as he is that is well as he is that it is that it is well as he is that it is well as he is that it is well as he is that it is that it is well as he is that it is that it is well as he is that it is that it is the interval as he is the interval as he is that it is the interval as he is that it is the interval

By Ron Klein



ith us for a year as a part of AFLIS
emains vivid in our memories and present in our prayers
rience working with young people became a blessing
out-ins, taught catechism and vacation Bible school adult class, took his turn preaching
when the real work of the Spirit becomes appar



## **World Missions**

But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.

— I Peter 3:15

Everyone a missionary

hen it comes to reaching the lost for Christ, the fundamentals are the same even when cultures are so different. Christians have peace and joy of heart even when their earthly situations are difficult by cultural standards.

The Hindu in India lives with a religion that says troubles that appear real are really an illusion. The only hope is to live this life in obedience to the caste requirements into which you are born, with a possibility of being reincarnated into a higher caste in the next life. But the Christian with peace and joy has an answer to this vicious cycle and must be able to communicate it in relevant terms.

In our culture, which seeks happiness and pleasure, the atheist desires to live it up in this life with the hope that there is no afterlife with a judgment before a righteous God. Yet atheists deal with a conscience. They use evolution to help dull that conscience.

Each Christian needs to learn the fundamentals of apologetics to give an answer to their hope in Christ in terms that relate to the competing religions of different cultures, whether it is Hinduism in India or atheism here. Teaching those fundamentals is a central part of the work of Christian missionaries, pastors, and teachers the world around.

Dr. Robert Kohl
 AFLC World Missions Committee

## Palmer takes on full-time directorate

embers of the AFLC
World Mission Committee are pleased to
announce that Pastor Del
Palmer has accepted the
call to serve as full-time director of
the World Missions Department.



**Del Palmer** 

Pastor Palmer has served as the part-time director for the past three years and will begin his full-time responsibilities Feb. 1. He will be leaving Faith Lutheran Church, Shakopee, Minn., after serving them

for nearly 10 years.

Because of the growing opportunities to expand AFLC mission work around the world, members of the World Missions Committee saw a need for a full-time director. We anticipate starting a new work with

the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Uganda in 2006 with missionary candidates Nate and Rhoda Jore. Members of the committee are also looking at expanding the work of missions in our current fields of Brazil, India, and Mexico.

Pastor Palmer began his fulltime service by participating with the tour group to Brazil, which is celebrating 40 years of AFLC mission work there. Palmer also participated in an exploratory trip up the Amazon River to evaluate the possibility of starting a new AFLC work there. Any expansion of mission work in Brazil would be in partnership with the AFLC Brazil national church.

Pastor Palmer has already traveled to India, Africa, Brazil, and Mexico in support of our mission efforts. His full-time status will accommodate this travel in the future as well as allow him to better

promote missions within the United States and Canada, including teaching mission classes at the Bible school and seminary.

Within the past couple of years, a number of people have expressed interest in serving the Lord through AFLC World Missions. Some, such as the Jores, and Tomaz and Miriam Chimel, are in the final stages of the process. Others have just begun discussions in the process. Please contact Pastor Palmer if you sense that inner call and would like to find out more about the work of AFLC World Missions.

The purpose of AFLC World Missions is, by the grace of God, to make disciples of all nations through teaching and evangelism.

Tom Caouette
 Chairman
World Missions Committee

## Chaplaincy

## empty

ost of us have probably graduated from high school or some equivalent. Not so long ago being a high school graduate was all that was needed in order to get a good job and be able to afford to raise a family. In today's society, having a high school education won't financially get you very far unless you have additional education. Our choices range from certificate programs and technical schools to colleges, and universities. In addition, many careers require continuing education in order to keep up with evolving changes and/or licensure.

Wasn't the overall idea behind education the betterment of man and our human condition? As we watch the local, national and world news, we have to wonder what happened. Social scientists theorize that individuals and their families both impact and are impacted by their environment. So what is the basis of our society from which our environment is built upon? C. S. Lewis once said, "A clever arrangement of bad eggs will never make a good omelet." As an educator, he commented, "Education without values, as useful as it is, seems to make a man a more clever devil."

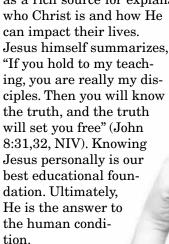
If you have ever broken a bad egg into a hot frying pan, you are familiar with the pungent odor it produces. (It took four years before I could attempt to fry an egg again.) If we look at Lewis' second statement and continue in the analogy, we would have to conclude that education without values is like a bad egg. However, as a chaplain and pastoral counselor at a regional drug and alcohol rehab unit, I find there is something missing in people's lives that goes deeper than values. After all, many schools today are attempting to teach values from a secular perspective as a basis for improving our society.

The apostle Paul warned us, "Don't let anyone lead you astray with empty philosophy and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the evil powers of this world, and not from Christ" (Colossians 2:8, NLT).

What I first find missing from many people's lives is a love and understanding of God's Word. With all of our education. I am afraid we have a tendency to become independent from God and look to

our own sources for happiness and fulfillment. We no longer look to God who has assured us that "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you" (Psalm 32:8, NIV). People have become biblically illiterate because God's Word is no longer taught in the home and, as a result, is no longer treated as relevant in our society. When happiness fails, we fall into utter dismay and grief and look anywhere but to God for ways to relieve the pain.

I also find in people a deeper problem of not knowing the One whom Scripture speaks of, Jesus Christ. I will often refer them to the Gospel of John as a rich source for explanation



— By Pastor Jerry Nelson Christ is Lord Lutheran, LaCrosse, Wis.



thought, "You want me of all people to lead a Bible study? Wouldn't someone else be more qualified?" But after praying and thinking about it, I realized that this was the opportunity I was looking for to share with others what God had taught me. I finally had an outlet to answer the call God had placed on my heart.

It was while I was involved with Campus Crusade that I began to hear God calling me to leave my pursuit of the medical field and instead pursue a life of full-time ministry. At first I thought it was nothing more than discontentment with my current classes and the future job I could have. Then I realized that's exactly what it was. I was not content because I was not where God wanted me to be. He was slowly showing me not only how much joy there is in serving Him in the way He desires, but also what a need there is in the world today for people, especially college students, to hear His gospel.

I truly believe that it was my involvement with Campus Crusade that led me to hear God's calling into full-time ministry, beginning with seminary.

I was involved with Campus Crusade for four years before starting at AFLTS. I learned a lot about leadership, evangelism, and the need for the gospel on our college campuses today. When I arrived at AFLTS I looked back on my time with Campus Crusade as preparation for seminary. Now I am beginning to see that it was more than just preparation. It was a preview of the vision God has given me of where He wants me to serve.

Although I am no longer actively involved with Cam-

pus Crusade, I have not lost the desire to share the truths of Scripture with college students. I have been praying that God would give me a way to do this while in and after seminary. Pastor Kevin Olson, AFLC Youth Ministries director, recently approached me on just this subject. He told me that an AFLC college ministry needs help from someone with a heart for college students. My first reaction was, "Yes!" But I didn't trust myself and I wanted to pray about it first. After a week my answer had not changed, and I knew it was not just my desire but God's desire as well that I take on this opportunity. God had answered my prayer.

Will I serve in college ministry after I complete my training in seminary? I really don't know. The point is that God has shown me through this semester how He leads us to different situations and opportunities to prepare us for His vision for our future. He is the one who brought me to AFLBS so that I could meet Nathan. He is the one who used Nathan to convince me to go to NHCC. He is the one who introduced me to Jake at NHCC so that I could get involved with Campus Crusade. He is the one who used Campus Crusade to call me to fulltime ministry. He is the one who used Campus Crusade to give me a heart to reach college students. As a result, God had prepared me to say yes to serve the AFLC's college ministry while in seminary, and I pray that He will continue to use the events of my life to prepare me for the vision He has for my future.

Forness, from Abercrombie, N.D., is currently a junior at AFLTS.

#### Mercy and Truth Publishers,

Newfolden, Minn., announces the final sale and distribution of Pastor Trygve Dahle's autobiography titled, "A Pioneer Church Family." This book is a good resource on the early history of the AFLC. To order for \$12, including postage and handling, write to MTP at 19494 350th St. NW, Newfolden, MN 56738.

**Pastor Tony Stockman**, Brandon, Minn., was appointed to the Mercy and Truth Publishing board. He replaces Pastor John Abel.

Magdelena "Febe" Hernandez, Irapuato, Mexico, wife of Pastor Raul Hernandez and daughter of Pastor Samuel Flores, died suddenly on Jan. 12. She was the mother of two children, both still at home.

Pastor Craig Benson, Radcliffe,

Iowa, has been promoted to the rank of major in the US Air Force Reserve, effective Feb. 7. He will also be serving from May through September as chaplain on a base in the Middle East.

Pastor Al Monson, Lakeville, Minn., pastor of Minnesota Valley, Lakeville, since 1994, has accepted a call to serve Calvary Free Lutheran, Mesa, Ariz.

Pastor Joel Lohafer, Ferndale, Wash., has resigned as pastor of Triumph Lutheran, Ferndale, where he has served since 1991. His future plans are uncertain.

Members of the Coordinating Committee accepted a resolution of affiliation from **St. Paul Lutheran**, Hagerstown, Md. ELCM Pastor Terry Culler currently serves the congregation,

which was founded in 1826 and formerly a member of the ELCA.

Pastor Greg Schram was installed on Jan. 8 at Our Saviour's Lutheran and Reiner Lutheran Free churches, Thief River Falls, Minn., by Pastor Paul Nash, AFLC Home Missions director.

Members of the Coordinating Committee accepted a resolution of affiliation from **Lord of Life Lutheran**, Mt. Vernon, Wash. Pastor Dale Lankford, a 2005 graduate of AFLTS, serves the congregation, which is newly organized.

**Paul Blom**, a 2001 graduate of AFLBS and a 2002 graduate of the Ministry Training Institute, has been approved as a missionary to serve in Slovakia with East European Missions Network.



Emmanuel Free Lutheran of Williston, N.D., received new members on Dec. 18. Pictured are: Jeanette Taasevigen, Tara Halverson, Philip Snyder, Steve, Verniece and Jesse Jo Johnson, and Milo, Janice and Greg Hunter, and Pastor Jon Wellumson



Sixteen new members were received at Zion Lutheran, rural Dexter, Minn. Pictured are 14 of the new members, along with Pastor Lyle Aadahl and six members of the church council.

## Seminary meets program challenge

The Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary has been awarded \$1,451 from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans for successfully meeting the GivingPlus program challenge.

"We are grateful to Thrivent Financial for offering this challenge and the opportunity to earn a financial outreach bonus," said Dr. Francis Monseth, dean of AFLTS. "The funds will be used in the seminary general fund."

## Join Knee Mail prayer list

The AFLC Home Missions department sends out a regular prayer email to those who wish to subscribe. To become a recipient of the Knee Mail and receive updates on Home Missions congregations, contact the Home Missions department by calling (763) 412-2018, or sending your email address to 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441, faxing to (763) 545-0079, or emailing it to homemis@aflc. org. The prayer letter is also available by visiting the Home Missions web site at www.aflc. org/home-missions.

## [ABCDEFG]

### What does it mean?

AFLC: The Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, a fellow-ship of independent congregations, who have chosen to be interdependent for the purpose of accomplishing service in the Kingdom of God that cannot best be done alone. Founded in 1962 with headquarters at Plymouth, Minn.

AFLBS: The Association Free Lutheran Bible School, a two-year Bible school founded in 1966 by the AFLC with campus located in Plymouth, Minn.

**AFLTS:** The Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary sometimes called the Free Lutheran Seminary (FLS). Founded in 1964, shares campus with AFLBS in Plymouth, Minn.

**WMF:** The Women's Missionary Federation was organized in 1962 and supports AFLC missionary endeavors.

### **Our President**

t has been a privilege to conduct scores of AFLC informational meetings during my years as president, and one can often predict the questions that will be asked. Someone will raise his hand and ask how much it costs to belong (usually the church treasurer or a member of the finance committee), and I explain in response that there are no



Robert L. Lee

dues, no suggested per-member allocations, etc., but that the AFLC operates on a free-will basis, trusting the Lord to supply through His people.

A question that may remain unspoken is this: Does it work? Then I am glad to announce that the

AFLC is blessed with a family of concerned congregations and individuals who generously support the ministries that God has entrusted to us, usually at an average total beyond the budget goals.

This past year has been unique. The average total of gifts to AFLC common endeavors is 116 percent (compared to 111 percent in 2004), but the unique aspect of 2005 is that *every ministry exceeded its goal*, from the seminary at 140 percent to Home and World Missions at 106 percent. Thank you, Lord!

This exceptional report, of course, is certainly not a call to relax our commitment. Each budget is "bare-bones," studied by the Budget Analysis Committee and approved by the annual conference, usually including little, if any, funds for expansion or new ministries. So the fact that that the goals were exceeded is an encouragement to enter the open doors the Lord is providing.

The AFLC is a faith ministry. Some of you have heard me tell of the visit of a banker to my office several years ago. He wanted to get better acquainted with us, and inquired about our sources of support, assuming that member congregations were charged dues or something of that sort. A look of uncertainly crossed his face when he heard that we were totally dependent on free-will gifts. "What happens if you receive nothing?" he asked. "Then we close down," I replied.

Thanks for being a channel of God's blessing to our ministries!

## **AFLC** memorials — December

FТ	œ	

Orville Hannem Francis Nelson Preston Heglie Herb Huseth Marvin Quanbeck Dennis Emberley Louella Meyer

Helen Frigstad

#### **AFLTS**

Orville Hannem Gilman Johnson Louella Meyer **Evangelism** Gilman Johnson

#### **FLAPS**

Robert A. Olson
General Fund

Oscar and Edna Folden Dorothy Hinderaker

#### **Home Missions**

Wilma Johnson Eugene Ytterboe Orville Hannem Eckhart Heid Fern Nervim

#### **Miriam Infant Home**

Carolyn Dyrud (2) Pastor Wallace Jackson

#### Vision

Reuben Iverson Ken Gage WMF

Joyce Tangen, Bruce, S.D.

#### **World Missions**

Marlene Marmon Julian Langseth Eugene Ytterboe Edwin Tofte

Merlaine Samuelson Gilman Johnson Malena and Omer Orres

LaVanche Peterson Eckhart Heid

... in honor of

#### **AFLBS**

McCarlson family

#### **AFLTS**

Pastors James Molstre and

Brent Olson

#### WMF

Marvin Lindroth, Roslyn, S.D. Carol Nelson, Webster, S.D. Tabor WMF Ladies, Webster

#### **World Missions**

Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Cummings Mr. and Mrs. Charles Olson

#### **Association of Free Lutheran Congregations**

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (12 months) - January 1 - December 31, 2005

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN DECEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund*	\$387,377	\$70,942	\$455,253	118
Youth Ministries	56,062	9.547	73,891	132
Parish Education	81,988	9,833	99,693	122
Seminary	156,804	39,160	220,138	140
Bible School	269,308	52,088	340,376	126
Home Missions	277,870	61,779	295,132	106
World Missions	262,377	71,031	278,694	106
Personal Support	368,688	62,128	396,890	108
TOTALS	\$1,860,474	\$314,729	\$2,160,066	116
TOTALS 2004	\$1,739,460	\$312,861	\$1,925,556	111
Goal 100%	. , ,	. ,	. , ,	

The Evangelism Department received \$25,254 in December.

\* Includes Evangelism totals

These are the Annual Conference-approved budgets but do not reflect all the financial needs of the departments. Contact the individual departments for further information.

# character formation

esus told the disciples, "The spirit is willing, but the body is weak" (Matthew 26:41, NIV). Sometimes, though, our spirit isn't willing even if our body is in the place where it should be. A guy might be sitting in a church pew when he wishes he was in front of the TV watching football. A



**Craig Johnson** 

girl might be in the library doing homework but wanting to be at the mall with her friends. A little boy might be sitting still but longing to be running in the park.

The Lord wants our spirit to be willing. Sometimes we settle, however, for just the body being obedient. We act as if everything is okay as long as a person's body is in the right place. God looks at our hearts and longs for them to be in tune with His. He wants us to have Christ-like thoughts and desires.

Author and teacher Dallas Willard writes: "What sometimes goes on in all sorts of Christian institutions is not formation of people in the character of Christ; it's teaching of outward conformity. ... It is so important to understand that character formation is not behavior modification."

The religious leaders of Jesus' day had great behavior modification, but the Lord still spoke against them strongly. He said, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. ... You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness" (Matthew 23:25-28).

Their bodies were in the right place, but not their hearts. Their behavior had been modified, but their character was not at all godly.

In our congregations and our schools we long for more than outward conformity. We want to see the character of Christ formed within our members and our students. We want to see people doing the right things - for the right reasons; having the right desires and thinking the right thoughts.

Willard also writes of how often in the evangelical culture, "You don't get in trouble for not having the character of Christ, but you do if you don't obey the laws." God has given His law and He wants us to follow it. We must take care, however, that we don't only stress the parts of the law that can be measured and ignore other parts.

It is impossible to truly measure humility, yet it is foundational to living a life pleasing to God. Someone who is doing good things but is proud of it upsets God as much as the one engaging in sexual immorality. The Lord hates pride and arrogance (Proverbs 8:13).

God looks at our hearts and longs for them to be in tune with His.

We can tell if a person shows up to class or to church much easier than if they are merciful and gracious. That doesn't mean, though, that all God cares about is perfect attendance. "And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). Acting justly, loving mercy and walking humbly is not as easy to point to and identify as some other things. It is what God desires, however, and wants to develop within us.

Character formation can happen. In Romans 12:2 it says, "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." We can be confident that when God gives a command like that He also offers the strength and the help needed to keep it. He can renew our minds. We can be transformed by the power of His Holy Spirit. A character that pleases God can be formed within us. But we can't do this by ourselves. "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). We pray for big things like character formation because we pray to the big, glorious and gracious Lord of all.

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd. Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441 Periodicals

## **Building the Base**

## Time to take

re you ready for some football? If I have counted out the Sundays correctly, you will be receiving this issue of *The Lutheran* Ambassador near Super Bowl Sunday. For many Americans, football has become the national pastime. It is also a sport that carries (as many sports do) great illustrations of spiritual truths.

One of my favorite illustrations of walking with Jesus is seen in football's "victory formation." When a football team is leading a game and it has possession of ball right before the game clock is expired, the offense goes into a special alignment. The quarterback hikes the ball, and immediately goes down on one knee.

It strikes me that the terms "taking a knee" and "victory" are connected here. Philippians 2 has a few pictures of how victory and a surrender posture fit together in the spiritual realm. Jesus' obedience to go to the cross in verse 8 is a position of great humility, and yet, through His costly sacrifice, all of us who believe in Him receive eternal life. The passage goes on to explain in verses 9-11 that God the Father honored Jesus' act of surrender at the cross by "exalting Him." It also mentions that the day will come when every person through all time will know that Jesus Christ is Lord! Are you ready for that day?

I watched a really unexpected example of the victory formation during a college football game last fall. The game was between Nevada and Fresno State, which is not on the typical viewing schedule for a Minnesota guy. Nevada had the ball late in the game and they had the

lead. Because of the situation, Nevada ran a run play with their running back. He broke through the line, and raced toward the end zone. This tailback would score his fourth touchdown of the game! He would be on ESPN's SportsCenter! What did he do?

He took a knee at the two-yard line. He didn't score. Why? Because he knew that going for his glory would just open the door for the opponent to catch up. If he scored, the other team would get the ball back. Instead, with the ball just two yards away, his team went into the victory formation and ran out the rest of the clock.

As Bible-believing Christians, we know the spiritual truth that a person is born again by grace through faith in Jesus. We understand that through the law we are humbled to see our sin, and through the gospel we receive the victory through Jesus Christ. Are we sometimes guilty of losing sight of the parallel in our faith walk?

We grow in God's grace the same way we come to Christ: victory through surrender. Colossians 2:6 reminds us, "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him." Let us walk with Jesus in surrender and victory!

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