

THE LUTHERAN 

FEBRUARY 2007

AMBASSADOR



Students at the
AFLC campus
come for various
reasons: to study
the Bible, grow in
their faith, and
pursue God's call.

Many of them
leave as changed
people ready to
impact the world
for Christ.

Our schools

Lead on,

BY PASTOR TIM HINRICHS



Shepherd

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4).

Following our shepherd should be a wonderful journey. But what happens when He leads us in a dangerous path? One of the worst things about being in the valley is the darkness. When you're alone in a dark and dangerous place, it can be very frightening. Being alone can be a blessing when you need a quiet place to rest, but when danger comes you don't want to be alone — you want to be with someone you can trust. Who wants to walk alone through a dangerous part of a city at midnight?

As children of God we are led by Him who *promises to walk with us* through every dangerous part of the path — a personal tour guide and escort.

Last fall I was biking on one of the tourist trails here in the Polish Beskid mountains. I followed the markers on the trees as the trail wound through the woods when, suddenly, I came to an opening where all the trees were recently cut down by lumberjacks. There were lots of logging trails from there, but no more trees that marked the trail. I had no idea which way to go!

In life, the Lord doesn't just give us a map and tell us to follow the signs. He doesn't leave us high and dry to find our way with a few tips and markers along the way. He doesn't let us struggle down dead end roads. No. He's a per-

sonal trail guide! He is present even in the mud and the rocks and the lost trail markers. We can trust He knows the way. We don't have to be afraid that we're lost and will die out there in some wilderness. He's by our side to help if

there's a problem — "a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:2).

Besides His presence, *His rod and staff comfort us with assurance of victory*. The shepherd doesn't give each of the sheep a staff to fight off the enemy. They're simply helpless. When was the last time you heard of a sheep winning a fight? They can't use a rod or a staff against any wild animals. Their only hope is the shepherd who uses his rod and staff against the enemy.

How many times do we think *we* need to fight life's battles? We need a more realistic picture of ourselves — as helpless sheep. Without the Lord fighting, we are always a victim. Every battle won by God's people in the Old Testament was won by the Lord. Consider King Jehoshaphat, who, the night before facing the Ammonites and Moabites in battle, heard a prophesy from Jahaziel, "The battle is not yours but God's" (II Chronicles 20:15). The next day the Israelites were victorious. Only when they tried to fight in their own strength did they lose.

The Lord has the rod, and He wins the battle as we rely upon Him. Lead on Shepherd!

Hinrichs, a missionary in Poland, is an AFLC pastor on loan to the East European Missions Network.

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I have come to the place in my life that, if the assignment I sense God is giving me is something that I know I can handle, I know it is probably not from God. The kind of assignments God gives in the Bible are always God-sized. They are always beyond what people can do, because he wants to demonstrate his nature, his strength, his provision, and his kindness to his people and to a watching world.

— Henry Blackaby

[It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until
He has hurt him deeply.]

— A. W. Tozer]

The first step to leadership is servanthood.

— John Maxwell

The Bible School and the Seminary have a great responsibility to promote the Association doctrines and practices. ... A pastoral concern that each student become grounded in the Word of God and Lutheran doctrine wedded to AFLC polity and piety must be the goal of our schools.

— Pastor John Strand

AFLC President's Annual Report, 1976

When God calls

They come from different walks of life, but all of the men in seminary seek one thing: to be obedient to God's call



BY ERIC RASMUSSEN

Difficult pregnancies, debilitating illnesses, surgeries, financial difficulties, the loss of a loved one, the loss of an unborn child ...

These are all experiences of students from our Free Lutheran seminary during the last year. Seminary draws people together, but not into the type of relationships that are formed in Bible school or college. Those relationships are built on spending hours together in dorms, eating the same cafeteria food and trying to figure out that whole dating thing. No, seminary is different. Sure, some of the guys are still trying to figure out the dating thing, but seminarians are drawn together through events and hardships like the ones mentioned above, not because they are facts of life, but because this is where God has called each of us.

I think each of us have sensed God's call to be in seminary, otherwise we wouldn't be here. I don't think we all know exactly why God called us, though. Some are called to be pastors, and some are called to be missionaries, and oth-

ers may be called to other types of ministry, but each man in the seminary has taken that first obedient step by listening to God's call just to come here.

By obeying God's call, each of us has signed himself and his family up for hardships. Seminary itself isn't a hardship (though many who have taken a Pastor Lee history test would disagree). Hardships are the work of our adversary. Satan knows that each man who completes his training and goes on to ministry has the potential to affect many hundreds of people and generations to come. He doesn't want any of us to finish. I believe that much of the discouragement and trying circumstances that we find ourselves in are put there by Satan himself. However, I also firmly believe that God is using these trials to teach us valuable lessons about perseverance, about trusting in Him, and about combating spiritual warfare. Each of these lessons will be a help in later ministry.

For some of the men I've gone to school with, God's call took them away from an established career. For others, the



call has been to go directly from college to seminary. So far in my seminary career, I have attended classes with a farmer, a couple of career naval officers, a teacher, a computer tech, a trucker, a rancher, a missionary, a medical professional, a salesman, and many others. I think of all these men as mentors in one way, and in another way, as peers. I can't say I have become best friends with any of these men, yet at the same time I've learned a lot from them and, more importantly, I've seen their obedience to God's call.

Since I've started in seminary, God's call in my life has changed in a way. I still feel God's call to go to seminary, but now I also have felt God's call in my life to be a pastor of a church. Whether that becomes a reality is still up to God, and that's the relief in it all, as well. I know that I could never be a pastor on my own, but if that's where God wants me, then I know He'll equip and prepare me for that calling.

I wish I could say that I've impacted my fellow students in the way these men have impacted me, but I don't know that I have. I meet weekly for prayer and fellowship with a

second-year student, but I think he has focused more on encouraging and fellowship than seeking a mentor. There are lots of lessons I wish I could pass on to my fellow seminarians: Don't let seminary become academic, but still do your best in your schoolwork to honor our Savior; don't make the ministry God will bless you with be about doctrine or theology, make it about people, their salvation, and their spiritual growth; don't let anyone fool you into thinking you're the head of your church, only Christ can perform that role; and many more. But perhaps the biggest lesson any of us can learn in our seminary career is to continue in what got us here in the first place — being obedient to God's call.

Rasmussen, a senior at AFLTS, lives on campus with his wife, Rachel, and their daughter, Anna.

1keep



learning

BY NICK DYRUD

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29, ESV).

Heading into my seminary internship last May I could have only imagined what would be experienced and learned throughout the year. Excited to get into the church and work, my family and I headed out to Sioux Falls, S.D., as soon as we could move.

Our first impressions at Abiding Savior Free Lutheran in Sioux Falls, S.D., were pleasant and warm. This large congregation (one of the biggest in the AFLC), continues to grow. With a growing church comes a growing staff. I found that staff devotions five days a week in the morning and numerous activities each day at the church provide for a great work atmosphere. I could see the advantage of interning in a church in which much activity was going on.

The goal for any intern is to gain supervised practical experience in the field in which one works. The members of Abiding Savior made this goal possible in a variety of areas. I have been able to participate in various ministry activities while still learning alongside the pastors and leaders. With preaching opportunities, preschool, day care, after-school care, Wednesday night classes for every age, Sunday night prayer services, men's and women's small groups, youth ministries, hospital ministries, evangelical outreach ministries — the opportunities have not disappointed.

What has stood out in my mind?

The summer was filled with difficult lessons about the reality of a minister's job. For example, in early June a young couple was married here in the sanctuary. One month later I assisted Pastor Bill Mitchell in performing the funeral for the bride who was killed when she and her husband were in a devastating car accident. Not more than three weeks later I led a prayer service for a young couple who lost their month-old son. That little boy was the first person I saw in the hospital for pastoral visitation.

The tragic side of the ministry was a new experience for me. Seeing it firsthand was eye opening. Still, Jesus was working and challenging me graciously and patiently

through the learning.

Fall came quickly and Abiding Savior was back to the regular fall schedule. With after-school ministries every weekday, and numerous kids' clubs and youth group, the church is always busy. After-school ministries have been a joy the past few months as Kris Bertus, director of Children's Ministries, and I have taught an afternoon kids' club where students from the local elementary schools come and learn about Jesus.

Although a great deal of learning can only come by experience — such as learning how to pray with an individual who is dying — the greatest learning has not come by all the activities I have been privileged to be a part of. The wealth of learning that will be remembered in the future is that which has taken place under the tutelage and supervision of the pastors and staff with years of ministry experience.

Pastor Michael Brandt, Pastor Bill Mitchell, Pastor Wade Mobley (Living Word Free Lutheran — our sister church), Pastor Paul Kneeland, and intern youth pastor Ryan Chase have taught me life lessons that will always be remembered. From the shared wisdom of a senior pastor to the hands-on example of faithfulness to God from the youth leader, Christ has been speaking and teaching through these individuals, blessing me and my family. Philippians 4:9 says, “What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me — practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.” Yes, Christ has been the teacher.

It is an incredible learning experience getting to know our Savior. It's a lesson in itself to understand that learning will always continue. The single greatest challenge which has been given to me by one of my mentoring pastors over the course of the internship has been the following: “When I'm looking for a preacher or teacher, give me a man who is willing to give it all up and truly follow Christ.”

Dyrud, in his last year at AFLTS, is serving his internship at Abiding Savior Free Lutheran, Sioux Falls, S.D.



Six thirty on a Wednesday night comes around and the youth room starts filling with kids. Seventh through twelfth graders tackle each other, challenge each other at a game of ping-pong, or stand in groups talking about the cute new guy who just walked in. Bringing order to all this insanity is always a challenge — but also a lot of fun.

How did I, a missionary kid from Ecuador, get involved in leading a large church youth group? Mostly because God has a sense of humor and some interesting timing! Emmaus Lutheran Church (Bloomington, Minn.) had advertised at AFLBS last spring about their need for a summer youth leader. After several plans didn't work out, I applied for the job and ended up being hired, along with a young man named Mike Power, to lead the youth group.

On some nights there are games to play, like the old favorites shuffle-your-buns and train wreck, followed by a talk, a movie, or a Bible study. On one night we read stories of the persecuted church and I got "arrested" by a police man — that sure got their attention! Another night a missionary came in to talk about the need for evangelism in the world. There are also service nights, for example packing boxes for Operation Christmas Child or raking leaves around the neighborhood. And then there are the fall retreats, sleep overs, Bible studies, movies, and bowling.

had the choice to get mad or laugh, and I chose laughter — usually the best option! And then there was the time during our camping trip when the guys took all our canoes and paddles, leaving us stranded in Canada. We had to swim back across a big lake, but had a great time. We did get them back! Times like these have helped us to bond as a youth group, and to enjoy being together even more.

Studying for two years at the Bible school has given me a sound biblical and doctrinal basis, which has helped with the teaching side of the youth group. It has also given me a firm foundation on which to base ministry. But I think the most useful thing has been to just get out there and do it. No class could have taught me how to be a youth leader as well as just starting from scratch and learning as I went.

Sometimes activities go amazingly well, sometimes they flop, but you learn through them all. Being a youth leader has been harder than I thought it would be. Barely out of the teen years myself, I lack the experience that older people would have. I also grew up overseas, so the culture of an American teenager is all new to me. But I have found that the basic needs are the same, whether in America or Ecuador. The need to be loved, accepted, and listened to is universal.

I have been so blessed to be involved at Emmaus. The whole staff is so fun and encouraging, and the parents on the

involved

BY LIZ LACKEY

In August I was asked to stay on staff throughout the school year because their full-time youth director had resigned. I never thought I would get paid to have fun, but I have adjusted quite well to that idea. Of course, it is not always fun and games. There are times when I feel like I am in over my head, times when a young person comes to me with a problem and I don't know how to help them. Or when someone asks a question that I myself am still struggling with and I am not sure of the answer. That is when I feel truly inadequate.

I hope and pray that I have taught these youths something in the last six months, but I am sure they have taught me even more. I have learned how to be more patient from some of my freshmen guys, and my girls have taught me to not be so "grown up and boring," like when they "stole" my car during a retreat and left a ransom note behind. I

youth board have helped me out many times. Being involved at a church has helped me grow. There are so many needs and possibilities for people with every kind of gift. Just popping in to a church for a couple hours each Sunday is not enough for true Christian growth and fellowship. Working, learning, and struggling together are what make a congregation strong. And even if you are not going to be in the area long, don't use that as an excuse to "church hop" or not get involved. You need it as much as the church does, so step up to the plate and change your corner of the world!

Lackey, a senior at AFLBS, grew up on the mission field of Ecuador with her parents, Bill and Carol Lackey, career missionaries with World Mission Prayer League.

MEET THE NEW AFLBS DEAN

farm boy

BY PASTOR JERRY MOAN

The Old Testament prophet Amos was a herdsman when God called him. Hans Nielsen Hauge was at work in a field on his father's farm in Norway when the Spirit of God broke through to his heart. Being a farm boy myself, I find it intriguing to consider the men whom God chooses for ministry. He rarely chooses the high and mighty in the eyes of the world.

YEARS OF PREPARATION

Pastor Joel Rolf grew up milking cows and driving tractors in northern Minnesota. But God had other plans for him.

"I was very blessed to grow up in a home where my parents daily prayed for their children, shared God's Word and sought to live it out," said Rolf. "I was also blessed to receive great teaching and preaching in my home congregation at Trinity Free Lutheran north of McIntosh. ... But it wasn't until I was a junior in high school that I finally was brought to repentance of sin and a personal receiving and trusting in Jesus Christ as my only Savior from my sin."

God used many people to encourage Joel in the Lord. Some had attended AFLBS. Their involvement in a weekly youth Bible study stirred a desire in this young farm boy to also attend Bible school.

"The daily studies in God's Word were life transforming," recalled Rolf of those years. "The fellowship and prayer times were rich times of encouragement. One of the highlights for me at AFLBS was the mission conferences in January. The first year I was especially challenged to be open to God's will for my life — whatever that might be. Up until that time I had my heart set on farming and hadn't been very open to God's will in the matter. It was during the missions conference my second year that the Lord confirmed His will for me to prepare for the ministry. He gave me both the willingness and desire to go to college and seminary, even though it would mean seven more years of education."



special mission

After graduating from AFLBS in 1977, Joel plugged into InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in college, leading worship and small group Bible studies and discipling students. Yet Joel never forgot about the youths back home. For a time he led the weekend youth Bible studies at Trinity together with Rodney Johnson, his college roommate.

"Those are some great memories. Some youths would drive more than 30 miles on a Saturday night just to study God's Word," said Rolf. "We didn't have a lot of games. The youths came because they wanted to study God's Word, worship, and pray together. They were hungry for the fellowship!"

Now in his first year as the dean at AFLBS, Rolf rejoices that many students evidence that same hunger for Jesus and His Word: "Some have been home schooled, some from small youth groups or schools where they have had little support or encouragement from peers. Bible school continues to meet a great need in hearts and lives as young men and women become established in their faith in Christ through His Word."

FAMILY

Rolf's enthusiasm over the impact of Bible school training is shared by his wife, Mary-Ann (Herset).

"Attending AFLBS was life-changing for me," said Mary-Ann. "I learned to trust the promises in God's Word, how to study the Word, and realized how important it is to yield my life fully to His leading. It was at AFLBS that I came to fully understand God's grace, and how He has made full provision for all my needs."



These were some of the blessings Mary-Ann had anticipated since ninth grade. God used the influence of her pastor, her parents, her brother, Allen, and other AFLBS students and alumni to kindle this longing within.

"Dorm life was full of activity," she recalled, "and I learned to find quiet places in creative ways in order to have my devotions. Serving one summer on a Home Missions team (Barnabas team) taught me how to apply what I had learned at AFLBS to needs various churches had. Attending AFLBS was the very best education I received, more important than the bachelor's and master's degrees I received later."

The Rolfs have a son, Josiah, who has made the adjustment to a new school, Heritage Christian Academy, and to a rigorous trigonometry course. He hopes to attend AFLBS after high school. In the meantime, he is learning to play

guitar and enjoys spending time hunting and fishing with his dad.

Josiah's two older sisters are sold on Bible school. Sarah graduated from AFLBS in 2004. She is now a third-year nursing student at North Dakota State University in Fargo. Her training at AFLBS has given her discernment in college courses where concepts contrary to God's truth are taught. She is not afraid to stand alone when students try to pull her into activities that would compromise her faith and witness. She credits this with her time spent at AFLBS.



"The two years I had to study God's Word and participate in ministry at the Bible school have been the best two years of my life. The classes and gospel team ministry and outreach opportunities really molded me and changed me. ... I am a life that has been changed, impacted, and empowered to go out and make a difference for Jesus."

It is evident that Sarah sees her father's call as part of the Lord's will for the entire family.

"God has called Dad and the family to the Bible school for a very special mission. Dad has a burden on his heart to see this generation grow in Jesus to become servant leaders wherever God leads them," said Sarah. "Our family has always sensed this was our purpose — to point others to Jesus and encourage them in their walk with Him. Joining the servant staff at the Bible school has been an honor for Dad, and he depends on God and His Word for guidance in this mission."

Christina is currently a second-year student at AFLBS, praying for God's direction in regard to college in the coming year. Team ministry has been a special blessing to Christina while at AFLBS, having served on the North Barnabas team last summer.



"Having an opportunity to reach out and share Christ in a new way has impacted me more than I ever imagined it would," said Christina. "My entire outlook on eternity has changed, and I am so thankful for what I learned and for the people who touched my life in the process."

Embarking on a new call is never a minor adjustment

for a pastor's family, as Christina can affirm. "It ... became a huge blessing to have my family with me on campus. I am so thankful that God led us all here and for the ways He has challenged and strengthened us. We have seen His love poured out through the encouraging words and servant hearts of those that have reached out to us in so many ways."

MISSION

Reflecting on the mission of AFLBS, Pastor Rolf returns with earnestness to the fivefold purpose statement which has charted the course for AFLBS over the past 40 years.

"Not all students have a personal living faith in Christ when they come," said Rolf, "and it is not something we assume. It is something addressed each semester, but a special emphasis is given in the fall ... [when] revival meetings are held. Assurance of personal salvation has a great impact on a person's whole outlook on life and death."

The curriculum at AFLBS directly reflects these five purposes, and Rolf is intentional about this.

"We truly believe II Timothy 3:16 and 17, not just in theory but in practice. It says, 'All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.' God wants you to be equipped for every good work in the life He has given you."

In John 8:31-32, Jesus promises: "If you abide in My Word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Pastor Rolf says this is why we seek "to help students to embrace the truth as found in the Bible, so that they will also reject the theological errors so prevalent today," and stand firm in Christ and His Word. He adds, "It is our prayer that as stu-

dents study God's Word at AFLBS, they will be challenged and equipped for Great-Commission ministry. We want every graduate of AFLBS to be 'equipped to serve in free and living congregations.'"

As dean, Rolf has been especially encouraged to see the students' heart for missions.

"Every Thursday evening the Mission Club meets to hear speakers bring a challenge from God's Word for missions and to pray for missionaries and for the Lord to raise up laborers for the harvest."

In addition, the third-year Ministry Training Institute (MTI) option gives students an opportunity to receive specific training in either cross-cultural or youth ministry.

"It is so encouraging to see how the Lord has used MTI since it began in 2000," Rolf observed. "Several who were in the cross-cultural track are now serving as full-time missionaries in other countries. Two of our AFLC mission candidates were former MTI students."

Plus, a number who enrolled in the youth ministry training are currently serving the Lord as youth workers in the U.S. or abroad.

"God got a hold of their hearts while they studied His Word here, and their lives will never be the same," said Rolf. "Neither will the lives of many others who hear the gospel of Jesus Christ through their ministry. To God be the glory for what He is doing!"

God got a hold of their hearts. That's how the Lord led a farm boy from the dairy barn to the dean's office.

Moan, who teaches at AFLBS and AFLTS, is a member of Solid Rock Free Lutheran, Anoka, Minn.

AFLBS PURPOSE STATEMENT

- To bring students into and establish them in the assurance of personal salvation in Christ Jesus through the study of God's Word.
- To prepare students to face a secular society in school and community by grounding them in the Word of God.
- To help students embrace the truth as found in the Bible, and to reject the theological errors so prevalent today.
- To challenge students to seek God's will in all

personal and vocational choices and to pursue the Great Commission of Jesus Christ as given in Matthew 28:19, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you."

- To equip students to serve in free and living Lutheran congregations.



1she's been

BY ABBY WELLUMSON

Reading was a favorite pastime for my mom and I while I was growing up. I have many fond memories of reading piles of books in the afternoons before I started going to school. One story I remember in particular was a Bernstein Bears book about Father Bear trying to teach Brother Bear how to ride a bike. Unfortunately for poor, clumsy Father Bear, his effort to give Brother Bear valuable tips through bike riding demonstrations ended up being examples of exactly what not to do.

I must admit that when I was asked to advise young people on how to make the most of their time at Bible school, I felt in the position of Father Bear. In my experience, I did a pretty good job of being an example of what not to do. I am not saying I had a bad experience at Bible school; quite the opposite is true. I will always look back at my years there as two of the best of my life. But, with the benefit of hindsight, I see the many mistakes I made and ways in which I wasted some of that most precious time. I wish I could go back and make things better. However, regret is a waste of time, and the lessons I have learned from making mistakes have been invaluable in shaping me and teaching me how to be a better person and make the most of my life.

Some of the glaringly obvious — as well as most overlooked — suggestions I would give to a future AFLBS student would be to make sure you are growing in your relationship with the Lord by focusing during class, having personal devotions, finding a prayer partner, ministering in some way, and listening during chapel. If you are taking the time to go to Bible school and are paying thousands of dollars to do it, of course you should do these things. Bible school is probably one of the first major investments a student will make fiscally and spiritually, as well as one of the wisest. Time is never wasted if your relationship with Christ is deepening. Take full advantage of every opportunity you can. Distraction is common because of all the fun things going on. But never lose sight of the ultimate goal at Bible school — to learn more about Christ.

The second most important thing to do at Bible school to make the most of your time is to constantly improve your-

self. It is an ideal place to do this because you are surrounded by Christian people who want the best for you, too, and have high priorities. Bible school is a great place to ground yourself before you go out into the world as an adult. You can learn to be honest with yourself there as well as be honest with others, which builds up an integrity that will be noticed wherever you go. One of the best ways I learned to do this was to have an accountability partner. I met an irreplaceable friend at Bible school who was the first person able to tell me when I was doing things wrong in such a way that I would not be insulted and resist her words of advice. She has helped me more than anybody see areas in which I can improve myself, and she inspires me to do so.

There are things you will want to avoid because they are a waste of time. Do not get involved in the drama going on between people at school. Be honest with your fellow students, and do not be a spreader of gossip. Crushes, break-ups and clashes are bound to happen; you do not need to know about it. Watch your tongue carefully; it is easy to have a joke misunderstood or to say things around your friends you normally wouldn't just because they are Christians. Do not act inappropriately around Christian friends because you think you do not have to be a witness to them. You never know who you could be hurting. Surround yourself with great friends. Bible school friends are friends you will have forever; and they are invaluable — make sure you treat them that way. Lastly, do not waste time looking for a romantic relationship. If you are supposed to find that special someone at Bible school, God will make it happen; He does not need your help. One of the fastest and easiest ways to distract your heart and mind is to give them to somebody else.

Never forget how precious your time at Bible school is, and how fast two years can zip by. God sums it up best in Ephesians 5:15-16, "Therefore, be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil."

Wellumson is a 2005 graduate of AFLBS.

1 Make the most of your time at AFLBS there

Norway's apostle

A newly reprinted edition of *The Apostle of Norway: Hans Nielsen Hauge* has been placed on the shelves in the AFLC Parish Education Department. It is the A. M. Arntzen biography of Hauge, originally published in 1933 by the Lutheran Free Church Publishing Company. Readers will find the book (\$20 from Parish Education) fascinating as it begins with vivid descriptions of springtime in Norway in the 1700s. Despite this beautiful time of year, a “spiritual winter,” a time of darkness, prevailed.

It was into this setting that Hauge was born on April 3, 1771, and christened the first Sunday after Easter. As a young boy he read the Scriptures, commenting, “It’s interesting to read what God can do with men” (21).

Hauge was raised in a farming community. By the age of 16, he had been confirmed in the faith and had learned the trade of carpentry. Throughout his life, he experienced struggles — spiritually, socially and physically — as God prepared him to be a leader in a spiritual revival. He began writing in his 20s. He self-published and distributed his books as he walked from town to town, teaching about the truth of the Scripture. His first book, *The World’s Folly*, describes “how foolish people are pretending to be Christians and yet live a worldly life” (105). As time progressed, the family devotions he led expanded as several neighbors joined. As the group grew, Hauge’s short talks expanded into sermons. He began collecting parts of his sermons and arranged them into a book entitled *God’s Wisdom*. Other books he later wrote were *Confessions of Truth*, *Miscellaneous Writings*, *Rule of Christian Life*, and *Fundamental Doctrine of Christianity*. In all he wrote more than 30 books and several tracts.

The Conventicle Act of 1741 forbade laymen to preach. Because he was a layman, Hauge experienced persecution and imprisonment on a number of occasions. However, this never deterred him from his fervent desire to lead others to the saving grace he had found through the Scriptures. In times of discouragement, his family encouraged him and gave him strong support. This was especially true of his sister, Anne, who urged him to continue his work: “No, Hans, God will need you to bring a gospel message to our people that will show them true Christianity, and how to live a true Christian life. It is your life-work” (106). Through it all, Hauge experienced a full array of human emotions, even doubts of his calling, but God was faithful.

Hauge’s preaching clashed with the lifestyle of many

of his countrymen. Even though his preaching was drawn from the truths of Scripture, many were offended, including the State Church of Norway. As a result, he was arrested and imprisoned several times.

On one occasion, just before Christmas, he was thrown into “the cage” for witnessing to fellow prisoners. It was very cold, but he “felt a strange gladness in suffering for the cause of God’s kingdom” (128).

After being jailed and released on nine different occasions — the last time for seven years — Hauge’s health deteriorated. In December 1814, the Supreme Court declared Hauge free. It was only then that he felt he could marry Andrea Nyhus in January 1815. She died after giving birth to a son on December 13, 1815. He later married Marie Olsdatter to give his son, Andreas, a mother. Hauge remained faithful to his calling until his death on March 29, 1824.

By then it was estimated that several thousand lay persons were preaching the gospel in Norway. One of the interesting aspects of Hauge’s ministry was his ability to start business ventures. As he began these ventures in various areas of Norway, he would plant fellow Christians who would help in building a Christian community. Thus, when he left for another area, the ministry continued strong, even after his death. He cleared the ground so others could plant, but God had given the increase.

Though Hauge is a name many in the AFLC would readily recognize, there are others who are still learning about this heritage. This readable, enlightening narrative of Hauge’s life, travels, and determined witness to others is recommended reading as we long for God to raise up leaders in our day to bring revival.

Bohling lives in Golden Valley, Minn., and serves on the AFLC Board of Parish Education.



welcome here



During my Sunday school days many years ago, there was a certain procedure for guests that was usually followed. “Are there any visitors here today?” the superintendent asked. Then, if the answer was yes, the children would sing: “There’s a welcome here, there’s a Christian welcome here!”

Some of our congregations are preparing to receive new pastors and families in the coming months. Is there a welcome here? Perhaps it might be helpful to consider how a parish might help the shepherd in his transition to a different flock and a different community.

Here are some suggestions:

- If there’s a parsonage, see that it’s ready to receive new residents. You probably need a parsonage committee, including some women. Don’t leave it up to the trustees, who may not see the need for cleaning and improvements. (Sorry, men.) Take the pastor and his wife on a tour of the house, explaining

certain features of which they may not be aware. (There was a water softener in one parsonage where we lived that I assumed took care of itself.) If there’s not a parsonage, you still may want to offer to help with anything needed to ready the home for occupancy. During an installation service, one congregation presented the new pastor and his family with a generous check for unexpected expenses.

- A kitchen shower is a great idea, often sponsored by the women’s group. My wife was welcomed by one congregation as the ladies shared favorite recipes together with the ingredients. We were grateful, too, when someone brought us a meal or a dessert during the early days after moving when dishes were still being unpacked. Invitations to your homes are also thoughtful, but be sure to give the family lots of time to themselves.

- How about an orientation to the congregation and

the community? One seminary professor suggests a get-together where an audio-visual presentation could be given, and where people could share stories of various church experiences over the years. Orientation trips to public services such as the city hall, libraries, the post office, police and fire departments, etc., might be appreciated. I’m thankful for the deacon in one parish who drove me around the area and even provided a map of the county, offering to direct me to the homes of any of the members whom I wanted to visit.

- Give careful consideration to your new pastor’s compensation. One Lutheran denomination estimates that nearly half of their professional church workers struggle with debilitating debt, including education loans and credit card debt as the primary causes. Is your pastor’s salary on a comparable level with other clergy in the community? How does it compare to teachers’ salaries? Do not neglect the need for insurance coverage and retirement benefits. The laborer is worthy of his hire (Luke 10:7).

A reminder that pastors and their families are real people should not be necessary. (I still remember a sweet little girl, who, when I mentioned that I was looking forward to Sunday dinner, said scornfully, “Pastors don’t get hungry!”) Moving is a difficult time at best, and all sorts of adjustments are necessary. Close ties have been stretched, and perhaps even relatives have been left behind. Children miss their friends, and often worry about starting at a new school. Try to understand and sympathize, even if you have lived in the same community for a lifetime.

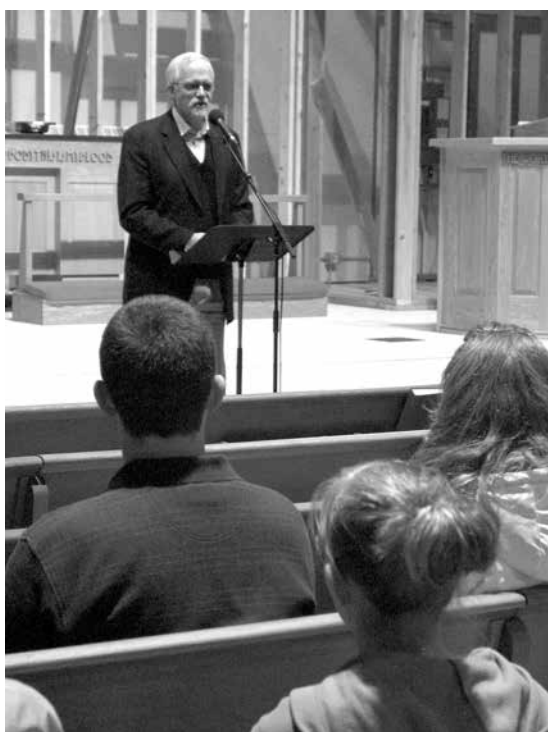
“There’s a welcome here, there’s a Christian welcome here!” Pray for your new pastor and his family, love them in concrete, visible ways, and do whatever you can to help them become part of your congregation’s family as soon as possible.

Are there some good suggestions for a new pastor to consider? I’ll save that for another article, okay?



Pastor Robert Lee

Campus hosts missions conference



The AFLC school's campus chapel was the site of the January missions conference, held Jan. 7-12. Pastor Connely Dyrud was the evening speaker each night, while representatives from several missions groups gave presentations, including (at left) Pastor Chuck Lindquist with World Mission Prayer League. Dr. Tim Warner (top left) was the special speaker during the daily missions classes.



Kevin Holman and Tony Ward, both 2006 graduates of AFLBS, check the plans for the altar area of the campus' chapel building. A temporary stage, which was put up for the Christmas concerts, was removed in early January. The permanent structure now being built will house the new pipe organ.



The family of AFLC school's teacher Pastor Jerry Moan was featured in the Dec. 13 and Dec. 20 issues of the Star Tribune newspaper, Minneapolis. The article focused on a home-school basketball team, on which the family's oldest sons, Jesse and Jonathan, play. The newspaper's photographer spent hours with the family, both in their home and on the road traveling to a basketball game. Besides competition, the article also focused on team members' religious values.

Missions momentum continues

Committee members meet with prospective candidates

BY TOM CAOQUETTE

The AFLC World Mission Committee gathered for meetings on Dec. 8 and 9. The momentum that seemed to be gathering at the last Annual Conference is continuing to build and is reflected in our two-day agenda. Members of the committee met with the following:

- Missionary Connely Dyrud to discuss the MTI program
- Missionary Dan Giles to discuss the work in Mexico and potential new work in Spain
- Missionaries Paul and Becky Abel to discuss the work in Brazil and the potential to plant a new church in Cuticiba
- Missionary candidate Andy Coyle to discuss the opportunities in Russia
- Pastor Kevin Olson to discuss the plans for a distance learning program
- Emmanuel Manirakiza regarding the opportunities in Burundi
- A young man with a heart for missions in Latin America

Additional committee discussion surrounded budget matters for 2007, approval of revisions to the World Mission Policy Manual (Blue Book), and the creation of a policy for short term missionary assistants (STAs). We also had the pleasure to discuss opportunities with other individuals who are interested in serving in missions.

With so much work to be done, we all took away action items to be completed within the next few weeks. We are also grateful for our full-time director, Pastor Del Palmer, and office manager, Wanda Jacobson. Please give them a call or an e-mail if you have any questions or interest in World Missions. The fields are truly ripe for the harvest (John 4:35).

Caouette is a member of the World Missions Committee.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Pastor Tim Skramstad traveled to India Jan. 11-24 with The Sending Place on a teaching mission trip. Skramstad taught classes on "Pastoral Care and Counseling" as well as "The Person and Work of Jesus Christ" at the COTR Seminary in Vishkahpatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Skramstad serves Living Word Lutheran, Eagan, Minn.

Lay Pastor Larry Hefty, 53, an assistant pastor at Faith Free Lutheran, Kalispell, Mont., died Jan. 4. He was born July 5, 1953. He attended the Lutheran Bible Institute, Seattle. He served with

Youth With A Mission from 1990 to 2001 as the director of performing and fine arts, and was on the executive council with YWAM from 1987 to 2001. He also served on the leadership council for Musicians for Missions, and was president of Shekinah Ministries International. Surviving are his wife, Rebecca; two sons, Asher and Daniel; and one daughter, Jennifer. The service was Jan. 9 at Faith Free Lutheran.

Pastor Paul and Becky Abel returned to Curitiba, Brazil, on Dec. 29, 2006, for their seventh missionary term.

hope

BY CHAPLAIN JOHN RIETH

“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf” (Hebrews 6:19-20).

Recently I was asked to compose the feature article in the first issue of the newsletter published by our hospice at Altru. I was asked to write something about hope. Those who know me are aware of how much I love to talk about this topic. Hope, by definition — whether used as a noun or a verb — means pretty much the same thing. At the heart of hope is a desire that one anticipates will be fulfilled. While the definition of the word is simple, how it is used can make all the difference.

The hope we possess in Christ is the bedrock of our faith. It is the substance of the foundation laid by Christ Himself. The hymn writer Edward Mote said it well in pen-

ning, “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness. On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.” This kind of hope remains the same no matter what circumstances of life lie before us.

I first learned of this hope from my parents, and then embraced it personally by faith. It was a new plant that was sown at home, watered by my church and pastor, nourished at Bible school and found a bloom of sorts during my years at seminary.

Working in health care, I’ve found that hope is valued as a key ingredient to healing and wholeness. But it tends to be defined narrowly by modern medicine. Most physicians, when faced with an inability to make someone well, see themselves sharing in that failure and the loss of hope. When our definition of hope is held to life on earth and our immediate circumstances, one might accept this as true. But no Christian should ever need to experience hope this way.

In Romans 8:24 and following, Paul speaks of hope as the culmination of our salvation. He reminds us that “hope that is seen is no hope at all.” I often share Psalm 23 with dying patients and their families. It is with special comfort that the Psalmist says “... even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.” Now that’s hope!

I don’t want to be misunderstood. Through the numerous dark valleys of my own life, I have despaired at times. There have been seasons of what Dr. Alan Wolfelt, an author on grief and loss, calls “the dark night of the soul.” Lesser expectations of hope often vanished as the waves of grief washed over me, but the hope that every child of God has in Christ never has left my side — or my heart. I love being able to share that hope.

The greatest single evidence yet of that hope is a transformed life. The faces of hope will be seen in you, in me by a touch, a kind gesture, or lingering a little longer to really listen. Hope will be seen in our willingness to share the source of all hope, Jesus. May our hope become contagious, winsome, and fruitful to the glory of God.

Rieth is vice president for the AFLC’s Division for Institutional Chaplaincy.



Dorm Life

BY LYNN WELLUMSON

For two years I lived in the AFLBS women's dorm in the 1970s. Just a few years ago, my daughter also made the women's dorm her home. I was very happy with Abbey's decision to attend AFLBS. I knew she would find direction in her life, grow in her love for the Word of God, and build lifelong character.

We were able to attend the 2006 Christmas concert. It is so much fun to meet the children of my AFLBS classmates. Some of them I recognized without being told their last names. There certainly is a feeling of a family reunion at these events.

Hundreds of women — and in the early years, some men — have lived in the women's dorm building. After the chapel, it is the oldest building on the AFLBS campus. In the dorm, my daughter and I both made friendships that continue today and will continue for eternity. How many other lasting friendships have been formed through

the fellowship that takes place in that building? I wonder. How many have found encouragement and help in their walk with the Lord from sisters in Christ as they learned to dwell together and fellowship together? God knows, but the number is large.

Buildings are not the church. Neither is AFLBS just buildings. Certainly it is young people taking hold of the opportunity to have their lives grounded in God's Word; it is young people encouraged in the fellowship of saints. Yet, without the buildings God has provided on this campus, how could all this take place? The buildings are indispensable. Being one of the oldest, the women's dorm is in need of major repairs and refurbishing.

Monetary gifts sent to the national WMF treasury for the calendar year 2007 will be designated for updating the women's dorm. The national WMF has always been supportive of our schools. As needs have arisen, women of the AFLC have given generously from the heart. Through your gifts, God continues to meet needs.

"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:10-11, NASB).

Wellumson serves as treasurer for the Women's Missionary Federation.



AFLC Memorials

December

AFLBS

Leo Boger
Amos Stolee
Don Bohrer
Robyn Leroux
Margot Faleide
Inger Ohnstad
Edna Ohnstad
Brynol Grahn
Hazel Holland
Ruth Ann Gjevne
Bernhard Anderson
Carl Moe
Darlene Merrill
Blanche Larentzen
Loree Lee
Ruth Jones
Renee Fretland
Millie Ringeon
LaVerne Peterson
Arnold Blikre
Todd Jarmin
Kathleen Walch

AFLTS

Elnora Aadahl
Virginia Jacobson
Clarence Palmer Pederson
Inger Ohnstad
Edna Ohnstad
Bernhard Anderson

Evangelism

Bernhard Anderson

General Fund

Ruth Ann Gjevne

Home Missions

Ellen Moyer
Pastor Mauritz Lundeen
Waino Kangas
Theresa Enderlein
Amos Hinderaker

Lutheran Ambassador

Audrey Jensen

Parish Education

Maynard Davidson

World Missions

Theresa Enderlein
W. Jerald Hansen
Brynolf Grahn
Amos Hinderaker
Waino Kangas
Leola Kunz
Hazel Holland
Bernard Anderson

Youth Ministries

Amos Hinderaker
Bernhard Anderson

... in honor of

AFLBS

Kathryn Henderson

AFLTS

Helen Berg

EEMN offers summer missions trip to Europe

The East European Missions Network is currently taking applications from those interested in teaching English at Bible camps in Eastern Europe this summer. The following trips have been planned:

- May 28-June 18: Petrozavodsk, Russia. Cost: \$1,150+airfare
- June 19-July 1: Saldus, Latvia. Cost: \$690+airfare
- July 5-18: Vel'ký Slavokov, Slovakia. Cost: \$975+airfare
- July 5-18: Lviv, Ukraine. Cost: TBA

A trip is also being planned to Tartu, Estonia. If you are interested in any of these trips, please contact EEMN immediately to meet the registration deadline at (952) 881-3554. Trip brochures and application packets are available at the EEMN web site: www.eemn.org.

MTI announces internships

Students to serve assignments during spring semester

Spring internships have been scheduled for several participating students in the Ministry Training Institute, the optional third-year course at AFLBS. The students will begin their ministries on Feb. 1 and return to campus on May 1.

Brent Raan (Tioga, N.D.) and Wade Halvorsen (Lakeville, Minn.) will serve at the Bible school and AMECAM ministries in Campo Mourao, Brazil, under the mentorship of Pastor Connely Dyrud and national Pastor Oseias Camara.

Brenda Waterworth (Salol, Minn.) and Rachel Eggert (Kenyon, Minn.) will serve at the Lutheran Elementary School in Martin, Slovakia, under the mentorship of Paul Blom. Blom is a 2002 graduate of the MTI program and is serving as a missionary with EEMN.

Heather Burch (Sioux Falls, S.D.) will serve in youth work at Emmanuel Free Lutheran, Eagle Butte, S.D., under the mentorship of Pastor Wayne Olson.

Isaac Redd (Liberia) will work with Liberians in the Twin Cities under the mentorship of Pastor John Mayer, executive director of City Vision.

Congregation raises funds for seminary

Members of Gloria Dei Free Lutheran, St. Louis, Mo., raised \$2,388 for the Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary through an annual relay walk. The event raised \$1,888, and Thrivent matched \$500.

The congregation's relay team of 27 individuals walked the 26.2 mile marathon distance in 8 hours and 12 minutes. The team collectively walked 168.7 miles during the October event. Funds were raised by seeking pledges from family and friends to support the walk.

AFLC BENEVOLENCES Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 2006

FUND	TOTAL (Subsidy)	REC'D IN DEC	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$325,700	\$44,853	\$343,922	106
Youth Ministries	57,949	7,003	59,894	103
Evangelism	98,330	14,020	90,650	92
Parish Education	96,477	25,626	113,251	117
Seminary	189,224	30,192	199,085	105
Bible School	296,257	36,309	323,335	109
Home Missions	293,287	68,833	310,415	106
World Missions	260,933	50,977	264,389	101
Personal Support	376,641	53,697	464,089	123
TOTALS	\$1,944,798	\$331,510	\$2,169,030	109
TOTALS 2005	\$1,860,474	\$375,980	\$2,142,828	115

Goal 100%

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.

know grace

Sometimes you wonder if confirmation students are getting what you're trying to teach. During one of those times, I asked the class the meaning of grace. One student spoke up and in his own words explained how grace is God's undeserved goodness, shown to us in Jesus. I thought afterward, even if all he gets out of this year is an understanding of the meaning of grace, it'll still be a worthwhile and productive time.

What is the key truth we want students in confirmation and youth group to remember? What do we want people in our congregations to have a good grasp of and know? What is it that students in the AFLC's Bible school and seminary need to clearly understand? They need to understand what that confirmation student understood: the meaning of grace.



Pastor Craig Johnson

A knowledge of grace solves a lot of problems. It helps us deal with the tough questions, like why do bad things happen to seemingly good people. Why does a guy hit by a drunk driver die and the drunk driver walk away? Why does a lady who has been faithful in church get cancer at a young age? Why does a person who prays for a safe trip get in an accident and someone who doesn't pray stay safe? Did the one person do some evil deeds we didn't know about? Are they being punished because of some unfaithful relative?

If we think the world is all about getting what you earn, then things don't make sense. If what happens to you in this world is based on how good you've been, then it seems sometimes God does a poor job of keeping score.

Everything looks different when we view life through "grace-tinted" glasses. God doesn't give accidents to bad people and blessings to good people. What happens to somebody in this life isn't always to be taken as an indication of how faithful or unfaithful they've been. It is not necessarily a sign of how God feels about them. Jesus dying on the cross tells us how God feels about us.

Jesus said God "causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matthew 5:45, NIV). He said this in the context of a call to His followers to be gracious to others: "Love your

enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (v. 44). God gives good gifts to undeserving people. He sends sunshine and rain to the evil and the good. He permits accidents and diseases in the lives of the righteous and the unrighteous. The reason why something hits one person and not another can't be easily determined. It can't be automatically traced back to some behavior.

None of us deserve any blessing from God. "We were by nature objects of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3). Thinking,

*Understanding grace gives us
peace in the present, hope
for the future and joy that is
real and lasting.*

"this shouldn't have happened to me," implies God owes me something. Any blessing God gives is undeserved. It's grace.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord" (Isaiah 55:8). That declaration comes after teaching on how the Lord is far more merciful and gracious than we are. He says, "You who have no money, come, buy and eat!" (v. 1). The wicked are encouraged to "turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon" (v. 7). God's ways are higher and different than ours. His ways are gracious.

Understanding grace gives us peace in the present, hope for the future and joy that is real and lasting. Understanding it is all grace humbles the proud and encourages the timid. Grace helps us overcome worry and fear. A knowledge of grace transforms how we relate to others.

When it comes time for students to make their confirmation vows, I often think of things I wish we had covered in class. Two years go by quickly. But even if a lot of good things didn't get covered, if the students in our congregations and our schools at least understand grace, then they're off to a good start.

building the base

minds & hearts

BY LARRY WALKER

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37).

A few years back Hollywood made a bad movie about King David. At the end of it, the old king, on his deathbed, gives a final message to his son, Solomon. He doesn't say what the Bible says he said. He says something the screenwriters thought more "spiritual." "Follow your heart," says the dying David.

In America today, most people assume that "spiritual" means "feelings." Following your heart. To be spiritual (they assume) doesn't mean to study the Bible and let it change your life, but to look inside yourself and discover your deepest feelings.

One reason our neighbors often take offence at things we believe is because they think faith is only a matter of feeling. "This guy believes there's a Hell," they think. "He must *like* the idea of people suffering forever." They can't imagine holding a belief that doesn't make you feel warm and fuzzy.

But real Christianity is about brains and feelings both. The Bible says we are to love God with our hearts *and* our minds. That's one reason why the AFLC has always stressed education.

Each of us tends to fall on one side of the stool or the other when it comes to feelings vs. brains. Some people are emotional by nature. They follow their hearts. They're like airplane pilots who look at their instruments, see that they're losing altitude, but say to themselves, "But I don't *feel* like I'm falling," and so do

nothing to pull out of their dive.

Others are analytical by nature.

They want hard evidence — no sentimental nonsense, thank you very much.

They're like the child-rearing experts years ago who told parents never to cuddle or play with their children, because that kind of contact satisfied no scientifically recognized need, and might spread germs!

The Bible, when we read it with an open mind, introduces us to Jesus, the most amazing man who ever lived. He held children on His knee and protected a weeping adulteress from stoning. But He also commanded us to "judge by right judgment" (John 7:24), and drubbed the Pharisees so badly in debate that they gave up challenging Him.

Christianity is like a health club, where there are weight machines and a running course. Some people naturally like to run. Other people are more drawn to the weights. But for the best all-around health, the runners need to cross-train with the weights, and the weight lifters should put in time on the track.

The Bible says that God wants to make us like Jesus. Ephesians 4:13 says, "Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ." Jesus was "the Word made flesh" (John 1:14), the smartest, most loving person who ever lived.

You might say He had His cake and ate it too.

And so will we, someday.

Walker is a member of Grace Free Lutheran, Maple Grove, Minn.

