

THE LUTHERAN 

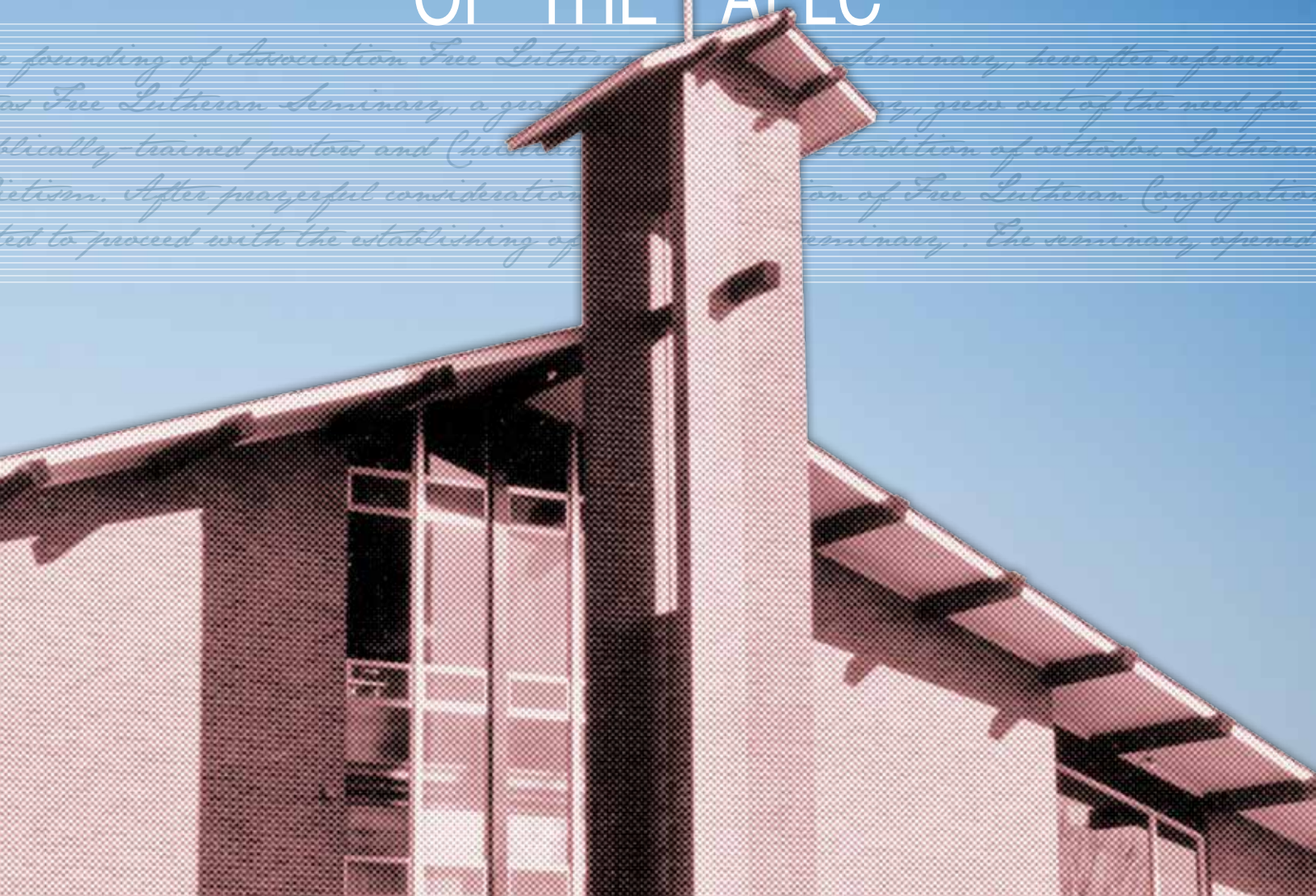
FEBRUARY 2010

AMBASSADOR

Patterned after the former Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis (founded in 1919), AFLBS began in 1966 with 13 students. AFLC church founders sought to establish young Christians in the Word of God before college and help believers to "win, build and equip" workers in local churches. The Bible school grew slowly: from 35 students the next year, to 65 in 1970, up to 95 ten years later and growing to an average of 105

THE SCHOOLS OF THE AFLC

The founding of Association Free Lutheran Seminary, hereafter referred to as Free Lutheran Seminary, a graduate school of theology, grew out of the need for publicly-trained pastors and Christian workers in the tradition of orthodox Lutheran Pietism. After prayerful consideration and approval by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, it was decided to proceed with the establishing of a seminary. The seminary opened



Our



BY SARAH VANCE

comforter

Those of us who are trusting in Jesus as our Savior have

often sought and received the comfort of the Lord. How wonderful it is to have experienced the comfort of God during the passing of loved ones, the loss of dreams unfulfilled, and the crushing blow of failure. It seems that the more we suffer, the more comfort God provides for us in our time of need. We have learned, through so many seasons of life, that our dear Jesus desires for us to turn to Him to deal with the pain that life brings. When we are overwhelmed, there is no one more capable of bearing our burdens than the "God of all comfort."

The comfort of God is so far reaching that it can touch others around us as He works healing in our deepest being. I recently was given the privilege of caring for an elderly saint who was dying. Her 89 years of serving Jesus, her church and her family were drawing to a close. As I tended to her wounds and personal needs I asked her if she was trusting in Jesus as her Savior. A beautiful peace then overtook the pained expression on her face. She weakly said she was trusting in Jesus and was relieved to soon see her Savior.

As I finished caring for her, she very gently started singing, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." I quickly called all of her family back into the room as she sang all three verses to her family. Even

on her deathbed, this dear, precious woman of God was ministering and witnessing to her family. It wasn't by her own strength that she was able to do this. God Himself had orchestrated this moment. The "God of all comfort" was seeking to bless her and her loved ones with His peace during their parting. God was calling her home, reminding her of His faithfulness during every season of life. The family was also comforted, knowing their dear mother and grandmother was going home to Jesus.

In II Corinthians 1:3-5, we are reminded of God's promise to care for us. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ."

Allow God to comfort you today. He knows the depth of the loss. He knows the pain of separation. When you allow God to comfort you, He will draw near to you. He will give you the strength, hope, and encouragement you need for this exact situation. He will also use you to comfort others. May you and all those around you be blessed in Jesus and His comfort today.

Vance is a registered nurse in an intensive care unit in Staples, Minn. Her husband, Pastor Jeremy Vance, serves Zion Free Lutheran in Wadena, Minn., and Bethany Free Lutheran Church of Bluegrass, Sebeka, Minn.

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The supreme end of education is expert discernment in all things—the power to tell the good from the bad, the genuine from the counterfeit, and to prefer the good and the genuine to the bad and the counterfeit.

—Samuel Johnson

True Christian education is not a negative thing; it is not a matter of isolating the student from the full scope of knowledge. ... Rather it is giving him or her the framework for total truth, rooted in the Creator's existence and in the Bible's teaching, so that in each step of the formal learning process the student will understand what is true and what is false and why it is true or false.

—Francis A. Schaeffer

The entire object of true education is to make people not merely to do the right things, but to enjoy them; not merely industrious, but to love industry; not merely learned, but to love knowledge; not merely pure, but to love purity; not merely just, but to hunger and thirst after justice.

—John Ruskin

When schools flourish, all flourishes.

—Martin Luther



ONE WAY, JESUS,

BY TIM HERSET



or some reason in middle school I ended up with this old, worn out, gray sweatshirt that my dad had bought in the '70s. The front pocket was barely hanging on, and it seemed like every time it was washed, the sleeves got shorter. Eventually I cut the sleeves off in an attempt to prolong its life. It wasn't really that warm, but I thought it was the coolest piece of clothing ever. Something that never changed was the logo—a finger pointing upward, the words “One Way, Jesus,” and the letters “AFLBS.” At the time I didn't know how significant this would be for the rest of my life.

I was asked a lot of questions when I wore that sweatshirt. The most common question was, “What is AFLBS?” I was quick to answer, “It's the school my mom and dad went to.” The follow up question was always, “Well, what school is that?” From there, I would explain that there is a little two-year school in Minnesota that people from my church go to after high school and study the Bible. That was generally a good enough answer for people, until I got to high school.

It seemed like every Sunday at church someone would ask if I would be going to AFLBS after I graduated. I would tell the person that I would be attending Montana State University, hoping they wouldn't ask why I wasn't going to spend two years at Bible school. Fortunately, the conversation would quickly turn to what I would be doing at MSU—getting my generals out of the way and eventually declaring a major. The important thing was getting some sort of education. Being involved with some sort of ministry would help keep me grounded. My spare time would be spent making the most of every opportunity the mountains of Montana could offer: mountain biking, hiking, fishing, camping, and a lot of skiing.

While I was at MSU, my brother was in Minnesota at AFLBS. When I talked to him on the phone he would tell me about life in the dorms, singing in the choir, and how the same guys who taught our parents were teaching him. I would think to myself, “Those guys must be old!” I could hear people in the

background asking, “Is Tim going to come to Bible school?” and I would quickly answer, “No.” I was making sure that I was following God's leading, and Plymouth, Minn., was not even a blip on my radar.

After a year and a half at MSU I hadn't declared a major, but during that time God opened doors to ministry opportunities. In January 2008, rather than going to school in Montana, I was skiing everyday in Golden, British Columbia. Helping the local chapter of Skiers and Snowboarders for Christ was a dream come true. That winter I learned so much about myself, about life, and about the God who is in control of *all* things. Moving back to Montana, I knew one thing—God has the plan for my life.

A few months later I found myself driving up the hill next to Medicine Lake, onto the AFLBS campus, attending classes just like my brother and parents did—even listening to the same teachers. After going to a university, living on my own, and experiencing God in real ways, I thought I knew a thing or two. When I realized how little I actually know, I got excited about learning. Hours in the library felt like minutes, lectures seemed to finish too soon, and I went to class every day. I started to understand the context of stories I heard growing up, had moments of clarity concerning my position with God, and developed a hunger for more of God in my life. Whether I want to or not, I am experiencing God every day.

I used to put on that old gray sweatshirt every day. Fortunately, I don't anymore. When I try to do everything by myself I feel worn out, like that sweatshirt. My time at AFLBS is getting shorter and will eventually be gone, like those sleeves. Wherever God sends me next, I need to remember what Jesus said in Luke 9:23, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” I pray that my life will always be “One Way, Jesus.”

Heret, a senior at the Association Free Lutheran Bible School in Plymouth, Minn., is a member of Faith Free Lutheran, Kalispell, Mont.

MEN

TOR

A look at what it is like to be a mentor and



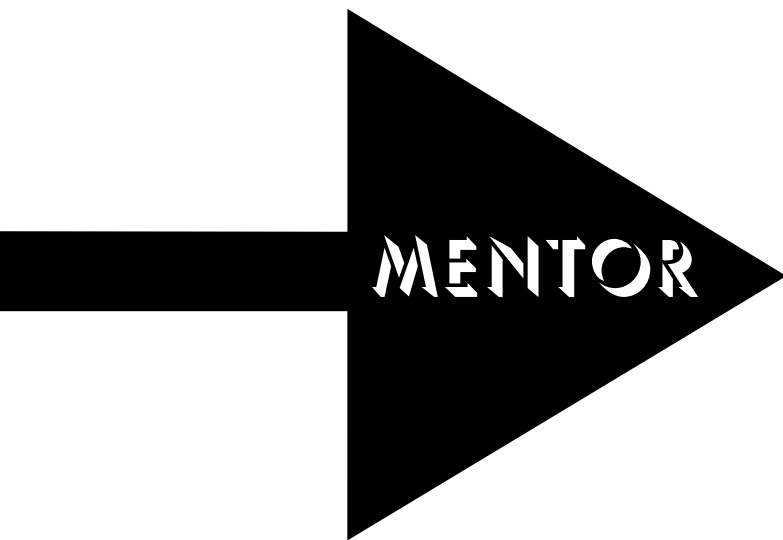
MENTEE

By Gracia Hjermstad

I can still hear the surprise in my mentor's voice as she exclaimed, "You've never heard of CoCo Wheats? The hot cereal with cocoa flavor!" My mentor, Carolyn, and I were discussing how quickly people change and grow. Her son had recently joined the National Guard and as a mother, she was being nostalgic. Our discussion made her think back to when he was a child eating CoCo Wheats, his favorite cereal, at the table. It was fun to hear her reminisce, and I got a sneak peek into the heart of a mother. Two years earlier, I would never have imagined the extent that I was growing in my faith, learning about myself, and having fun while doing it.

I am grateful to a friend who encouraged me to seek out a mentor. She showed me a verse from I Thessalonians 5:11, which states, "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." Christians need and desire to have encouragement and guidance from others who have experienced life and are walking with Christ. This realization prompted me to call my pastor's wife and request a mentor from my church.

Any nervous feelings that I had about meeting my mentor were put to ease as soon as Carolyn introduced herself to me. She was just as excited and nervous to meet me as I was to meet her. After a few weeks of getting to know each other, we began reading Proverbs 31 and a book focusing on the virtuous woman. Studying the book gave me insights that I had not understood in becoming a woman of God. But what made our weekly meetings even more



what it means to be mentored

valuable were our discussions that stemmed from the readings and the prayer time afterward. Sometimes we would run out of time and not be able to finish a chapter.

Mentoring is one avenue that gleans from God's commands through His Word. Carolyn responded to the call that God emphasized, through Paul, when he wrote in I Corinthians 5:7, "Now you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it." There are many ways that God uses people to minister to others, but Carolyn chose mentoring because that was what she was called to do. She has children, a husband, a job, and is on various committees at church, but she chose to share her valuable time ministering to me. Watching her devote her time to the building of Christ's church was humbling and inspires me to do the same.

Mentoring was not at all like I thought it would be. It was not a meeting that I felt obligated to attend on Wednesdays. Meeting with Carolyn was a time to have fellowship with a sister in Christ. We were able to talk about our week, have devotions, share prayer concerns and praises, and then lift each other up in prayer. What a blessing!

Of course, laughter was also part of mentoring. After Carolyn discovered that I had never had CoCo Wheats, I came to church and found a box of the cereal in my mailbox.

Hjermstad, a 2004 graduate of AFLBS, attends Emmanuel Free Lutheran, Williston, N.D.

By Emily Walker

Mentoring has been something that I have really enjoyed over the past two years as I have had the privilege to mentor two young women and see them grow and mature in their faith. I believe that mentoring is a God-given privilege for older men and women to advise and encourage those younger than us in the Lord.

There are many Bible verses which speak on mentoring. One of the most-used verses in regard to mentoring is Titus 2:3-5: "Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God."

In I Thessalonians 5:10-12, the apostle Paul first gives a reason for obedience to God, whether in the area of mentoring or in another area, and then gives a command to encourage one another. He writes to the Thessalonian church: "He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

And Proverbs 31:26 shows that one characteristic of the "noble wife" is her ability to teach others: "She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue."

Being a mentor and role model for those younger than us is a calling and a responsibility given to us by God. Mentoring can be difficult and often overwhelming, but it comes with so many joys, as well. It can build friendships and relationships that last a lifetime. One of my closest friends is a young woman that I mentored for two years. Though we don't see each other often anymore and are both busy with many things, there is a strong connection when we do get together because of the deep relationship that was built. We have seen each other through deaths in the family and school stresses as well as through joyful times.

Often, the mentor learns just as much, if not more at times, from the mentee as what the mentee gleans from the mentor. I have learned much from the ladies whom I have had a privilege to get to know in this way. Though I have only formally mentored two young women, I have found that as a dorm assistant and then as the resident head of the women's dorm at the Association Free Lutheran Bible School I have gotten to know and informally mentor and encourage many more young women, as well.

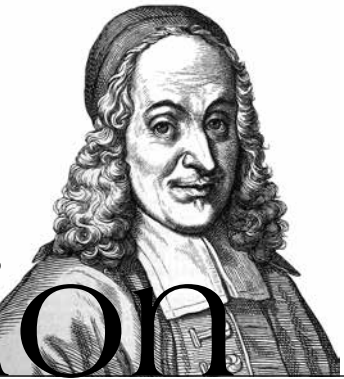
Praise God that He can use everybody in this role; you don't need a college degree to be an encourager. We all know those who are younger than ourselves, both in age and in spiritual maturity, who could benefit from someone taking them in and feeding them with the Word of God.

Walker, a 2006 graduate of AFLBS, is the women's resident head at the Association Free Lutheran Bible School in Plymouth, Minn.



By Dr. Francis Monseth

Ethics & Sanctification



Under the theme, “Personal and Social Ethics,” more than 2,000 members of the Evangelical Theological Society met for their 61st annual meeting Nov. 18-20, 2009, in New Orleans. Several members of the AFLTS faculty belong to the society and have taken part in its events and conferences at several locales across the nation. In attendance from the faculty this year were Pastors Robert Lee, Jerry Moan, and Dr. Francis Monseth.

In view of the prevailing relativism and pluralism that increasingly pervades American culture, the theme of this year’s conference was timely. Attendees gathered in four major plenary sessions featuring such topics as “Biblically-based Ethics: What’s Missing,” “Communal Christian Ethics” from an African perspective, “Lessons from Bioethics,” and “Faith, Economics, and Social Ethics.” Additionally, many small-group parallel sessions were held throughout the conference in fields relating in the main theme of Christian ethics but including topics in other areas of Christian theology.

Monseth read a paper in one of the small group sessions entitled, “The Doctrine of Sanctification as Portrayed in Philip Jacob Spener’s *Pia Desideria*.” In an attempt to address the dire ethical conditions of his day, Spener published his *Pia Desideria* (pious desires) in which he not only offered his analysis of the state of the Church in Germany but also presented proposals aimed at a renewal of personal and corporate spiritual life. His small book aroused widespread interest and is considered a primary factor in the spiritual renewal that followed.

Spener, generally regarded as the father of Lutheran Pietism, is considered the major catalyst for widespread spiritual awakening in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. The effects of this revival were felt throughout Germany and other parts of Europe, including the Scandinavian countries. Indeed, it is possible to trace its impact to the present day and is considered an important contributing factor in

A look at Philip Jacob Spener’s *Pia Desideria*

the convictions and emphases of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. Early leaders of the AFLC cited as one of the reasons for its existence to work and pray for “wholesome Christian pietism.” The AFLC’s seminary describes itself as “an orthodox school of theology in the tradition of Lutheran pietism.”

Pia Desideria is a message to the Christian Church. Its main concern is the sanctification of believers. In his presentation, Monseth noted Spener’s understanding of sanctification, as well as the proposals he advanced for fostering and strengthening spiritual life. The respective roles of the Holy Spirit through Word and sacrament, preaching, and the priesthood of believers were discussed as to their contribution to spiritual growth and renewal. In a concluding section, Monseth dealt with the motivation and effects of sanctification in Spener’s understanding. Monseth’s paper will appear later this year in *The Global Journal of Classic Theology*, an online publication edited by Dr. John Warwick Montgomery.

Membership in the ETS is limited to those who are committed to the complete inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. Its members annually indicate their continuing conviction in this regard as they sign the following statement: “The Bible alone and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written, and therefore inerrant in the autographs.”

Numbering more than 4,000 members, the next annual meeting of the ETS in November 2010 will gather in Atlanta, Ga., with a special focus on the theme, “Justification by Faith.”

Monseth is the dean of the Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary, Plymouth, Minn.

Life of



*The prayer of a
righteous man
is powerful
and effective.*

James 5:16

Prayer

By Stephanie Kantonen

Jesus Christ has always been the foundation of Aini Myking's life. Both of her parents were solid Christians, and she is unable to remember a time when she did not know Christ. It was under the teaching of Pastor Herb Franz that she really began to grow in her relationship with the Lord. She has placed Him first in her life ever since and has become a true prayer warrior for the Kingdom. Each day she prays, "Jesus, You are life. I give my life in surrender to You and for Your glory."

When Aini was only 45 years old her husband, Bern, passed away unexpectedly. She looks back on that time and says the Lord was truly at work—she experienced complete peace after his death.

Just a few months later someone from the Association Free Lutheran Bible School called and asked if she would come and work at the school. Aini committed the matter to the Lord in diligent prayer. She said the whole move to Minneapolis was one answered prayer after another. Everything fell into place, and Aini says, "The only way things fall into place is by trusting in Jesus."

One of Aini's daughters was going to be traveling to Norway with the Bible school choir and her two younger daughters still living at home were planning to go with her to AFLBS. Even her house sold quickly. There was nothing holding Aini back from making the move.

This was when her true passion for the Bible school and seminary was born. As the dean of women, she became a mother to the girls in the dorm, taking care of each one of them. She was only at the school for two years when God called her away. God answered more of her prayers when He quickly provided a job for her at General Mills, where she gained a glowing reputation and became a strong

witness for Jesus Christ. The Bible school was still home, though, and she was on campus often helping wherever needed.

It was during this time that Aini and a friend heard there were no services at a nearby nursing home, the Crystal Care Center. They began the services, and the Lord blessed their work. During this time Aini built a relationship with the seminary, as the seminarians were often the ones who would preach at the services on Sunday mornings. She keeps up-to-date with the seminarians by getting lists of each year's class and finding out where they will be serving. Then she knows what to pray about.

Every morning when Aini returns to her apartment she spends an hour or two with the Lord. The Word has truly become alive for her, and since she is unable to recall many verses these days, she finds joy and refreshment reading her favorite verses over and over. This is when Aini commits the most time to continuous prayer. There are lists of Bible school and seminary students, gospel team members, and current pastors kept in a small drawer near her chair. When she talks about praying for the schools, her eyes light up. This is her way of staying involved.

Aini said, "I miss the school and the friends I have there. ... I think about the school a lot ... and pray about the school a lot."

She has watched the schools grow and change over the years and has seen many young men and women walk out of the doors with an in-depth knowledge and love for the Lord and His Word. That is the reason she continues to pray so steadfastly for the AFLC schools.

Kantonen, who is a member of St. Paul's Lutheran, Cloquet, Minn., plans to attend AFLBS in the fall.



By Naomi Finney

The Ministry Training Institute is a great training base for students who want to pursue God's call to ministry. I went to MTI after two years of Bible training at the Association Free Lutheran Bible School. While AFLBS helped me grow as a Christian, my time at MTI showed me through the Bible, through teachers and their life experiences, and through the books we studied that I was equipped for ministry. I just needed to go where God was calling me and not be afraid.

I am now a parish builder at Good Shepherd Free Lutheran in Camarillo, Calif., where I help our pastor in many aspects, mainly focusing on children's ministry. For the four years that I lived in Minneapolis, studying on the campus of the AFLC schools, I was always searching for a church home and trying to find a way to get plugged in. But I never felt like I fit anywhere. As soon as I came to Good Shepherd, where God had called me, I began to know that sense of being a part of something, a useful tool in church ministry. It has been fun to connect and build relationships with families. I have a part-time job outside of the ministry work, so when I am at church it doesn't feel like a job. I can enjoy the ministry and I can play with the kids at church—which MTI doesn't really train you for. But it did train me for the questions they ask!

One class MTI offers is called Intro to Ministry. As a woman, being a ministry staff member presents a different set of challenges than for a man. That is one area that MTI was able to better prepare me for my role in ministry. Our class went through a book titled, *The Ministry Staff Member*.

Author Douglas Fagerstrom showed, through several scenarios, how different personality types interacting together can have a positive or negative impact on ministry. It caused each of us to take a step back and look at our attitudes and the impressions we left on others. I tend to be opinionated, and I needed to see from these stories how counterproductive that is to ministry. The class also helped us focus on unity in the body of Christ as we seek to spread the gospel.

A huge focus of MTI is one of the most basic aspects of every believer's life—daily devotions. At the beginning of the year, we were each given a binder. One of our required texts was the Bible. We were asked to read a specific portion on a daily basis, and then we would journal our devotions, turning the journal in for the teacher to verify every week. I also did my own devotions because I have another special way of spending time with God, which I didn't want to miss. Having devotions is an important part of living out the Christian life, no less for those who are not in active ministry. As believers we are all in ministry, we are all walking testimonies. We are constantly being observed, and our lives are silent witnesses to those around us. Every time I skip over my daily devotions, I am giving Satan a little foothold into my life. He notices when I miss my time with God and he takes advantage of it every chance he gets. This is a lesson for a lifetime, and we can't let him get us down over that one time. We need to get right back up and draw closer to God.

These lessons and more helped prepare me for ministry in a church that is growing fast and undergoing many changes as a congregation. We meet in a school,

which means that we have a lot of work to do to make a Sunday service happen. Some people in our church are there from 7 a.m. on Sundays until about 1:30 p.m. We learned a lot about being flexible in ministry from our teachers, Pastor Connely Dyrud and Pastor Richard Gunderson, but I never really thought it would be that big of a deal for me. Now I am learning that I need to be open for change, ready to try out new things, and always flexible.

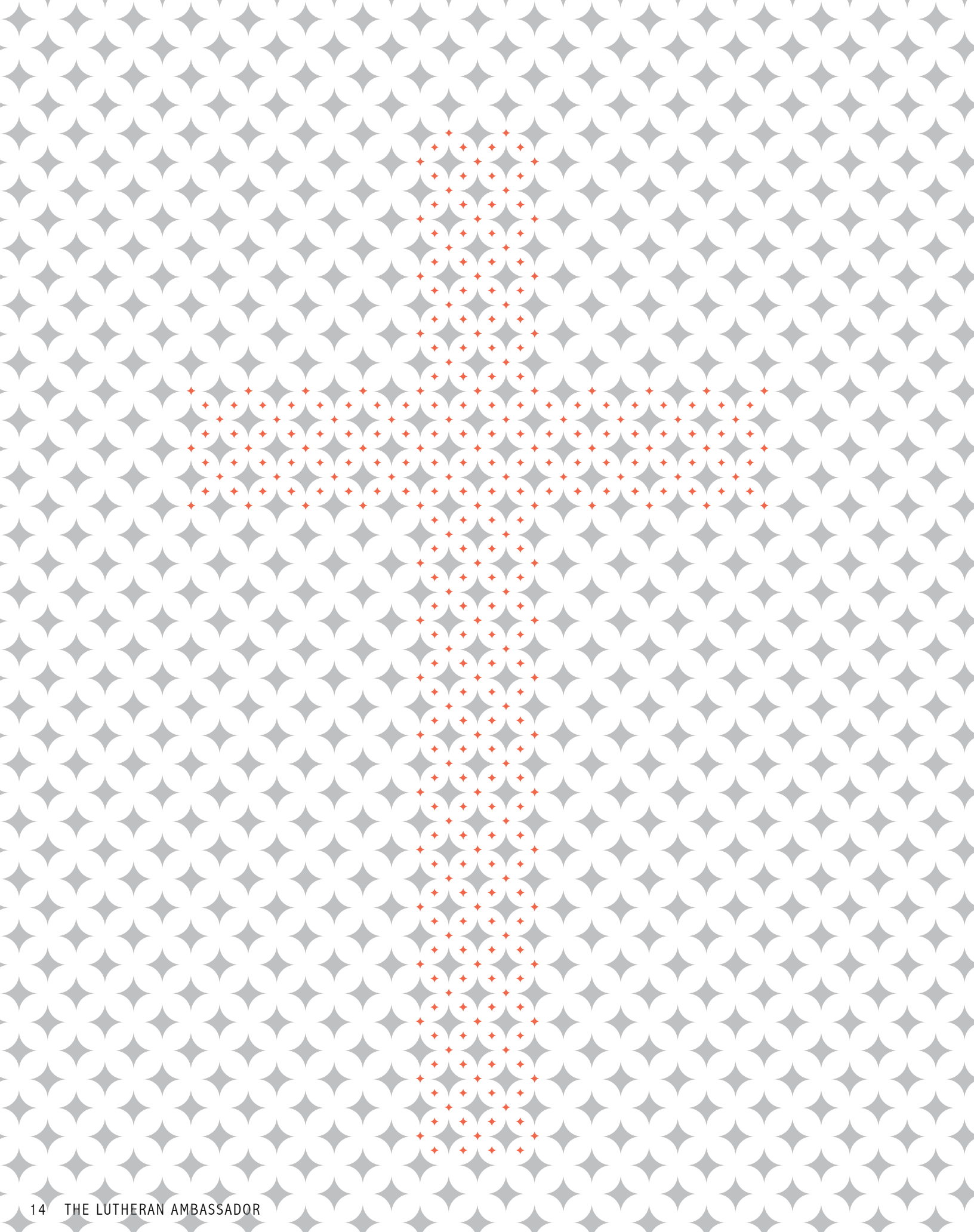
Summer is our busy time. With school out there is no end to the fun and exciting ways to keep kids busy as they grow in Christ and participate in the numerous physical activities that southern California offers. As a parish worker I found that I couldn't keep a regular job or try to have my own schedule during those busy months. But God provides! It is truly a joy to be a part of this family in Christ and watch it grow. I am constantly reminded that I have to live up to a higher standard because the children I work with are watching me, following my example, and sometimes saying the words that I say, which can be a good thing as long as I am speaking positively.

I want to encourage you to find that place where you can plug in and serve God. If you don't think you are prepared, or if you don't know what gifts God has given you and how you can utilize them, pray about MTI, or find a book about this subject, and then let God use you! "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them" (Romans 12:6).

Finney, a 2007 graduate of AFLBS, attended the fall semester of MTI in 2008. She currently serves as a parish worker at Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Camarillo, Calif.

Ministry Training Institute prepares students for service





Is Augsburg's work done?

Translated from Norwegian by Larry Walker

THE FOLLOWING TWO ARTICLES WERE AMONG THE VERY LAST WRITTEN BY PROFESSOR GEORG SVERDRUP OF AUGSBURG College. They were published March 1907 in the Folkebladet magazine. Sverdrup would pass away the following May 3.

The articles were written during a time of considerable difficulty, both financial and political, for the Lutheran Free Church. Against the background of a number of defections by LFC clergymen to the larger United Norwegian Lutheran Church, Sverdrup and the Free Church leaders had come under personal attack in the United Church's magazine, Lutheraneren. Sverdrup's request to have his own response published in Lutheraneren was rebuffed, an offense that wounded him deeply. It was apparently in the context of that controversy that someone suggested Augsburg Seminary no longer served any useful purpose, prompting the following response.

The question [at issue] is not whether Augsburg has been faithful in its calling, but whether it has finished with its service. More than a few are sending us messages informing us—some publicly, but others more privately—that Augsburg's work is done; that it can do nothing more that is useful. And this leads us to consider the matter afresh, as we have often considered it previously in other times of crisis similar to that which we now experience.

It would, obviously, be a thing almost extraordinary, if it could be said legitimately and honestly that Augsburg has carried out its work and completed its service, and fulfilled its calling in such a complete manner that it may safely close down. Then Augsburg might, with joy, behold the end of its many battles and all its difficulties, having fulfilled its task. For everyone who has stood with Augsburg knows, as do many of those who have opposed it, that it has not had easy or leisurely days at any time.

If we have understood some small part of the calling which Augsburg has received from God—not through dreams or new revelations, but through God's leading and the circumstances into which He Himself has placed it—[that calling] must certainly be to work for a clerical education suited to the requirements of free Lutheran congregations among the Norwegian people in America.

There is something unique in being

the first Norwegian Lutheran seminary in America. That in itself presumes a calling and a responsibility. This is something of which we may speak openly, for the men who now labor at Augsburg did not inaugurate the work of Augsburg in advance of any other [Norwegian Lutheran] seminary in America. It was done before our time. Augsburg is the pioneer among Norwegians in America, and has as its task to precede others in one of the most serious and burdensome labors which the Christian church in America has to carry out in changing times: how are God's servants in the congregation best to be educated for their work?

It is also historically demonstrable that Augsburg has proceeded in carrying out its task in such a manner that it has found itself imitated in no small degree by others; perhaps even some of those who now maintain that Augsburg ought to die have followed it to a considerable degree.

This situation obviously brings with it peculiar demands and peculiar responsibilities. A question and a demand lie in every word, when it is said that the aim here is to educate God's servants for free Lutheran congregations among the Norwegian people in America.

It demands personal Christianity, with a view to the freedom of the congregation. It demands simple Lutheranism, with reverence for Norwegian catechetical training and the Haugean awakening. It demands the upright abolition of state churchly hab-

its and state churchly abuses.

Those who know a little of how difficult it is, especially for state churchly Norwegian pastors and sextons, to tolerate these demands and to comply with them in spirit and truth, know also something of the reason why Augsburg's road has been thorny, from the first day up to now. They also know something of the reason why the pastors who work in conformity with these principles encounter so much affliction on their way.

Has this task now been fulfilled, so that no more labor is required for it? Have others taken its place so completely and totally, so wholly and unreservedly, that the work does not need to go on? And if there should be any other school which follows in Augsburg's path, is it then so certain that there is no room for more than one? Is even competition entirely profitless in church work? Mutual criticism is certainly not without value among brothers.

The work for living pastors in living congregations will never be so complete here on earth that it can be laid down without injury to the church and to the salvation of souls. And if even the most perfect work will never be finished, how much less the incomplete, which demands both time for improvement and time to press forward?

So be not too quick to think that Augsburg's work is done, [that it] may now cease at any time.

The oldest Norwegian seminary

It is not age that presses on Augsburg. It itself remains very young, and—perhaps we might add—youthful. But nevertheless Augsburg is the oldest among the Norwegian seminaries, and that also has its significance. If it is wrong that there are so many seminaries, that is in any case no criticism of Augsburg, since it was alone at the beginning, and the others have come along since. And if it is good that there are many, it is still no shame or harm to lead the way in doing good.

But, as everyone knows, leading the way is difficult. Poets have sung of this, and many a pioneer in large and small matters has experienced that it is so. Hundreds and thousands of our settlers can bear witness that those who came first and traveled farthest out on the prairies required both spiritual and physical strength to take up the hardest tasks, and even then it left them with bent backs and weary arms.

Augsburg, which was established while its founders could still well be described as poor newcomers, has experienced the same things. It endured straitened circumstances; it was subjected to enmity and mockery; it had to build with one hand while defending itself with the other. It was a wonder to many that it did not collapse. Its purpose was to attempt to educate pastors in a new country, where the need for personal competence among pastors was greater than in the old country. With one or two teachers, they intended to accomplish an enterprise which, in Norway, is carried out by a great machinery and many capable men. And much [more] of the same could be added.

Why did Augsburg not fail before it was a year old, if we might ask? Because it was God's will. It had a calling, and in that lay its still-unexhausted strength.

For if it is difficult to lead the way, it nevertheless also has its great profit. Everything that is done may be done in the

manner one is convinced is right. One may organize things without regard to old traditions and precedents, and have them the way one believes God would have them, if only one is willing to let Him guide, and to endure the reduced and impoverished circumstances which He always takes pains to bestow, so that it may be clear that it is not the power of man that impels the work.

Thus Augsburg acquired the freedom that was necessary for the purpose of inaugurating on the "broad prairie" a school which was to impart the most difficult of all forms of education for the most valuable of all forms of work among men.

Here there was no further use for any old-fashioned educational forms. It was in responsibility to the people and to the congregation, the gospel and the truth, that everything should be arranged so as to serve—not the education of royal officials or of "professional men"—but the education of biblically sound and Spirit-impelled witnesses, who were prepared to serve souls and the congregation in sacrificial love.

This is to say that, since God so well arranged matters that a new beginning should be made in poverty and affliction, it was simply a matter of grasping the heart of the thing itself, the serious and simple apostolic way itself, without all those many little ornamentations which belong to the old and somewhat refined state churches.

And what is the heart of pastoral service, to which an improvement was here to be made? The heart of the matter is this, as Jesus says: "The Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning" [John 15:26-27]. Or as it is written in the Revelation of John: "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" [Revelation 19:10b].

This, therefore, is Augsburg's "right

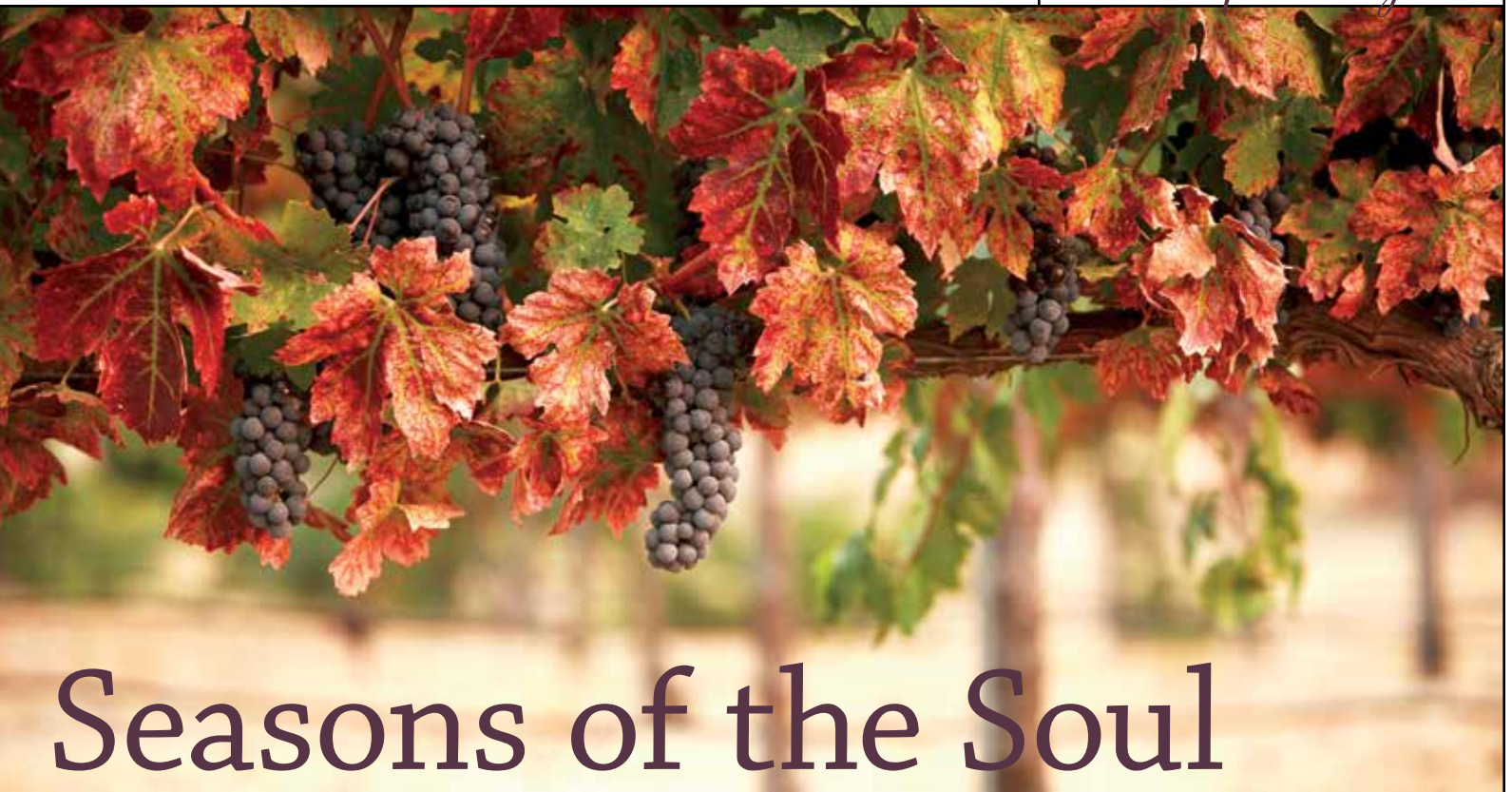
of the firstborn." It had neither time nor strength for many sophistries and trifles. It had to hold to that which, in pastoral education, is "the one thing needful," the living, spiritual biblical knowledge which says that Jesus Christ the Crucified is both Wisdom from God and Power from God, so that whoever knows Him, because he has been with Him from the beginning, has taken hold of that which is essential in his preparation, that which a pastor needs. For in Jesus all the mysteries of wisdom are hidden. Without Him we have nothing. In Him we have all that we need here below.

It takes time and labor to enter into the Scripture, and it takes testing and experience to find the treasure that is hidden in Jesus. But by its deepest nature this work of preparation may be done just as well in the straitened circumstances of settler life as in the proudest edifices. Jesus Himself did such a work with His disciples on the byways, in the boat, out in the wilderness places and on the steep mountain slopes, by the beds of the sick and from the Cross.

It is profitable to have the experience that pastoral education also has its simple source, its heart, its one thing needful, its best portion, and that this is its "right of the firstborn."

So shall Augsburg now die, because it is the oldest? I wonder if there is no one who feels that his heart still beats a little more warmly than usual when he thinks of Augsburg's time of affliction in its youth, and the right which it has won through its labor and its sufferings. Or is it less needful now to have the spirit of prophecy?

Articles written as an editorial March 20 and 27, 1907, in Folkebladet. Walker serves as the campus librarian at the AFLC Schools, Plymouth, Minn.



Seasons of the Soul

BY PASTOR LARRY SEVERSON

It would be interesting to know who first thought about our lives as having seasons. I have seen several articles and books over the years on the seasons of our lives. Just as it is difficult to predict when seasons will actually arrive, it is difficult to know when we move from season to season in our lives. I wonder if I am not in the late summer or even early autumn of my own life.

Think of your spiritual life, your relationship with God, using the seasons as a metaphor. I can now look back over the years of my own life and see that I have moved through the seasons' cycles. Unlike the calendar of seasons, spiritual seasons are erratic in their lengths.

A splendid spring is a time of rapid and exciting spiritual growth. It is a time of freshness in our souls that is like a spring breeze. Our spiritual senses are alive as we are awakened to the glory of God. In a traditional sense, this springtime of the soul brings experiences similar to times following conversion, revival and renewal.

Summers of the soul are times of spiritual productivity, growth and service. This is the time when we are able to share with others from the bounty of our spirits.

Fall can be a pleasant time in our spiritual lives. In my own experience, the movement from summer to fall can happen almost without knowing it. They are times of reflecting on and enjoying the blessings of our spiritual summer. They are times to reflect on spiritual harvests. There is even a subtle dying—a dying of dreams, a dying of passions, a dying of motivation, a dying of stamina. It is a time of slowing down and resting.

Winters of the spirit are generally a time of coldness, when productivity stops. Like all spiritual seasons, a spiritual winter can happen at any time in our lives. We can experience a spiritual winter blast in the midst of life.

As a chaplain in hospice care, two nursing facilities and acute care, I find it is a daily learning experience to identify these seasons playing out in the lives of clients, residents and patients. Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, "There is a time and a season for everything." There is a time for spiritual spring, spiritual summer, spiritual fall and spiritual winter. As the seasons of the natural world are simply a part of the cycles God put in place when He created the world, so the cycles and seasons of the soul are natural and normal. He requires that we simply trust Him despite what our sinful intuitions may be suggesting.

Consider the writings of the Old Testament prophets, the evangelists and apostles, together with the writers of the Psalms. Note the content of their writings reflect the spiritual seasons. David, the psalmist, demonstrated in his writings a range of spiritual seasons from deepest depression to unrestrained joy—all the course of days.

In the flow of the seasons of the soul we can learn new and necessary truths that will help us love the Lord with all our hearts.

May you be blessed as we move together through the seasons of our spiritual lives, bearing fruit appropriate to each season.

Severson is a chaplain with LifeCare Medical Center, Roseau, Minn.

Lay Pastor Donald Duff, 79, of Redding, Calif., died Dec. 27, 2009, at his home.

Born July 8, 1930, in Detroit, Mich., he was married to Sharrie, his wife of 35 years. He served three years in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Korean War. He was in the insurance business and became a financial consultant for more than 50 years. He was also a realtor for 21 years. After retiring in 1999, he served as a lay minister at several congregations, including St. Timothy Lutheran, Redding, Calif.

Surviving are his wife; two sons, David Duff, Santa Ana, Calif., and Andy (Marci) Duff, Redding; one daughter, Shannon (Russell) Horn, Bremerton, Wash.; and six grandchildren.

The service was Jan. 3 at St. James Lutheran, Redding, Calif.



New members were received at Norland Free Lutheran, Salol, Minn. Pictured are (front row, from left) Pastor Cal Willard, Karin Kotz, Debbie Johnson and Fern Johnson, (back row, from left) Jay Quaife, Frank Kotz, Terry Johnson and Harvey Johnson. Not pictured is Maria Kotz.

Housing options for 2010 annual conference

The 2010 annual conference will be held June 15-18 on the campus of the AFLC Schools in Plymouth, Minn. The conference committee has gathered information on available housing for conference attendees. The options range from on-campus dorm housing to hotels and campgrounds. The map at right shows the approximate location of the campus (noted by star) and the housing options (A-G).

★ Campus dorms will be available to rent for the week. Options include \$25/night for a two-person room or \$35/night for three to four people. There is a one-time charge of \$10 for bedding per person. A limited number of air conditioning units are also available for \$10/day. Call (763) 544-9501 to reserve a room.

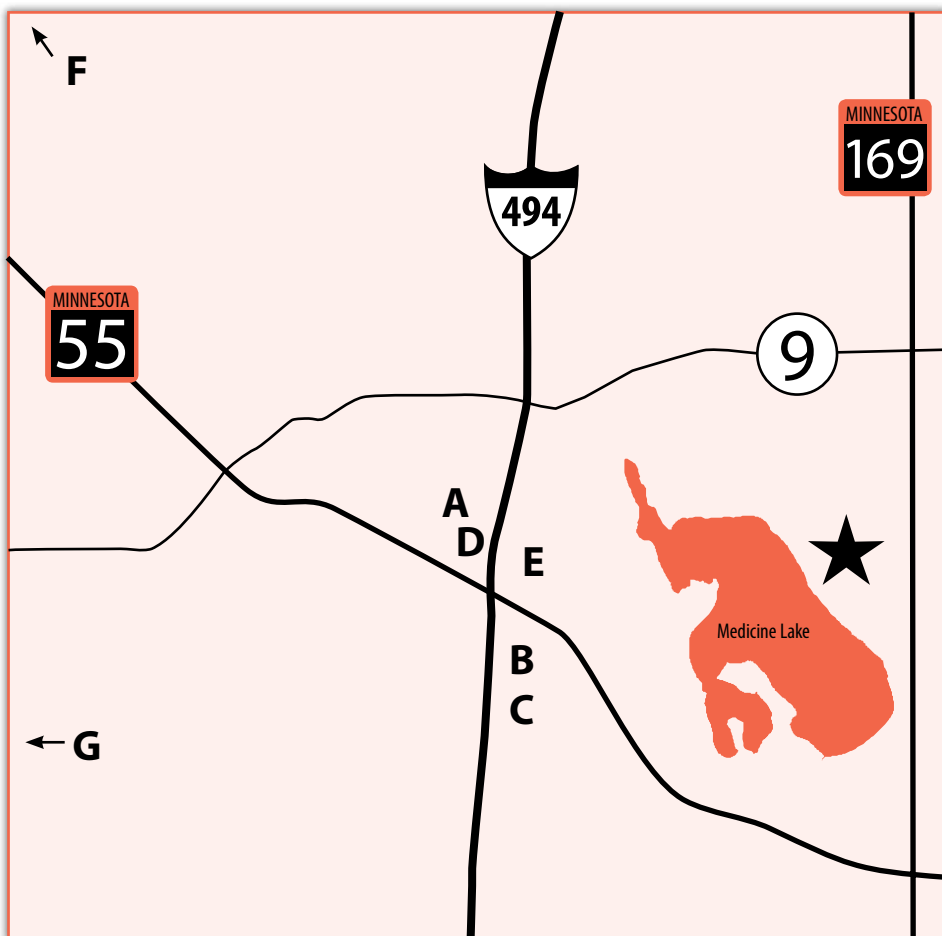
A: Comfort Inn, 3000 Harbor Lane, Plymouth. One king or two double beds for \$75/night. Call (763) 559-1222 or visit www.comfortinn.com.

B: Best Western, 2705 North Annapolis Lane, Plymouth. One king or queen, two queens or two doubles for \$75/night. Call (800) 528-1234 or visit www.bestwesternplymouth.com.

C: Red Roof Inn, 2600 Annapolis Lane, Plymouth. One king for \$55/night; two doubles for \$60/night; one king with microwave and refrigerator for \$65/night. Call (763) 553-1751 or visit www.redroof.com.

D: Days Inn, 2955 Empire Lane, Plymouth. Any room for \$47/night with AFLC rate. Must make reservations 30 days in advance. Call (763) 559-2400.

E: Radisson Hotel, 3131 Campus Drive,



Plymouth. One king or two doubles for \$109/night. Call (763) 559-6600.

F: KOA campground, Maple Grove. Call (763) 420-2255.

G: Baker Campground, 2309 Baker Park Road, Maple Plain. Call (763) 559-6700 or visit www.threeriversparks.org.

Grounded in God's Word

BY LORILEE MUNDROM

At the Association Free Lutheran Bible School (AFLBS), students set aside up to two (or even three) years of their lives to study the Word of God. The campus is located near the shores of Medicine Lake in Plymouth, Minn., a suburb of Minneapolis. The campus consists of two dormitories—one for men and one for women—and Heritage Hall, which is a multi-functional building with classrooms, faculty offices, administration, library, bookstore, and the dining facilities. The chapel is located in the seminary building, which is housed on the same campus.

These are the physical aspects of AFLBS. However, the most important part of this school is the study of the Word of God and related subjects like Christian education, music ministry, evangelism, and missions/ministry-related classes. The AFLBS choirs and gospel teams travel throughout the United States throughout the year, ministering the Word of God through music and testimony. The third year of the Bible school education is the Ministry Training Institute. Students who are interested in training for ministry with youth, missions, or aviation are invited to participate in this third-year program.

If you have never visited the school or even thought about your children attending, I suggest you visit the Web site for the Bible school (www.aflbs.org). There you will find testimonies from students, a curriculum guide, and descriptions of various programs on campus in which students can participate.

The Bible school education gives students grounding in the Word of God that they cannot find on other college campuses. Because two years, or even three, are spent with other Christian students studying the Word of God and receiving training in how to share their faith, teaching Sunday school classes, music ministry, and other aspects of church life, it is *the* place to attend. Living in the dorms, students are exposed to different cultures from around the world (foreign students attend AFLBS). They have devotions and prayer together several times a week. Students develop life-time friendships at Bible school. I can testify to the fact that the friendships my husband and I made at Bible school are still some of our closest friends for whom we thank God!

The Women's Missionary Federation of the AFLC is supporting the Bible school through funds given for the remodeling of a former classroom in the girls' dormitory. The plan is to turn it into a gathering place for students to study, visit, and share together in fellowship by installing a coffee bar, comfortable chairs and other furniture in the lounge area. It could also serve as a welcoming place for guests and visitors. We are excited to be supporting this improvement to the school, making it more attractive for students and visitors alike. Won't you consider what you can do to assist them in seeing this project accomplished?

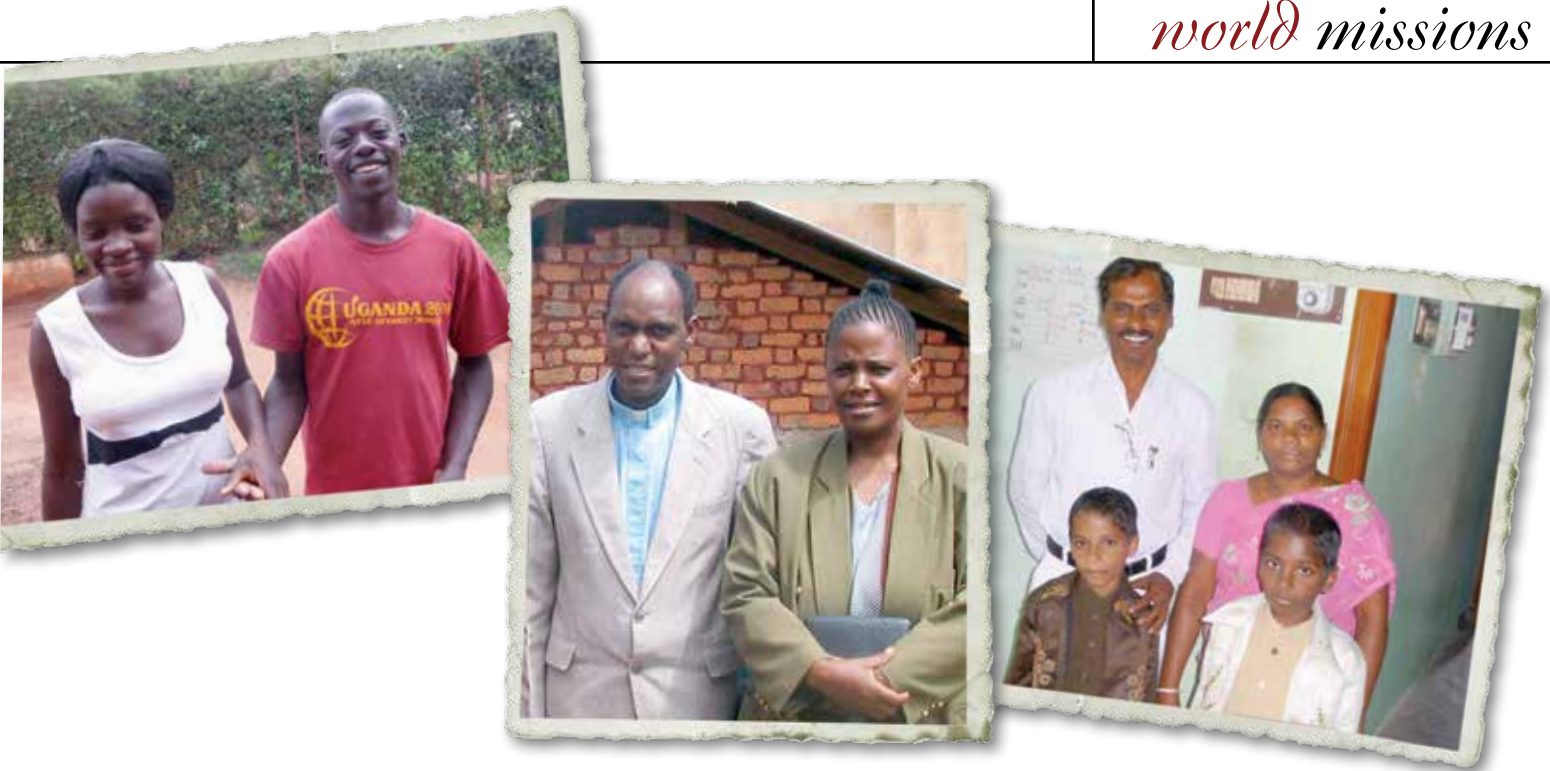
Mundfrom, who lives in Eugene, Ore., is the president of the AFLC's national Women's Missionary Federation.



AFLC Schools host open house, Christmas concerts



The AFLC Schools campus in Plymouth, Minn., was the site of a weekend of Christmas concerts as the Schools welcomed parents and other guests Dec. 11-13, 2009. Clockwise from top: Members of both AFLBS choirs join together during an evening concert. The wind ensemble provided musical numbers. The congregation joined in the candlelight service. (Pictures by Julia Prichard, AFLBS junior.)



What is your focus?

BY PASTOR KEVIN OLSON

What is your major?" is often the first question asked of college students home on break. But have you asked yourself that question lately? Have you stopped to consider where you are headed or what your next goal is in life? Even asking those questions could be overwhelming for those who are just trying to make it through the day or week. Yet every one of us puts our focus on something. There is always something that rises to the top priority in our lives. What would happen if the priority in our lives was the study of God and His Word?

Chris, who lives in Uganda, decided to major in deepening his understanding of the Lord after he found out that he had a terminal illness. He realized that all of the other priorities in his life would not really matter and that he needed to know the truth about God and His Word. He dedicated himself to studying the Bible and serving the Lord. Since that time, Chris has grown in his faith. He has captured the respect of the pastors in his home area, organized them into a class to study together and is now one of their teachers. Not only did things change inwardly, but outwardly as well. He was miraculously cured of his illness and was recently married to a young woman named Sarah. For Chris, changing his major from the things of the world to the ways of the Lord changed everything.

Devasahaym, who lives in India, has been seeking the Lord for a number of years. The joy in his heart and the peace in his family reflect the fact that the Lord has first priority in his life. This past year Devasahaym agreed to be the instructor for the training of pastors in India. It means that he must learn the curriculum

and teach it well. It means that he must live what he teaches and have the respect of pastors who are twice his age. Recently, he was asked to travel to another part of India to be one of a team of instructors to bring the training to another group of men.

Nicolaus, who is from Tanzania, is now in his second year of seminary at AFLTS, which means living away from his wife and eight children. Recently, his 13-year-old daughter's leg became swollen because of varicose veins. Nicolaus wished to be home to care for Juliet and to help his wife by taking Juliet to the hospital in Dar Es Salaam. His choice to study God's Word at seminary in the U.S. came with a high cost. The students at the Bible school took an offering at chapel to help Nicolaus pay for the expenses of Juliet's surgery. More than enough money came in to cover the surgery.

A man asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus told him, "Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me" (Luke 18:22). Putting the Lord first in our priorities is the best decision that we can make in our lives. It is not always the easiest. Problems and struggles will still come, but our lives will have meaning and purpose beyond the temporal things of this world. The all powerful Lord will protect us and go with us through the overwhelming times in our lives.

Olson, Shakopee, Minn., is the department head for the Ambassador Institute.

People and Places

Members of the AFLC Coordinating Committee removed **Hope Free Lutheran**, Snohomish, Wash., from the congregational roster after its members closed the congregation.

A group of AFLC pastors traveled to India Jan. 4-17 to work with the pastoral training program, including **Dr. Francis Monseth**, dean of AFLTS, **Pastor Kevin Olson**, who heads up the Ambassador Training Institute, and **Pastor Mark Antal**, who serves Victory Free Lutheran, Park River, N.D.

Members of the **FLY Committee** have selected, "It is Written," as the theme for the 2011 FLY Convention, which will take place July 2011. The theme comes from John 20:30-31.

Pastor Edward Strom was installed Jan. 10 at Freedom Lutheran, Ottawa, Ill.,

Correction: The number of babies who are aborted each year was incorrectly stated in the Women's Missionary Federation column (page 16) in the January issue. The correct number is 50 million worldwide.

Todd Waldie has resigned as the coordinator of youth and family ministry at Christ the King Free Lutheran, Pipestone, Minn.

ARC hosts winter retreats

A look at upcoming retreats at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis.

- **SIDExSIDE** and **Sno Daze** are Feb. 5-7. Cost is \$90 (before Jan. 25) or \$110 (after Jan. 25). A family discount is available for those who have more than one child attending these retreats. The main speakers are Jeremy Erickson for **SIDExSIDE** and Pastor Todd Erickson for **Sno Daze**.

- **Couples' Retreat** is February 19-20 with the option of staying through Feb. 21. Cost is \$130 (Feb. 19-20) or \$160 (Feb. 19-21). Speakers are Pastor David and Vicki Johnson from Cloquet, Minn.

- **Women's Retreat** is March 26-28. The speaker is Rayleen Wilson, wife of Christian Motorcyclists Association National Evangelist Roger Wilson, of Ottumwa, Iowa. She will share what God has done in her life and in the life of her family. The theme is, "Through the Looking Glass."

For more information on these retreats and future camps, visit the ARC's Web site at www.arc-aflc.org.

AFLC memorials for December 2009

AFLBS

Hannah Quanbeck (5)
Lyle Pittenger
Gladys Nelson
Albin Haugen (3)
Joe Rosenberg
Lael Seruyange (2)
Marjorie Mathre
Grant Christopherson

AFLTS

Louella Meyer
Lorraine Brandt
Albin Haugen (3)
Lael Seruyange (2)
Hannah Quanbeck
Harlan Estrem
Grant Christopherson

All Departments

Raymond Whitestar

Evangelism

Lorraine Brandt
Hannah Quanbeck
Arlitte Swenson
Roy and Beatrice Rasmussen
Pastor Don Duff

FLAPS

Lorraine Brandt
Harvey Hoops

Robert A. Olson
Ethel Mohagen (2)
Helena Dietrich

General Fund

Louella Meyer
Albin Haugen

Home Missions

Arlen Johnson
Luke Allmendinger
Lorraine Brandt
Albin Haugen
Ethel Mohagen

Parish Education

Albin Haugen
Hannah Quanbeck
David Christenson
Ethel Mohagen

Vision

Louella Meyer
Lorraine Brandt

World Missions

Pastor Robert Giles
Albin Haugen
Hannah Quanbeck

... in honor of

World Missions

Pastor Steve and Angela Lombardo

AFLC BENEVOLENCES Jan. 1- Dec. 31, 2009

FUND	TOTAL (subsidy)	REC'D IN DECEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$434,087	\$50,411	\$327,231	75
Evangelism	112,642	14,747	102,508	91
Youth Ministries	78,909	6,595	85,434	108
Parish Education	135,207	17,196	104,381	77
Seminary	244,110	40,937	209,761	86
Bible School	398,910	50,203	381,808	96
Home Missions	375,908	61,720	365,261	97
World Missions	327,017	62,564	297,812	91
Personal Support	435,500	87,290	458,794	105
TOTALS	\$2,542,290	\$391,663	\$2,332,989	92
TOTALS 2008	\$2,307,821	\$341,746	\$2,398,839	104

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.

Worth praying about

Finding a new full-time instructor for the AFLC's Bible school and seminary is not the most pressing concern in most of our congregations. We're more focused on preparing next week's Sunday school lesson, helping the senior citizen who is facing health problems, or taking care of building maintenance needs. Unless we are at the Plymouth, Minn., campus, who is teaching at the AFLC Schools doesn't seem to matter much.



Pastor Craig Johnson

The decision to call someone to the position of instructor may not make a big difference in our congregations this Sunday, but it very likely will impact future Sundays. Those

who are teaching right now at the Bible school and seminary may not affect what songs are sung in our congregations or what lessons are taught at Bible study or what kind of sermon you hear. But what they are teaching this year at the Schools will affect what is going to be taught in our congregations in future years.

Each week, the training I received at the Free Lutheran Seminary affects how I preach, teach and pastor. My teachers from 20 years ago are making a difference in our congregation today. It has often been said, "As the seminary goes, so goes the church body."

We tend to only concern ourselves with the need that is right in front of us. We live under the tyranny of the urgent. That which we think has to be done right

now gets all our focus. The things that won't impact us for some time get little attention.

Those things that seem urgent are often unimportant. The important things are often not urgent. The urgent things cry out loudly, so we attempt to deal with them. The important things often make little noise and, thus, get ignored. The calling of the next teacher at the Schools doesn't demand attention the way a leak in the roof or a problem with the heater does, so it doesn't get a prime spot on our prayer list the way it should.

The calling of a new teacher needs to be surrounded by a great deal of prayer. Pray for the members of the Schools' Board of Trustees as they make this decision. Pray that God will give them direction and discernment.

Jesus said the work of His kingdom is like a farmer sowing seed. Sowing seed requires patience because it doesn't yield immediate results. In Jesus' parable the seed that sprang up the quickest didn't produce lasting fruit because it had landed on shallow soil (Mark 4:5-6). The seed that landed on good soil produced an abundant crop, but it took awhile.

In our culture with its focus on instant satisfaction, it is easy to have only a short-term focus. It is tempting to try to plant seed that will produce immediate fruit but not be helpful for the long term. We fall for that temptation if we offer programs or events that attract and impress

a crowd, but don't help them get firmly planted in Christ and His Word.

Getting involved in a child's life and setting an example for Christ often doesn't attract a crowd, but it is a way of planting seed for the long term. We plant the seed of God's truth and love in their lives with confidence that the Lord will cause good things to come from that seed in His time.

A long-term perspective doesn't just focus on what is going to make me look

The calling of the next teacher at the Schools doesn't demand attention the way a leak in the roof or a problem with the heater does, so it doesn't get a prime spot on our prayer list the way it should.

good or feel good today. It cares about the next generation. It plants seeds that may not bear fruit tomorrow, but will bear abundant fruit in the generation to come.

We pray about things—like the calling of a new teacher—that don't appear to have an immediate significance. We give thanks that by praying and sharing God's Word we get to be involved in work that has long-term, eternal significance. We don't have to be hostages to the urgent, jumping whenever it shouts. We can step back and listen for the gentle whisper of the Lord and take note of what really matters as we serve the eternal God.

building the base

On your own road

BY PASTOR TOM TUURA

I've heard people say, "Christianity isn't for me," or something like, "I can't be a Christian. I tried it and it didn't work."

There's a song on the radio that reminisces about an old red dirt road, a girlfriend, a first car, and a meeting with Jesus. The song talks about going out into the world and the value and hope of coming back; hence both ends of that old dirt road.

In my life there was a pretty significant dirt road. It's where I found Jesus. Actually, it was in church on Sunday morning.

Do you have memories of meeting Jesus on the dirt road of childhood somewhere? Maybe that was a long, long time ago with many miles, many people, and too many transgressions along the way. Or maybe you've had an experience, prayed a prayer of invitation, or wept at an altar. But you woke up the next morning fearing it didn't work. That longing for home doesn't go away. And some of us are like the car in the song, tore all to pieces.

I don't know about all your fancy excuses and rationalizations, but I know that

like the song, you and I can come back to the Jesus of our youth.

Here are three examples of people who had problems on the dirt roads of their lives.

The first was none other than King David. Many are familiar with the story of his adulterous affair with Bathsheba. But few are aware of the sultry details—a religious man committing adultery and then murdering the husband to cover it up. Well it wasn't covered up; God made sure of that. But even though David paid dearly in this life for the consequences of his sin, he was forgiven by God and saved in the end.

Have you denied your Lord? Remember Peter did three times on the night Jesus was crucified, and he, too, was restored.

Then there was the famous story of the prodigal son told by Jesus Himself in Luke 15. This young man in his pride insulted his father and family by demanding his share of the inheritance. He left with the money and squandered it in wild living. Penniless, he returned expecting to be a servant. He

didn't know that his father was watching for him to return and ran to meet him.

The only human requirement in all three of these situations was sorrow and contrition over sin. It is hardly surprising that these three men underwent unbearable guilt and shame for their actions. But there's something else they have in common: It was heaven's desire to bring these sinful men back. God convincingly made David aware that he couldn't hide his sin and needed to repent. Jesus speaks of the father that waited and ran to his prodigal son when he returned home. And Jesus Himself sought out Peter, the rock of the church, to personally restore him to faith.

Come on home to that dirt road, the Savior is waiting. That's what I know, a poor part-time country preacher.

Tuura, pastor at Living Word Lutheran, Windom, Minn., writes a blog at www.part-timecountrypreacher.blogspot.com.