

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

January 4, 2000

February 22,



Life on campus



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February 22, 2000
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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

Light to the path

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105).

What my pastor said in his sermon on my Confirmation Day, lo, those many years ago, I do not remember. But this verse and verses 9-16 of that same psalm were his text and we can imagine some of what he said. In his last appeal to us as a class, he pointed to the Word of God as the guide we would need to walk successfully through life.

The Lord has given us means by which to receive strength for daily living. The chief ones are prayer and the Word. It is strange how often we minimize the importance of the constant contact we need with the power source. We are very protective of the quality and quantity of our daily meals and coffee breaks for physical well-being but can be nonchalant, even lazy, about our intake of God's Word. That isn't the way it should be. We all agree on that. So it is a matter of discipline, and putting first things first.

We are familiar with the people at Berea, who were visited by Paul and Silas. Not Christian believers at first, they searched the Old Testament when they heard the men preach of a Jesus Christ. Convinced that what was presented was in accordance with the Bible they had, many became believers. They are given the description of being "more noble" because of their wanting to check what they heard with the Scriptures they possessed.

If we love and follow Jesus, we are to be open always to the prompting of the Holy Spirit through the Word. That is the way

He can get to us. The scene afar off isn't usually revealed, but light for the day is.

I am reminded of the many times I walked about a block on late fall and winter evenings to milk our cow in the small barn Grandpa had built on the edge of town. Illuminating the way for me was the kerosene lantern I carried. In the barn, hanging on a nail by the door, the light in the lantern cast a warm glow, even on the coldest of days. Much more so than an incandescent light would have.

But it was in the walking that the lantern showed the way, a step at a time. The lantern was a light to my path. So is the Bible to our way, as we permit it to be so.

The child with his first very own Bible, the girl at Bible school who will later go on to college, the man studying theology in preparation for the ministry, mother and father leading the family in devotions, the older man or woman re-reading passages which have been anchors throughout life; for all of these and more, the Word of God is the lamp to the feet and light to the path.



— **Pastor Raynard Huglen**
Newfolden, Minnesota

1

Postmodern culture, disillusioned with both traditionalism and modernism, values tolerance and diversity.

So it may be a disservice to ask our youth to be conservative rather than revolutionary. We must let the world see that God has the power to shake us out of selfishness, pettiness, prejudice, and fear as evidence of healthy spirituality. ... We must be willing to help people learn to ask the right questions rather than glibly parroting the right answers.

— *Brian McLaren*

Sound Bites



2

Cultivating the mind was absolutely essential, Luther held, because people needed to understand both the word of Scripture and the nature of the world in which the word would take root. Furthermore, insistence on the priesthood of believers demanded more education, not less. It demanded that education be brought to the most ordinary levels and to the most ordinary people.

— *Mark Noll*

It will be in vain for me to stock my library, or organize societies, or project schemes, if I neglect the

4

culture of myself; for books, and agencies, and systems, are only remotely the instruments of my holy calling; my own spirit, soul, and body, are my nearest

machinery for sacred service; my spiritual faculties, and my inner life, are my battle axe and weapons of war.

— *Charles H. Spurgeon*

3

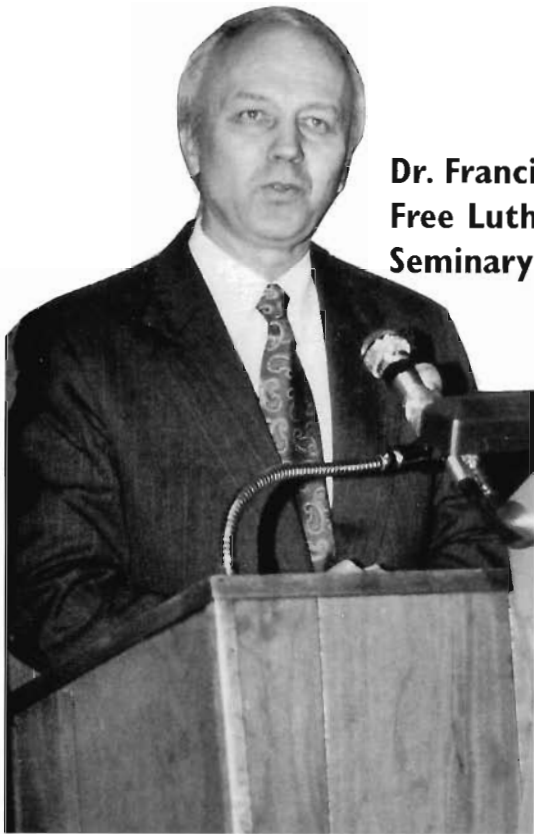
The primary reason for a book is to put a writer into relation with readers so that we can listen to his or her stories and find ourselves in them, to listen to his or her songs and sing along with them, listen to his or her arguments and argue with them, listen to his or her answers and question them. The Scriptures are almost entirely this kind of book. If we read them impersonally with an information-gathering mind, we misread them.

— *Eugene Peterson*

5

A Christian becomes grounded in faith, unconquerably, invincibly established in this faith only thorough experiencing the truth and the divine authority of the Bible-book in his heart.

— *C.F.W. Walther*



Dr. Francis Monseth
Free Lutheran
Seminary

Meet the

We asked Dr. Francis Monseth, Dean of the Free Lutheran Seminary, and Pastor James L. Johnson, Dean of the Association Free Lutheran Bible School, to share their answers to the following questions:

What was your first contact with the Bible school?

J.J. — When I was 14 or 15, I attended an AFLC Bible camp on the West Coast. Pastor John Strand, the former AFLC president, was the preacher. I remember him preaching on Matthew 19:27-30, where Jesus said, “Anyone who has left houses or brothers or sister... or children or farms for My name’s sake shall receive many times as much.” That week was a turning point in my life. I was a new disciple, and I met AFLBS students there. They had a fire. They had a love for people. They were free to talk to you. They knew the Bible. I remember thinking, “I don’t know much about the Bible school, but I want to go there.”

What was your experience as a Bible school student?

J.J. — I loved it. I came to AFLBS in the fall of 1980, thinking I knew a lot about the Bible. After two years, I knew that I was just starting to learn. Teachers took us through the Bible and I learned about prayer and how to have a quiet time. I memorized Scripture. The teachers were excellent because they were faithful Christians. It really prepared me for college.

How did Bible school prepare you for college?

J.J. — I wasn’t on defense; I was on offense for the Lord. At a large public university, I found many opportunities to witness. Bible school equipped me. Besides, I learned how to study and was better prepared to be a student.

What is the most enjoyable aspect about being on the schools’ faculty?

F.M. — To know that as the Word of God equips and strengthens our students to

be effective and faithful spiritual leaders, they will be used to win others for Christ as well as to nurture and equip them for ministry.

What is the biggest challenge you face as dean?

F.M. — There are many challenges, but perhaps the greatest is to balance administrative duties with preparation for the classroom.

J.J. — I love working at the Bible school. College-age students are fresh and vibrant. They are not perfect; neither am I. Only Jesus is perfect. But to get to work with young adults who have their whole lives in front of them — some to be youth workers, some missionaries, some Christian leaders, some moms and dads, some weak, some strong, and some highly adventurous Christians — well, it’s a great calling. Some don’t know what they are going to do yet and that’s okay. “Man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps” (Proverbs 16:9). Linda and I live in the parsonage on campus and we get to raise our six kids here. They watch and study and love the Bible school students.

deans

The hard part is watching them leave. In parish ministry, we built long-term relationships with people young and old. At the Bible school we send them away every two years. You see these young believers grow up in the Lord, you build friendships, and then you say goodbye. I don't like that part. However, when they leave, they will go on to be Christian parents and youth directors, evangelists, witnesses and missionaries around the world. They'll be computer techs and farmers, starting new Bible studies and raising families. So many are beautiful growing Christians, and it's an honor that we can have them for two years. They are the Lord's, really. They do not belong to us.

How did God call you to this position?

F.M. — I accepted a call to be an instructor at AFLC Schools in 1971. I served for ten years in that capacity, working closely with our beloved dean emeritus, Rev. Amos Dyrud. His godly example and wise counsel were a great blessing and of tremendous help to me. Upon his retirement from full-time ministry, I was nominated by the Board of Trustees and elected by the 1981 Annual Conference to be the dean.

J.J. — I had always hoped that God would permit me to serve in rural congregations for a long time because I cared about small-town churches and felt that long-term pastorates were helpful. I began serving in Fosston, Minnesota, in 1992 and we were happy there. My "heroes" were people like Samuel Miller and A.W. Knock, former leaders and teachers at the old Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis. My siblings had studied under Maynard Force, the president and first teacher of a Bible school in Los Angeles. I heard him teach the Old Testament a couple of times, and I thought he was amazing.

When I was asked to meet with the Board of Trustees to interview for the position of dean, I thought I was too inexperienced — only 34 years old and only four years as a pastor. But God began to speak to me

Pastor James L. Johnson Association Free Lutheran Bible School

using verses such as Psalm 32:8-9, "Do not be as the horse or as the mule ... which need a bit and bridle to prod them. ... I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go."

About a week after the interview, I preached at a nursing home on the Second Coming of Christ from Matthew 24. After the message, I shook some hands and began to leave, as I had another service in five minutes.

As I walked out the cafeteria door, I caught a glimpse of an elderly lady. She was waving me back weakly. I kept going out the door, then stopped, turned and came back. I did not know her, but stepped across the room to greet her. She spoke so softly I could hardly hear.

"What seminary did you go to?" the old woman asked.

"The Free Lutheran Seminary in Minneapolis," I said.

"Did they teach you to preach about the Second Coming like that?"

"Yes, they did."

With the deliberate voice of a prophet, the old woman said, "May the Lord raise you up to be a Samuel Miller, a H.G. Randolph and an A.W. Knock, that you would preach the Second Coming of Jesus like that."

I could never claim to measure up to great men of God like those Bible teachers. H.G. Randolph, I learned, was a former teacher at LBI, too. I chatted briefly with her and walked back out the door with a strong sense of what God was telling me.

"Don't be a horse. Don't be a mule. Follow My leading. If God wants to raise you up to be a Bible school dean, then let it happen. Even an inexperienced pastor can be used of the Lord — if God is raising you up."

When the 1996 Annual Conference
(continued on next page)



MEET THE DEANS

elected me as AFLBS dean, I still felt inadequate. But something happened when I moved my boxes and books to Minneapolis a month later. The moment I stepped into the oversized dean's office, I relaxed. I sensed an unmistakable peace — "you're supposed to be here." And that same peace, give or take a few bad days, has remained every time I have walked into the room.

What is your favorite thing to do when not on the job?

F.M. — I would have to say "favorite things." Ellen and I enjoy planting and caring for a large vegetable and flower garden each year. We love bicycling on the many converted railroad beds in eastern Minnesota. We enjoy camping beside a lake or in the mountains of Montana or Colorado. We love reading together at night before going to bed. Times together with our children and

grandchildren are treasured. Most live within a half-hour of our home. We enjoy the good fellowship with wonderful friends in our congregation at Medicine Lake.

J.J. — Besides playing sports, hunting deer, and pitching batting practice to our children in the backyard, Linda and I love to read. On a date we'll go to Barnes and Noble and look at books. I love reading about history, the Civil War, lately especially Gettysburg. I love studying character and leadership traits about Lincoln, Thomas Jackson, Longstreet and General Lee. I love to study Moses and the kings of Israel for the same reason.

As for the kids and Linda, they love to travel. So every May we spend three days on the North Shore of Lake Superior. Every August we spend a few days in Ontario near Lake of the Woods.

I also love reading about evangelism and church planting. I love Billy Graham's autobiography, "Just As I Am." I love studying

Carla Mattson, dorm assistant and cook with AFLBS junior Sue Hohler, Shevlin, Minnesota.



Kelly Nelson, AFLBS 1997, is the Bible school office manager. Ellen Erdman, is the registrar. She joined the AFLBS staff in 1997.



Campus chapel and seminary building.



Seminary Brent Logeman, Metropolis, Illinois.

the Book of Revelation. But most of all, I love to listen to, study, ponder and meditate on great preaching. Maybe it's not a hobby, preaching is a passion, but I study it all the time — on or off the job.

How would you ask our readers to pray for the seminary and Bible school?

F.M. — Continue to pray for more men for the ministry. There is a great need for more godly, Bible-believing pastors, missionaries and evangelists in our AFLC as well as throughout the world. I would also ask continued prayer for all of us on the faculty and staff that we might be unswerving in our devotion to Jesus Christ and His Word and faithful in communicating that inerrant Word in proper distinction of the Law and the Gospel. Finally, pray for our present stu-

dents and their families that they would have the necessary discipline, strength and resources to successfully complete their studies while keeping the priorities and ministry to their families as husbands and fathers.

J.J. — Pray for refreshing waves of revival, and a hunger for the Word. I wish people could see our students worship. Pray for students who struggle, too, that they can hang on when it's hard. The schedule is rigorous — far more difficult than college for me. Students spend 20 hours a week in class and chapel, from 8 a.m. to noon, and usually more than 20 hours a week at part-time jobs. They wear down. I worry about that.

Pray that the Lord would send more young believers to our school and that we would have room to host them. Thanks to all the prayer warriors who care about our school and ministry!



Campus planner

March 9-11 — NBCAA basketball national tournament

April 1-16 — Choir tours

April 28-30 — Spring campus days

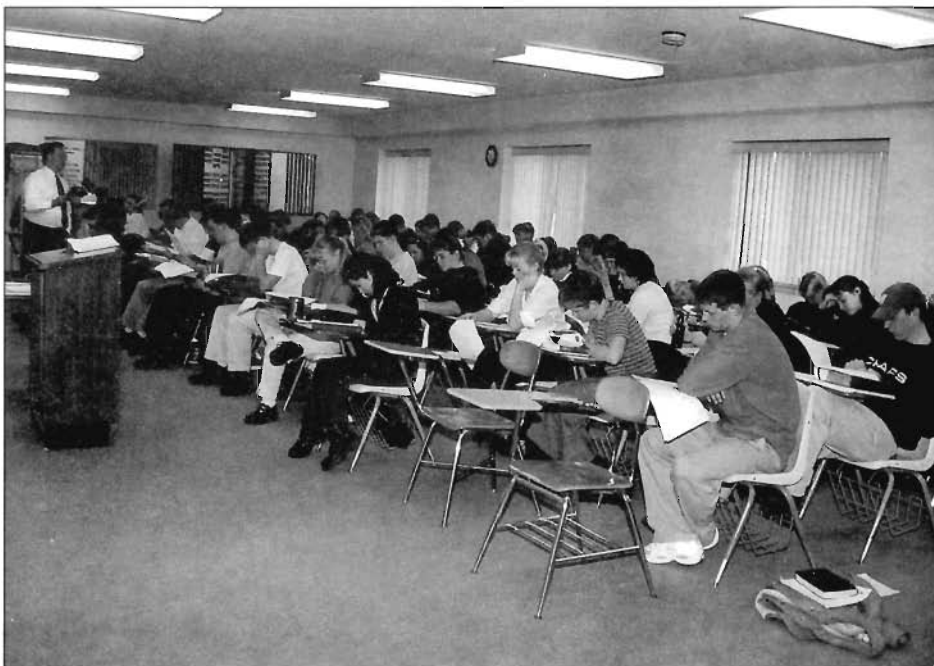
May 19 — Spring concert

May 20 — Graduation, 1:00 p.m.

May 25-June 2 — Summer ministry team training



AFLBS Choir director, Jerry Nelson. Preliminary plans are for the Bible school choir to travel to Eastern Europe in the Spring of 2001. Countries included will be the Baltic nations, Finland and Russia. The distance traveled in Europe will be equivalent to a tour in the States.



AFLBS Dean James L. Johnson taught a missions class during the January term. Pictured is the classroom in the men's dorm. The missions emphasis in January was highlighted by the Missions Week of January 9-12. Pastor Mark Olson, Arlington, South Dakota was one of the small group leaders who left "excited to see the wonderful commitment to the Great Commission taking root in the hearts of Bible school students. There was an earnestness among the students in asking, 'How does the Lord want me to be involved?' That was refreshing to me."

Learning to unlock the truths of scripture

That seminary class called hermeneutics

We often hear the use of jargon or sayings that are confusing to understand and sometimes sound like a foreign language. Many times people having the same job develop a lingo that is common to them, but strange to the person outside that field of expertise. Examples of such groups are scientists, farmers, lawyers, doctors and even ministers. Having developed a friendship with a fellow seminarian who used to raise hogs has taught me some farming dialect. One group's jargon most challenging for an outsider to understand is that of medical doctors. They are experts at using long impressive sounding words to mean something that is probably quite basic. Here at seminary we too use fancy words.

The Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible), exegesis (pulling meaning out of the Bible), and hexaemeron (the whole universe was created in six days) are some large words with common meanings.

Hermeneutics is another one. It is a class taught in seminary and, simply defined, it means the science or art of interpreting the Bible. The word hermeneutics is easy to understand, yet it is a hard discipline to master. First Corinthians 2:14 clearly says that anyone who has the Holy Spirit can understand spiritual things. However, one who reads the Bible and isn't trained in hermeneutics can make certain errors in interpreting Scripture.



—Richard Carr
junior seminarian at FLS
Bethel Park, Pennsylvania

We know that for the most part, the Bible has a literal meaning. When God told Abram to leave his country and family, God meant for Abram to leave (Genesis 12:1). That is obvious, so what is the value of hermeneutics?

Hermeneutic study is especially useful when the Bible uses figures of speech to make a

point, or when a point cannot be taken literally. We are familiar with terms like similes (comparison

by resemblance) and personification (an inanimate object is assigned personality or given a human trait). These are two different figures of speech found in the Bible.

We know that in Exodus 24:17, Moses did not say that God is a devouring fire, but that God in a sense, is like a devouring fire. In Numbers 16:32 the earth is written to have opened up its mouth and swallowed a bunch of men. Does this mean that the earth grew a mouth, throat, and stomach to be able to swallow those men? Of course not! By now one may conclude that hermeneutics is all common sense, but there are many other more complicated things to consider.

If you are a parent or desire to have children, you have very possibly read or heard of Proverbs 22:6. It reads, "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it" (NKJV). Some read this and think that since the Bible says this, it is true that if the proper training is applied to children, then those children will in turn always follow God. For those who have done their best and still have children who don't follow the Lord, do not be too hard on yourself. We know that since this is a proverb, it is a general truth that is often found to be true. If parents pray diligently, and do their best in training their children, often those children will follow God, but not always.

Other Scriptures one can look to in Proverbs may help illustrate this point: Proverbs 1:33, 10:3-4, 13:21, and 17:2. If the Proverbs were all absolute, then all poor people would have not honored God with their possessions (3:9-10). Did not Job lose all his possessions?

In summary, hermeneutics is much more than understanding simple figures of speech and general truths found in Proverbs, but an art of knowing what it is that God is conveying to us. We must hold the whole Bible as a treasure chest waiting to be opened. Our opening the Word of God will enrich us beyond what mere gold or diamonds can, but with an everlasting treasure that no thief can steal, or moth destroy. May God bless you in your discovery of His flawless Word!



What makes a good internship?

You may be thinking the title of this article is a good question to ask, but does the answer have anything to do with me? Yes! Every believer has a key role in the success of a seminarian's internship. Even Christians in congregations within a district can have a role in making an internship a fruitful time of training and ministry. Let's look closer at what makes an internship good.

A good congregation

The congregation is vital in the health of an internship. The local body of Christ has a responsibility to support and assist the seminarian. The congregation's focus on Jesus, His Word and living for Him can have a great impact on the intern. The role that the congregation has been given by the Lord to pray, to encourage and to minister does not change with an intern. A kind word of thanks and an inclusion on a prayer list goes a long way.

During my internship, the congregation made it a point to pray for us and to support us. My family and I were truly blessed by their actions of Christian love and concern.

How does a believer in a neighboring congregation have a responsibility to make a seminarian's internship worthwhile? I had many opportunities to take part in district-wide events such as Lenten services, outreach events, and Bible camps. Every ministry event was a chance to see the Lord at work in other believers. Even a humorous title from an area pastor, "intern-boy," demonstrated interest and concern in me and what the Lord was doing through my internship.

A good pastor

Equally as important as the congregation is the pastor. The pastor opens his life and his ministry to the intern. Qualities that make a good pastor also make a good supervising pastor for internship. The pastor has the challenge of ministering to the congregation he has been called to shepherd and discipling the pastor-in-training he has been asked to work with. It demands humility. It demands leadership. It demands a servant pastor, which is exactly what the intern needs to see.

My supervising pastor made the time to work with me. He made it a priority to bring a balance of observation and involvement to my internship. The result was an internship



Pictured is seminarian Steven Carlson. He is one of four men scheduled to begin a year of internship June 1. The other three men are Jon Bylkas, Todd Erickson, and Peter Ward.

where, by its completion, I was able to check off every area of ministry recommended by the seminary for internship.

A good intern

Something is certainly left up to the intern! It is conceivable to have a good congregation and a good supervising pastor and for someone to still have a poor internship. It also doesn't take long to figure out why that would be the case. The intern has an unique responsibility. He is asked to serve and to listen. He is to serve and listen to the Lord first of all, but he is also to serve and listen to the congregation and her pastor. The intern is not the pastor. This requires an intern to demonstrate spiritual maturity (Galatians 5:22-24) in all his relationships. This situation gives him a chance to learn how to minister with a view to what is best for the congregation and her pastor.

What it really asks of him is to grow as a servant-leader. That's why a good internship can be so helpful! It trains a pastor-to-be in being a pastor through his desire to serve the Lord Jesus and His congregation, and to humbly fulfill his role as intern.

A great Savior

It is because of Jesus that I had a great internship. I recognize that it was from His gracious hand and I praise the Lord for His training. I am grateful to Helmar Lutheran Church, Newark, Illinois, and Pastor Jeff Swanson for being a good congregation and a good pastor to me and my family during my internship. I praise Jesus for saving us and for showing us how to love Him and love others. "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (I John 3:16).



—Pastor Jason Holt,
Associate Pastor of Youth &
Family Ministries
Calvary Free Lutheran
Fergus Falls, Minnesota

Life in the dorm

—Kristen Antal
AFLBS senior
Park River,
North Dakota



Life in the dorm. When most students are asked what their favorite part about attending AFLBS is, they answer, "It's the dorm life." I am convinced that no other educational institution could provide the wonderful dorm experience we enjoy at AFLBS. I hear alumni say what they miss most is the dorm life after they leave. Roommates as well as the whole campus become a closely knit unit in the Lord.

Why is the dorm life so special? True Christian fellowship is exhibited here. As we gradually draw closer to each other, a really neat thing happens. We become like family and develop a genuine concern for each other. If one of us is sick, another one is there to help. If someone is short on funds, another one is there to offer assistance. In other words, living in a dorm is our opportunity to apply the concepts we learn in classes. It is terrific to study the qualities of a true servant of God in a Monday morning class, but if we are not living it, what good does it do? In the dorm we have accountability partners, sometimes more than we would like. The fact that someone is always watching is a challenge to live a real life before the Lord. There are times we struggle. As humans, we sin and our flesh wins over what we know is right. Thankfully, we have sisters and brothers to point out our weaknesses and encourage us back onto the right path.

Dorm life develops important character qualities in students.

Discipline is crucial. It is hard to go to bed early

instead of staying up and talking until all hours of the night. However, after experiencing a few late nights, one understands the need for discipline. An offer to go is enticing but the need is to study.

Sensitivity to others develops in the dorm. When one lives among 70 girls or 70 guys, it's important to learn to be considerate of the needs of others.

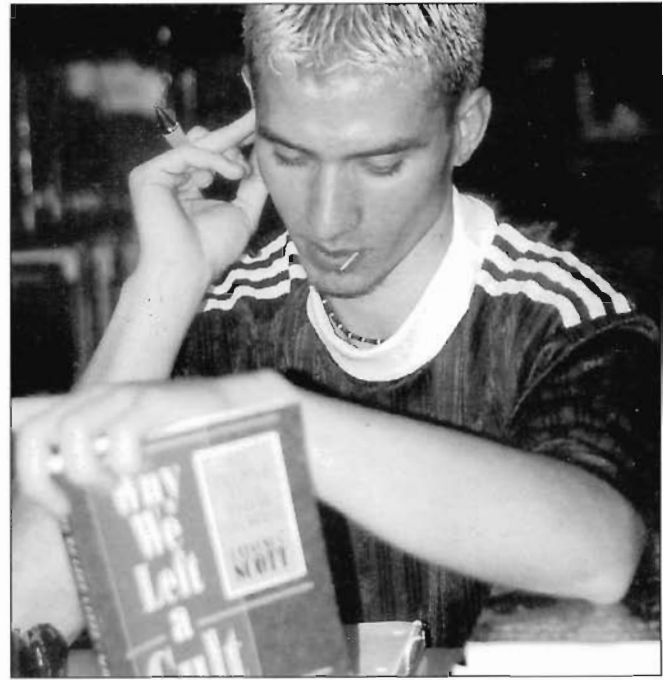
Prayer life takes on a new meaning. There is always an opportunity to pray with someone or search the Scriptures together. These are times to offer encouragement to those who are struggling and to be strengthened when life brings a storm your way.

Dorm life develops **tolerance**: seventy ways to clean, to dress, to live. Personalities clash at times. However, we learn to understand what God's love is all about as we look beyond an annoying habit to see a fellow bother or sister seeking to follow the Lord. God's love transforms

our hearts and gives us selfless attitudes. John 13:34 says, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

I would give anything to freeze time and stay here forever. Yet, God has placed me here today to accomplish His will. I thank God for the blessings He has given, the lessons taught, and those who have helped me learn along the way.





Look inside AFLBS where the spirit is warm!





Enjoying God's Plans

**testimony
of a student
at AFLBS**

**The author (far right)
was an usher at the
1999 AFLC schools'
Christmas concert.**

**—Liz Komarnicki
AFLBS junior
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

After nineteen years of running from my heavenly Father, I finally crumbled. I had just returned home from a year abroad as an exchange student in Belgium, and was excited to begin my life. I was on my way up the ladder of society and was determined to reach the top rung. Driven and confident, I was accepted at a prominent business school in New York City.

God had better plans for me. When I inquired at the university housing office at the New York school, I learned that my name had mysteriously dropped from the files. I stayed home for the fall semester to readjust to American living while under the watchful eyes of my parents. I was not happy.

During that time, though, the Lord was at work in my heart and I realized my need of a Savior. I joined a Bible study. Last Valentine's Day I accepted the Lord as my personal Savior, and my eyes were truly opened. I found true love in Christ and became a new person.

One week later, my path crossed that of a recent AFLBS graduate who lived in Pittsburgh. I met Steve at a youth group activity. He invited me to come to his church, Ruth-fred Lutheran. I did and the pastor's sermon really spoke to me. The church seemed familiar and the people were easygoing and polite. I was comfortable with my company, and spent that entire afternoon with Steve and his friends.

Steve also told me about the Bible school. He described his growth in the Lord

and the wonderful fruits in his life as a result of studying the Bible. My spirit listened. My father had also attended a Bible school when he was nineteen, and his salvation experience was similar to mine. I felt an urge to follow in his footsteps. I knew with every part of my heart that I was being called to this small AFLC Bible school in Plymouth, Minnesota, halfway across America. Though tempted and tested and even told not to go, I knew I needed to come.

I have never spent so much time with fellow believers assembled to dig into God's Word. I have never spent so much time growing. I feel as if I'm plugged into the main vein of electricity. Tapping into God's power by studying the Bible for four hours each day is exhilarating, entertaining, educational and convicting. I am changing. I see sin in my life. Repenting from it and running into God's arms has been liberating. I am a new person. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come." I'm so happy inside I have a silly smile on my lips all day. I love Christ. I love what He is doing in my life. I feel so full of the Spirit I feel almost fat, and I know I need to share some of my joy. So I go out from the Bible school, bubble into the world and I smile. I died in Christ and now I'm a light. I want to let it shine.

Whether I go on to pursue a degree in business, start work as a guidance counselor in a high school, set up a small business in interior decorating, or travel to foreign countries to teach English or do mission work, I am willing and able. I am confident about my future because I know that I have the greatest Navigator in the universe.



Start studying
God's Word
when you
are young!



*Thy word have
I treasured
in my heart,
that I may
not sin
against Thee.*

— Psalm 119:11



The AFLC Board of Trustees meeting with Pastor Tonnes Pollestad.

Vision 2004 update

“**A**nd we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). The Vision 2004 office staff praises God for His control and timing of all things. The first seminary married housing unit is complete and fully occupied.

We now move forward with the next phase — the student center. We are in great need of your prayer and financial support in order for this to become a reality. We have seen “Commitment Sunday,” January 2, 2000, come and go and have seen a substantial increase of funds coming into Vision 2004. Pray that the momentum will continue since we still have a long way to go. We look at what God has already done and know He is the One in control. God continues to own the cattle on a thousand hills. He owns all that we have and He is the one that will stir hearts to give financially to Vision 2004. The five million dollar student center will alleviate crowded classrooms, offices, and library conditions, while allowing much needed housing space to be developed. Praise God for the growth and vision of our schools as we work together to meet current

and future needs.

Presentations of Vision 2004 are scheduled across the AFLC. If we have not been in your area, we would like to be there soon. Please call to make arrangements for a visit. We certainly enjoy meeting with our people. Common responses by those who receive the project are awe and excitement.

We need your prayers for Vision 2004, especially for God to lead individuals with the financial means to give large gifts to the project. Many times God sends us people who have a big heart for what He is doing among us. Sometimes these few help carry a large load. That is why we ask all of you to pray that those individuals will come forward soon. Please call if you are one of those individuals or may know of someone who may fit this prayer need.

Every gift of every size is important, and thank you to all those who have given faithfully, generously, and cheerfully to this exciting project for the advancement of our goals to train disciples to share the good news of Jesus Christ and abide in Him.

— **Pastor Tonnes Pollestad**
Director Vision 2004
612-412-2004

Mark and Carol Homp and their daughters Katie and Rachel will convince you in a second that it means a lot to live in the new seminary housing. It's a central place with a family feeling that they are able to come home to. The Homps moved to Minneapolis from Wisconsin for Mark's year of seminary to complete his colloquy requirements.

Having made friends with some of the students in the dorms, this

townhouse is a very important part of the campus for them. They appreciate the safe environment and convenient nearness to campus classes as well as neighborhood schools. And, what nice neighbors — "couldn't pick them nicer." As a father, Mark feels good about the family living here on campus. It made a huge difference, especially to Carol and the girls to be able to settle in. They stayed up all night that weekend they moved in to turn it into their home.



This housing provides not just "so many square feet," but there were good ideas in planning that will provide long-term benefits for many families, including a great job done with quality tile, wood and appliances. The Homps are grateful that when their son comes home from college, there is even room for him. While there's a lot of coming and going with jobs and school activities, this home provides valuable space for family life. Reduced financial stress is a blessing, too, since this is available for less than what comparable housing would be. How great that the seminary subsidizes the housing cost!

Mark encourages Vision 2004 to press on in its endeavor. "Growth is coming, for the AFLC's good theology is what most people are looking for. It is mushrooming, and we need more facilities. It's not hard to see the future unfolding — it's clear to see that it will pick up speed, so be ready for it."



We live in the new seminary housing

First-year seminarian Rich and Brenda Carr arrived in Minneapolis from Pennsylvania. It had been difficult to prearrange housing and nearly impossible to afford what was available. When the letter of approval came for on-campus housing they were greatly relieved.

Recently married, they save time and money with this affordable, convenient housing. No time on the road traveling to and from school means more time to devote to studying. Less money required to spend on housing also reduces the demand for an extra car and job pressures. Having maintenance provided is supportive of student life as well.

The Carrs reported, "These homes are not tiny, and are built beautifully, not like stories about housing at other seminaries. They are meant to be lived in and a couple could live here the rest of their lives. The view is unbelievable, and

we enjoy walks by the lake as well."

Brenda loves the kitchen, appliances, and window treatments. Knowing they didn't have to buy them was great for their situation. The huge washer and dryer in the cabinet-filled laundry room are convenient, along with the kitchen appliances.

The Carrs are grateful to the churches and individuals who have contributed money and time to make this housing a reality. They look forward to the realization of the plans for other buildings to provide additional and improved classrooms, study areas and housing. "As good as the schools are, being so small we can only equip a certain number of students. Enlarging the facilities will train more servants of the Lord. There are so few good schools and more people are wanting to be trained."





Vacation Bible school at Lar Parana church in Campo Mourão, Brazil.



A youth Valentine's banquet in Campo Grande, Brazil.



Pastor Tom Olson, Naknek, Alaska.



Missionaries Dan and Debbie Giles, Mexico.

Missions training institute scheduled to open fall semester

The Missions Training Institute planning committee continues to meet Wednesday afternoons to prepare for MTI's opening semester in the fall of 2000. They pray specifically for the "third-year program," aimed at Bible school graduates and middle-age Christians who sense God's call to consider a ministry calling. MTI students will study practical ministry skills on campus and spend four months on a ministry or missions internship.

Short-term ministry internships will take students to a location of their choosing. Internships are offered in pastoral ministry, mission work, church planting, youth ministry or home missions work under a gifted veteran, from February 1 to June 1. Locations under consideration are Brazil, Mexico, Alaska, Eastern Europe or several places in the States, according to MTI Planning Board Chairman James L. Johnson.

Costs for the program will be similar to those at AFLBS, approximately \$5,000 per year for room, board, books and tuition. Much of the cost will be covered by work-study and individual support from churches and friends. Classes will be from 8 a.m. to noon.

"We're praying for seven to twelve students to begin classes in September," said Pastor Johnson. The committee is also praying for a part-time director, hopefully a shepherd-leader with mission experience. The AFLC Board of Trustees has interviewed one candidate already. Other veteran missionaries have agreed to work with the program.

Applicants and those interested should call AFLBS for more information at 612-544-9501. Correspondence should be addressed to MTI Planning Committee, 3120 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441.





The Bible school and seminary campus in Campo Mourão.

Pastor Robert Lee, AFLC president is preparing to join the Brazilian AFLC annual conference scheduled for March 4-7, 2000 at the Bible school and seminary campus in Campo Mourão. He will also participate in the dedication services of three new churches: two near Curitiba — Sao Braz and Bateias, started by Missionary Paul Abel; and the church in Campo Grande, started by Missionary Jonathan Abel.

Pastor George and Helen Knapp, Willmar, Minnesota will also make the trip to the Brazil annual conference. Helen was invited to join in this 30th anniversary of the Brazil - WMF. The Knapps retired from missionary service in 1990, after 22 years with the AFLC in Brazil. The Knapp's daughters, Carol and Karen and her family also plan to make the trip.

Dr. Francis Monseth, FLS dean returned home the first weekend in February after four weeks of teaching in Latvia and Estonia.

WMF Donations

In Memory — January 2000

Clarence Quanbeck, McVill, ND
Irving Gisselquist, Minneapolis, MN
Ethel Kelly, Morris, IL
Marguerite Warriner, Morris, IL
Milan Hollen, Williston, ND
Lloyd Lee, Escanaba, MI
Chet Curry, Bradley, SD
Eudale Keller, Wallace, SD
Mildred Bakken, Tioga, ND
Christine MacMonagle, Tioga, ND
Lincoln Engelbert, Webster, SD



The campus chapel.

Pastor Eugene Enderlein, AFLC World Missions director returned on February 4 from visiting the mission work in India. Part of his time in India was spent with the Bible School team and Pastor Phil Haugen, who taught a two-

week long Bible seminar for the Indian pastors and workers. Pastor Enderlein also saw the AFLC-India purchase two lots adjacent to their existing property as they seek to expand their ministry.

The Women's Missionary Federation — They serve the church at home and around the world through the local congregation



Grafton, North Dakota — Pictured are the new officers at Bethel Free Lutheran's WMF and the outgoing officers at the installation service held last January. Interim Pastor Dennis Gray led the service. The WMF is an integral part of the congregation. They actively support: missionaries through prayer and financial gifts; the community through volunteering time at the "Second Time Around" and the Lutheran Sunset Home; serve meals at special events; prepare and send boxes of supplies and clothes throughout the world and are always ready to take on special projects within the church.



— **Lori Keller**
Calvary Lutheran
Wallace, South Dakota

When children leave home

Being a mom is one of the most wonderful things in my life. Most of my life has been spent raising our two daughters, Stacy and Sarah. Jim, my husband, and I

"Jesus is faithful; His promises are precious. Were it not for these considerations, I should, with my present prospects, sink down in despair,..."

— *Nancy Hasseltine in considering the dangers and uncertainties in her future. Two weeks after her marriage to Adoniram Judson, they left Massachusetts on February 18, 1812 — along with another couple to become the first foreign missionaries to leave the shores of America.*



Kathie Klenner, author of this year's **Women's Missionary Federation Bible Study**, was honored by her local WMF, **Salem Lutheran at Freeman, South Dakota**. After their first meeting of the new year, they surprised their pastor's wife with flowers. **Maxine Christensen**, Salem's WMF secretary writes, "We hope you join us this year at your meetings for good discussion and searching into God's Word as we learn and grow together."

accepted their schedules and interests as ours. How good it was to share those things as a family! The idea of the girls leaving and not sharing in the day-to-day activities was unimaginable.

Then it happened. Stacy set off for college six years ago. What an adjustment! Sometimes I would go into her room and sit for a while, then give her a call just to talk.

Last fall Sarah left home to attend the Association Free Lutheran Bible School. It is hard to describe the stillness and "too quiet" feeling of them both being away. I sometimes go into her room and smile, just thinking about her.

Looking back I can see how God prepared me for the time when my children would be out on their own. As they developed their own interests and spent more time away from home, not only did they change, but we, as parents, did too. We watched them become more independent and determined to make their own decisions. God knows the path our lives will take and prepares us, as well as our children, along the way.

Jim has been a special blessing. We have the opportunity to talk

more now about everything. It has brought us closer and made our marriage even stronger. But what now?

Jeremiah 29:11-14 states: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.'" This verse seems very appropriate to me now. God doesn't say He has plans only at the major crossroads of our lives, but He has plans for me, for my whole life.

I know that it is only by God's grace that Jim and I have two beautiful daughters who love the Lord and are committed to Him. Our relationship with them doesn't change because of location; the phone bills get higher and e-mail is well used, but our love is the same. God has been faithful in everything and I know I can trust Him for whatever the future holds. Entrusting our children to His care brings us peace and joy that only He can give.

God's blessings continue. Last summer Stacy married Steve, a wonderful Christian man. Jim and I are looking to God for the answer to the "what now" question. Things have changed since they have moved out, but God hasn't. He is faithful.



BOOK REVIEW

"Seasons of My Heart" by **Barbara Peretti**, (J. Countryman, a division of Thomas Nelson, Inc. 1998). We have all done it. Pulled out old journals, reopened old letters and paged through photo albums. We've traveled to where we have been, thought of what we have done and will become, and wondered what it all means.

"Only God knows all the answers," states Frank Peretti, in the book's foreword, "but He's

shown us a few: the lessons, the insights, the experiences, and the things that really matter." These are shared throughout the pages of "Seasons of My Heart."

I found myself relating to their life experiences. I gleaned from Barbara's insights. I was encouraged in my walk with the Lord as I read what the Lord had done for them as they waited patiently for His leading.

— **Faith Nelson**
WMF National President
Kandiyo, Minnesota

2000 Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
38th Annual Conference Registration Form
The Association Retreat Center
Osceola, WI

Hosted by: Amery Free Lutheran Church
 647 113th St, Amery, WI 54001
 715-268-9218
 email: ameryflc@win.bright.net
 Pastor David Johnson

June 14-18th, 2000

The Message of the Cross.... For a New Millennium
 1 Corinthians 1:18

Name _____
 Spouse _____
 Children (names and ages) _____

 Address _____

 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ Congregation _____

<input type="checkbox"/>	✓ all that apply
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lay Member
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lay Visitor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pastor (Member)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pastor Visitor
<input type="checkbox"/>	WMF Day Only

Registration Information: (delay in registration may hinder material or meal availability)

	Before June 1 st	After June 1 st	Total
Conference registration for singles	Pre-registration \$20.00	Registration \$25.00	\$ _____
Conference registration for couples	Pre-registration \$30.00	Registration \$40.00	\$ _____
WMF Registration (Wednesday Only)	Pre-registration \$ 3.00	Registration \$ 5.00	\$ _____
Vacation Bible School Registration (number of children K-6) _____	No Registration (Free-will offering)		

Conference Meals:

All meals provided by the ARC staff will be figured at a flat rate of \$5.00 per individual and \$15.00 per family. In the worksheet below, place the cost for individual meals(\$5 for one, \$10 for 2, etc.) or the \$15 family amount if the number of diners is 3 or more. Place the meal total at the bottom right.

Wednesday	Cost per Meal	Thursday	Cost per Meal	Friday	Cost per Meal	Saturday	Cost per Meal	Sunday	Cost per Meal
No Meal	*****	Breakfast		Breakfast		Breakfast		Breakfast	
Lunch		Lunch		Lunch		Lunch		No Meal	*****
Supper		Supper		Supper		Supper		No Meal	*****
Daily Total		Daily Total		Daily Total		Daily Total		Daily Total	
								Meal Total	

Conference Events:

Event	Meeting Time	# Attending		Per Person	Total
WMF Luncheon	Wednesday Noon		X	\$5.00	
WMF Banquet	Wednesday Evening		X	\$5.00	
Schools Corp.	Thursday Noon		X	\$5.00	
ARC Corp.	Friday Noon		X	\$5.00	
Missions Corp.	Friday, 7:00am		X	\$5.00	
Pastor's Banquet	Thursday Evening		X	\$13.00	
				Total Cost	

Special Services Required (Wheelchair, etc): Yes _____ No _____ Total Conference Cost \$ _____
 I will be arriving by airplane and request transport Yes _____ No _____ Payment must accompany registration
 Childcare provided at all sessions and services (free-will offering) Checks payable to Amery Free Lutheran
Please mail completed registration forms, with total payment, to host congregation, Attn: 2000 Annual Conference.

38th AFLC Annual Conference 2000

Lodging Accommodations

Area Motels (Osceola, Amery, New Richmond, and Dresser)

All rooms listed below have been blocked for AFLC use, but must be reserved by May 23rd (3 weeks prior to June 13th). All rooms listed are blocked from June 13th – June 17th.

Some motels may increase room rates for weekend nights, Friday and Saturday.

Motel	Rooms Available	Costs
Association Retreat Center Osceola, WI 800-294-2877	120 rooms (various capacities and luxury levels available)	\$25 – 45 per room per night \$5.00 Linen fee per set \$5.00 Portable Air Conditioner per day (limited Availability)
Forrest Inn 1045 River Place Drive Amery, Wisconsin 715-268-4100	15 Rooms Blocked	\$43 Single \$46 Double \$49 Two Beds
Maple's River Front Inn 814 N. Knowles Ave. New Richmond, WI 715-246-4606	15 Rooms Blocked	\$55.14 All Rooms \$71.83 Friday and Saturday
River Valley Inn & Suites 1030 N. Cascade Street, Hwy. 35 N. Osceola, WI 888-791-0022	15 Rooms Blocked	\$59 All Rooms \$74.70 Friday and Saturday
Super 8 Motel 1561 Dorset Lane, Hwy. 65 South New Richmond, WI 715-246-7829	15 Rooms Blocked	\$45 All Rooms \$8 Per extra person \$66.49 Friday and Saturday
Valley Motel 211 State Road 35 North Dresser, WI 800-545-6107	15 Rooms Blocked	\$49 Single \$59 Two Beds
Holiday Inn St. Croix Falls, WI 715-483-5775	Scheduled to open June of 2000	

Campgrounds and R.V. Parks

Association Retreat Center
Osceola, WI
800-294-2877

\$10 - \$15 Per unit per night (electric included)
\$10 Per tent per night (electric available)

Schillberg's Brookside Campground
1100 Oakridge Drive
Osceola, WI
715-755-2280

Interstate State Park
St. Croix Falls, WI
715-483-3742 (Campsite Reservations)

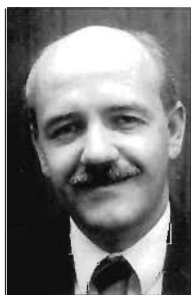
AFLC pastors and churches featured in the press

Oklahoma City pastor's house a lighthouse for prayer

"The Daily Oklahoman" of December 18, 1999 did a feature story on Pastor Jerry Peterson of First Lutheran titled, "Lights beacon to neighbors," along with a picture of him and his family. The theme of the story was Pastor Peterson's outdoor Christmas lights as well as his desire for his home "to be recognized as a lighthouse for prayer."

The article stated: "The idea comes from a nationwide prayer emphasis known as the Lighthouse Movement.

"Part of Mission America, Lighthouse encourages people to make a commitment to pray for the five neighbors on each side of their house and the 10 homes across the street. Guided by prayer, the participants seek ways to get acquainted with the neighbors. They also look for ways to help their neighbors and, when the opportunity arises, to share the Gospel message."



Walls have been built in our society, and according to Pastor Peterson, "This was an entry point." He added, "Good intentions do not happen until we really step back and say, 'To what degree have we really gotten to know the people around us?' It's really our walls that are broken down, when prayer is taking place."

Peterson said his family knows the joy of driving around to view Christmas lights. He thinks the family also will experience joy from praying for neighbors. "It's a gift that can benefit the ones who pray as well as the ones who are prayed for."

For more information on how you or your congregation can be involved in evangelistic efforts in your community, call the AFLC evangelism office at 612-545-5631.

Dexter, Minnesota, congregation featured in "Small churches of large faith"

It was a cold January night when "Austin Daily Herald" reporter, Lee Bonorden, set out to visit rural churches near his southern Minnesota community. Mower County is filled with country churches, many of whom are more than 100 years old and Lutheran. Reporter Bonorden chose to visit the Thursday night Bible study at the AFLC's Zion Lutheran in rural Dexter, served by Pastor Lyle Aadahl.

Zion Lutheran is 109 years old and lost her building from arson in its centennial year. It was not only rebuilt, but serves nearly three times the number of parishioners as it did at the time of the fire.

The reporter discovered the church's heartbeat when he asked members at the Bible study how they would describe Zion. He received comments such as:

"It's a country living church.

People are closer. ... They believe in the infallible Word of God at Zion and that's why we joined. ... What I liked about it when we came here — there's love. ... We laugh together. We cry together. If there are hardships, we treat all of them like we're



family. ... I see the faith of people in God's grace and God's working in their lives."

Pastor Aadahl put it this way: "It seems like this little church fills a

niche these days; for some people anyway. We strive to be true to the Bible. People are looking for absolutes in this world where they say there are no absolutes."

— taken from *Austin Daily Herald*, January 16, 2000

Prayer is all I had to go on

Pastor Alvin Sather, Greenbush, Minnesota made national news in January when he picked up three men walking along a highway about twenty miles from town. The men had slept in his church, Pinecreek Lutheran, to escape 25 below zero temperatures the night before.

Pastor Sather said, "I don't normally pick up hitchhikers, but it seemed like the Christian thing to do." He took them into Roseau and offered to buy them breakfast, but they refused and just wanted to get into a warm motel room. One of the men had told Pastor Sather they were lost after crossing the border and would have frozen to death if they had not found the church when they did.

After he dropped the men off at a motel, Pastor Sather happened to see a U.S. Border Patrol agent at a sandwich shop. He mentioned his

encounter and the agent was suspicious. According to the Associated Press wire service report, the three men were Turkish nationals who had entered the United States illegally. They surrendered to the agents at the motel.

When asked if he realized the potential danger he was in, Pastor



Sather said, "Prayer is all I had to go on. I couldn't leave them out in the cold." Pastor Sather is an AFLC lay pastor serving

Pinecreek, Concordia and Roselund congregations, an ELCA parish along the Minnesota-Canada border.



Fargo, North Dakota — Pictured are the new members who recently joined St. Paul's Lutheran. Pastor James Fugleberg serves the congregation (standing far right, back row).

Dexter, Minnesota — On January 23, Zion accepted eleven new members followed by a potluck dinner in their honor. February was highlighted by their third annual Valentine's dinner. Pastor Ken Thoreson of Argyle, Minnesota was the guest speaker.

Kirkland, Washington — The Pacific Northwest District Bible Conference will be held at Our Redeemer Lutheran, March 10 to 12 with the theme, "Life's Voyage on the Ship of Faith," based on Hebrews 11:1. The guest speaker for the weekend will be Dr. Francis Monseth, dean of the Free Lutheran Seminary.

AFLC pastors' retreat held in January

The 2000 AFLC Pastors' Retreat was held at the ARC in Osceola, Wisconsin, January 18 to 20. The pastors gathered around the theme, "Redeeming the Time" from Ephesians 5:16. Dr. Norvald Yri, a Norwegian Lutheran missionary to Tanzania, currently teaching at a Bible school in Norway, taught during the Bible study hours from the book of Romans. Discussion group times followed the Bible study hours. Workshops were also held during the retreat on areas such as: "Neither doormat nor dictator — the servant-leader," "Devoted without devotions? — the pastor's quiet

At the ARC in March

Men's Retreat — March 3 and 4. Speaker — Pastor Peter Franz, St. Paul's Lutheran, Cloquet, Minnesota. Workshops will include one on Christian finance. The cost will be \$35.

Couples' Retreat — March 24 to 26. Speakers — Pastor Elden and Faith Nelson, Maranatha Lutheran, Willmar, Minnesota. The cost will be \$90.

Register for the retreats by calling 1-800-294-2877.

time," "A heart for missions — encouraging a mission emphasis," as well as other topics.

The retreat also included some time for relaxing, catching up with old friends and making new ones, and doing some recreating in the ARC's new gym.

The close of the retreat was a service of Holy Communion.

Prior to the retreat was the AFLC Home Missions Pastors' Clinic on January 17 and 18. The theme was on being "Spiritually Healthy." Sessions focused on encouraging healthy pastors, healthy families and healthy congregations.

AFLC—Canada Annual Conference

April 7-9, 2000

**Solid Rock Free Lutheran
Camrose, Alberta**

Theme — "Take root below and bear fruit above."

Guest speakers: Dr. Francis Monseth, FLS dean and Pastor Mark Olson, member of the AFLC Board of Trustees.

For more information call the church office at 403-672-1848.

Grafton, North Dakota —

Bethel Lutheran is hosting a "Miracle Mile Workshop" on April 7 to 9. Pastor Wayne Hanson, the founder and director of Miracle Mile Ministry will be the teacher. Others from the AFLC offices will be present. The congregation is providing some housing and there are motels available. Most meals will be provided by the congregation. All members and friends of the AFLC are welcome. Please contact Pastor Dennis Gray at 701-352-0307.

Pastor Mark Olson, Arlington, South Dakota, has resigned as pastor of Calvary Free Lutheran where he has served since 1994, in order to accept the call from Zion Lutheran in Tioga, North Dakota. He and his family expect to begin their new ministry June 1, 2000.

Pictorial directories available — A limited amount of 1999 AFLC pastors' pictorial directories are available for \$5 postage paid. Contact the AFLC Office at 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441.

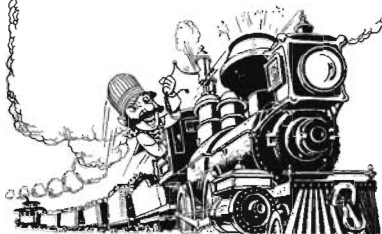
Illinois congregation joins AFLC

Lisbon, Illinois — Lisbon Bethlehem Lutheran Church was recently accepted into the fellowship of AFLC congregations. Their previous pastor left the small congregation last fall. They are now seeking to call a new pastor. Lisbon is near a number of other AFLC congregations and is part of the former farming community now mixed with commuters driving into the Chicago area for work.

YOU'RE ON THE RIGHT TRACK!

Get started!

We have vacation Bible school information and kits available. All AFLC churches should receive a letter with recommendations for this year's materials. Call the parish education office at 612-545-5631.



"Our property had increased greatly in value, and was returning very low income. We wanted to sell and avoid losing over one-fourth to taxes. AFLC Foundation showed us how to sell tax-free, benefit the Lord's work, receive large income payments for life and get added income tax savings."

If you would like further information, please contact Mark D. Johnson, CFP, AFLC Foundation at 800-950-2109.



Sylvia E. Franz, 80, of Dollar Bay, Michigan, went to be with the Lord on Saturday, January 15, 2000, at the Winkler Nursing Home in L'Anse where she had been a patient for less than two days.

She was born on January 11, 1920 in Dollar Bay, to Otto and Rose (Jackola) Lahikainen. She attended the Dollar Bay School and the Del Mar Beauty School in Detroit. On June 1, 1940, she married Herbert L. Franz. On January 28, 1948, Sylvia received Jesus Christ as her personal Lord and Savior, an experience which would change her life for time and eternity. Her sweet spirit, servant heart, and her love for people all gave evidence to God's gracious work in her life. She and her husband lived in Eben Junction, Michigan, and Cloquet, Minnesota where he served Calvary and St. Paul's Lutheran

Churches. Upon his retirement in 1986, they moved to Dollar Bay where he serves Grace Lutheran in Pelkie and Redeemer Lutheran in Ontonagon.

Sylvia is survived by her husband, Rev. Herbert Franz of Dollar Bay; three sons, Pastor Dean (Leslie) Franz of Dollar Bay; Rick (Debra) Franz of Glendale, Arizona; and Rev. Peter (Judy) Franz of Cloquet, Minnesota; eighteen grandchildren and one great grandson; two brothers and two sisters. Besides her parents, she was preceded in death by a daughter, Gail Sandra, four brothers and one sister.

Blessed be her memory.

Shakopee, Minnesota — Faith Lutheran is anticipating the start of their new educational wing this spring. The present church was built in 1988. The congregation is served by Pastor Del Palmer.

Anoka, Minnesota — Solid Rock Lutheran Church conducted their first worship service in their newly purchased building on January 16, 2000. After eleven years of meeting in schools and leased facilities in Brooklyn Park and Osseo, the congregation purchased a church building in Anoka, another northern suburb of Minneapolis. The address is 737 Bob Ehler Drive, Anoka, MN 55303; phone number 612-433-8610. Pastor Jim Johnson serves the congregation.



Solid Rock Lutheran in Anoka, Minnesota.

Preserving the heritage

The AFLC began a Bible school and seminary early on because of the belief that we have a unique heritage we want preserved and passed on to future generations. What is some of the uniqueness of that heritage?

A low-church emphasis

In 1962 a group of people who had chosen not to enter the newly formed American Lutheran Church met for what became the first conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. Presented at that conference was a short paper titled, "A Statement on the Historical Situation." It tells of the main objections that had been raised against the American Lutheran Church. One of the objections was concerning the high-church emphasis in the worship style of the new church. The question is asked, "Is there not something to be said for the low-church emphasis?" Continuing on the subject it states, "Many of us come from a low-church tradition and do not feel we are any less Lutheran for that reason. In our new fellowship we must not lay down any restrictions for others in regard to these matters, but we do hope to preserve and propagate the idea of and opportunity for simplicity in worship."

At that same conference another document called "A Declaration of Faith" was submitted. Regarding worship it states, "We make no recommendation as to the use of liturgy and vestments except that we encourage simplicity in worship. ... We believe the earliest Christians were extremely simple in their order of service. Whatever is added to the service carries the danger of becoming only form. ... The preaching of the Word of God must be the central part of the service."

We zealously guard the freedom of the local congregation in determining their order of service and practices they observe as they gather for worship. Our founders were concerned because of attempts in the American Lutheran Church "to recommend appropriate practices." They were also concerned because what was being recommended was high-churchly.

An emphasis on simplicity in worship with the preaching of the Word of God being central is more needed now than ever. We are surrounded by people who have grown up having no contact with the church. What is done and said in churches is often totally foreign to them. Our call, as witnesses for Christ, is to present to them the gospel and try, under the empowering of the Holy Spirit, to make it understandable. We must take care that the simple truth of

the gospel does not become lost in the midst of our practices, forms and rituals. Let us take stock of what we are doing and ask if it is helping or hindering a clear communication of the good news of Jesus.

"If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and he is a foreigner to me" (I Corinthians 14:11, 12, NIV).

Simplicity in worship, a low-church emphasis is part of our heritage that should not be discarded or forgotten. Instead, let us rejoice in it, encourage it, preserve it and practice it.

Pietism

The "Statement on the Historical Situation" presented to the 1962 conference also stated, "We object to the merger with the American Lutheran Church because it does not represent the pietism we believe is needed and is right for our day." It spoke of pietism as "an emphasis on personal Christianity, and in which emphasis the Christian does not use all his Christian liberty both because of his own weakness which may lead to occasions of the flesh, and because he must watch his example and not cause a weaker brother to fall."

In history some, under the label of pietism, have strayed into the error of legalism. They have spoken loudest regarding things on which the Bible is silent and have seemed to advocate a lifestyle which is little more than following a series of do's and don'ts.

This has led some to have a negative view of pietism.

I am glad to belong to a group with a pietistic heritage. Pietism in its true and proper form is a call to apply what we believe to how we live. It developed as a reaction to orthodoxy that cared only about right doctrine with little regard for right living. Both how we talk and how we walk matters.

Pietism is not an attempt to restrict freedom in Christ, but a call for wisdom and care in how we live out that freedom. "Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak. ... if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall" (I Corinthians 8:9, 13, NIV).

An association of congregations that advocated simplicity in worship and pietism was considered a needed thing by the founders of the AFLC in 1962. I believe it is even more needed today. We give thanks for schools that have taught and continue to teach that heritage.

— Pastor Craig Johnson

"The preaching of the Word of God must be the central part of the service."

SOMETHING TO SHARE

A lesson at the feeder: Be alert

My heart sank when I saw the small tuft of feathers. I knew instantly what had happened — the white cat.

At first there had been just a quick pass through the yard, nothing more. Nor was it every day. But soon, instead of going over the bank to the river's edge the cat stopped to sun on the hilltop. Innocent enough, but it did bring us a little concern. You see, our bird feeder is on that side of the house offering birds and abundant life with plenty to eat, fresh water nearby and a sanctuary from wind.

It wasn't long before the cat chose to lie under the evergreen right next to the bird feeder. The birds were not oblivious to the cat. In fact, its first appearance was like a Chinese gong. They stopped feeding and flew into the nearby trees. Gradually, some returned to the feeder and cautiously ate opposite from where the cat was lying. She would lie for the entire afternoon sunning and appear disinterested in the birds. And since the white cat was so obvious lying in the dark shadows of the evergreen, and the birds so cautious; we were confident everything would be just fine.

After several weeks, she began to lie directly below the feeder; always reclining, showing no apparent interest in the birds. Eventually, the birds' senses dulled and they

did not notice the cat no longer sitting in the sun. Now she was poised, ready to make her strike.

"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (I Peter 5:8).

To prowl is to randomly cover a great area searching in all directions to find something. We learn in Job that our adversary roams the earth and that he also walks in it. He will restrict his search to a smaller area to take a closer look as he seeks to devour Christians.

Be sober. Be alert.

We are always in a spiritual battle with Satan, so be self-controlled and vigilant. Our adversary works untiringly at ways to devour the Christian. He will "walk among us" to observe how best to destroy. We were aware of the danger of the cat. We knew what it could do. But we thought, "It certainly wouldn't try anything right here in our yard, at our feeder."

Satan uses various means to rob us of our abundant life in Christ. He observes our character and temperament to see how to effectively work on us. He always begins subtly. Slowly, with calculation, Satan works at desensitizing us, making us unaware of our loss of vigor for the Lord. Through any method or practice possible he will work to make us ineffective servants, and to rely on ourselves and not on God. We will not notice how we dropped our

guard or how we allowed our moral standard to lower, even crumble away. God says He is our strength and shield, our refuge. Ask, and He will give us wisdom to perceive the dangers and He will provide the power and stamina for battle. But we need to be walking with God, reading His Word, communing with Him in prayer. We must be obedient to the standards He has set for our safety and happiness.

The birds at the feeder were well aware of the cat from the first time it entered the yard. They scattered, sounded alarms and stayed away for long periods of time. Only a few cautiously returned at first. The cat was cunningly patient, taking three weeks to move gradually closer to the feeder, never making any attempt toward the birds until that day of her ultimate conquest.

If we fail to be alert and prepared, we will be Satan's conquest.

We cannot stop that cat from coming into our yard. But we have certainly discouraged it from staying!



— Mary Christenson
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