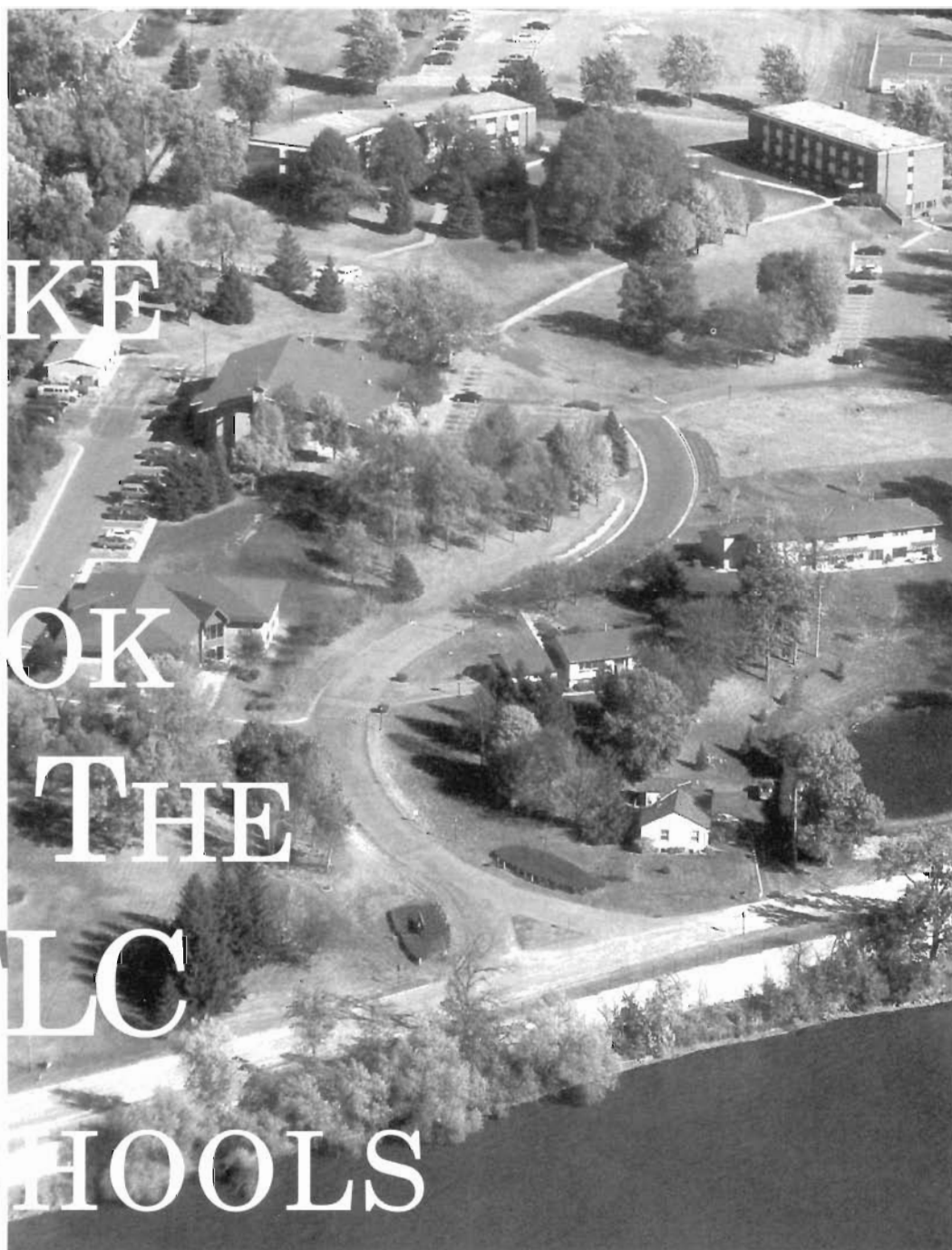


THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

February 27, 2001

TAKE A LOOK AT THE AFLC SCHOOLS



Staying in touch
with the laity.

p. 4

International students
bring a new dimension.

p. 4

Learning to
serve in
congregations. p. 6

Who comes
to AFLBS?

p. 8

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February 27, 2001
Volume 39, Number 3



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CONTENTS

Keeping in touch with the people in the pew	p. 4
Learning to serve in local congregations	p. 6
Bible school by extension	p. 10
Meet the FLTS seniors	p. 14

The Lutheran Ambassador

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

Soul mates

We have just passed another Valentine's Day, a time when Hallmark, the florist, and

Fanny Farmer have all clamored for our attention. They didn't want us to forget the one we love, so, at every corner, they reminded us to let the special person in our lives know how much we care for them by giving that special one a card or gift or both. The sparkle in their eye, when they opened the card or gift warmed our heart. It said, in yet another way, how much we appreciate them as our soul mate.

This issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* has as its emphasis our AFLC schools. It is common knowledge that many graduates have found their soul mates there. Is that the only reason they came to Bible school? Of course not! It may be one reason, but certainly not the only one. They also came to study and learn more about the ultimate soul mate!

The Scriptures tell us a great deal about that One. He is the One who defined the term. He set the example for us all, and set it high. He is described as the Shepherd or Guardian of our soul. As such, He always has our best interests close to His heart. Listen as the Apostle John describes for us just how and why He went about becoming our soul mate:

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."

A soul mate gives the very best he has for the one he loves. Recently

I became a grandpa for the first time. That little guy is pretty special to me. I would lay down my life for him because he is my grandson. When Jesus died, for whom did He die? According to Paul's letter to the Romans, Jesus died for ungodly, sinful men. Men who were trying their best to thwart everything God did. Men who were God's enemies. You say, "But that doesn't sound like me?" The Scriptures would beg to differ. In Romans 3 we are told that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Paul adds, "There is none righteous, no not one!" We fit this description to a "T," and God sent the very best He had, namely Jesus Christ, for each one of us. Paul tells us in II Corinthians 5, that "God made Him (Jesus) to be sin for us, so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." What a blessed trade! Jesus took my sin, and put in its place His righteousness. What I needed most, He abundantly provided.

What a marvelous soul mate Jesus is! He gave me life, through His death on the cross. He sustains me daily through His grace and mercy. He walks with me and talks with me and continually tells me He is mine and I am His.

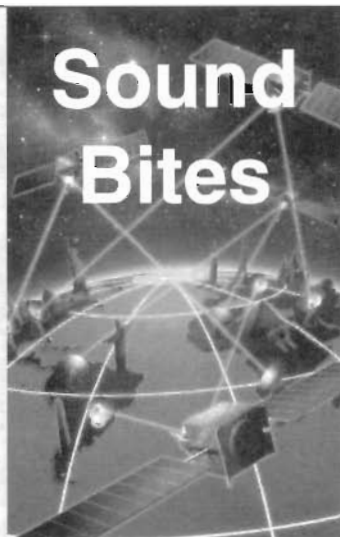


— **Pastor Edward Strom**
Emmanuel and Hauge
Lutheran Parish
Kenyon, Minnesota

If we work upon marble, it will perish. Time will deface it. If we rear temples, they will crumble into dust, but

1 if we work upon immortal minds and imbue them with principles, with the just fear of God and love of our fellow men, we will engrave on those tablets something that will brighten all eternity.

— Noah Webster



2

Maturity, in fact, is the lifelong goal the Bible sets before all of us, and teens are no exception. Mature teens will be sensitive to the will of God, they will demonstrate progressive spiritual growth, and they will appreciate the grace of God.

— Paul David Tripp

When one has been born of the Spirit he is a new creation. Possessing a changed and regenerated heart

3 he has a new sense of hearing and a new sense of vision. The Bible seems new to him. He not only possesses the Word but permits it to possess him.

— Carl Rosenius

4 True growth occurs when we know our purpose is to honor God, who delights in our maturity. We grow by seeking to understand His perspective, and we grow by aiming to be more faithful servants.

— Gordon MacDonald

5

Effective leaders in the churches of tomorrow will not be power-seeking controllers, but relation-building equippers and mentors.

— Eddie Gibbs

6

The Word of God is like a lion. You don't have to defend a lion. All you have to do is let the lion loose, and the lion will defend itself.

— Charles Spurgeon

Keeping in touch with the people in the pew

— *Pastor Lyndon Korhonen*
Good Shepherd Lutheran
Cokato, Minnesota



The campus chapel where FLTS classes are held.

Throughout the history of the Church, there have been a variety of approaches to the relationship between the clergy and laity. Most recognize that it is essential that the man called by God has a number of years to pursue theological studies. Yet during this time, the student must not become detached from the very people to whom he is preparing to minister.

I believe the most important thing a seminary student can do during his training to counter this, is to be active in a local congregation. As the student reads and is tempted to form idealistic scenarios in which he can “win the entire world to Christ,” the rubbing shoulders with sinners such as himself in a local church helps him to see that no program, on its own, is going to change people. As ministers we are sowing seed in faith that God’s Spirit is going to move the hearts of people.

The second aspect I found helpful in my training was internship. When I was in school the internship occurred in the summers. We had nine months of schooling and three months of putting it into practice, which created a nice balance between theory and practical application. The challenges of daily ministry caused an appetite for more schooling.

The seminarian will also find that when he completes his degree, this relationship between laity and pastor has to begin all over again in the church that calls him. There he will discover that it is a learning process to balance study time and “out-time” with people. He will also find that one or the other will come more naturally to him.

When I began in the ministry, I loved to stay in my office and study. I forced myself out to visit in the afternoons. Now after seventeen years, I find I have to discipline myself to stay in and study in the mornings. The contacts at the radiator shop, the floral shop, pushing manure into the gutters in the dairy barn, all serve to keep me in touch

with the challenge of sharing Christ on a daily basis where people live and work. The pastor who isn’t rubbing shoulders with the

world can become very demanding with his sheep and forget how challenging a place the daily work world is — from the posters on the wall in the shops to the conversations at the water cooler.

Furthermore, the pastor must recognize he will have convictions that he has formed in life that may be very helpful to his own life, but it is not his place to force them upon the congregation. For instance, I have a conviction that I would rather not see the church borrow money to build. The church I serve voted to add on to the fellowship hall but felt we needed to do it soon and not wait for all the funds. Someone suggested that if we were going to finance the project, we should do it by selling bonds within the church. We voted to go ahead and sell the bonds, and our project has gone along very nicely.

Also during this planning process, we wrestled with how much to hire and how much to do by volunteer help. I always encourage volunteer help, since we have many gifted builders in our congregation. But the building committee voted to have the structure enclosed by hired help and then volunteers to finish the inside. After the experience of 247 sheets of 4x12 sheet rock and other inside finishing, I have come to the conclusion that many Christians have more money than time. The pastor today needs to keep in touch with his people so he is not frustrated when they want to do it differently than his own personal inclinations.

Whether a veteran pastor or a new seminarian, keep in touch with your people. Together we are Christ’s Church. We need to listen to each other because we are a family — the forever family of God.



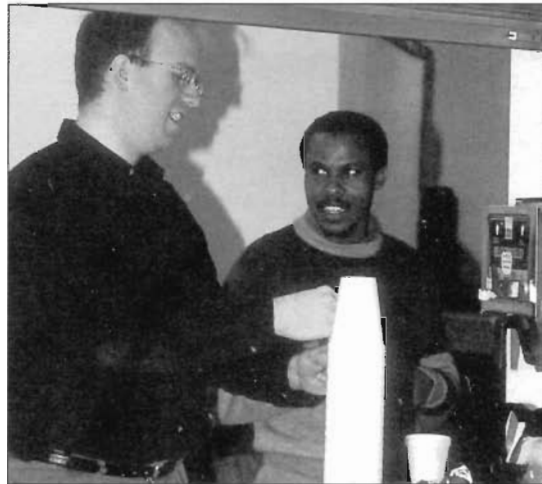
International students at the seminary

— Pastor Mark Olson
Zion Lutheran Church
Tioga, North Dakota

Forgiveness of sins — the gift of the Holy Spirit — wonderful promises to those dead in sin and then radically changed through faith in Jesus Christ. These are the promises that we uphold at our seminary. We rejoice when God calls those from within our church body to diligently prepare to serve as pastors, missionaries, and other ambassadors of Christ. We also rejoice (quite often lately!) when God calls like-minded men from around the world to also prepare at the Free Lutheran Theological Seminary for the work of the Kingdom.

As a member of the board of trustees, I have appreciated the opportunity to personally meet our international seminary students. Beyond our North American students, we currently have Kenya and Nigeria represented by four seminarians, and one each from the Eastern European nations of Latvia and the Czech Republic. Based on the number of inquiries that we have from abroad, we fully expect to see more countries represented in the coming years.

You may wonder if this is affecting our seminary. Yes, the effect has been significant. Seminarians now completing their training tell of how these international students have brought a whole new dimension to the classroom discussions. Reports of God's activity in far-off places have helped each of our men gain more of a global perspective on ministry. This awareness of the great physical and spiritual needs around



the world helps keep our campus from falling into any self-centered complacency. Seminarian Roland Tonisson shares his experience: "I have enjoyed my studies at FLTS tremendously. I am around people who are not making jokes of the Bible and faith; as has been the habit in Europe. We need the faith in Europe."

It is not just our student body that reaps the benefits of having international students on campus; so does our faculty and staff. Pastor Jerry Holmaas reflects on his experiences as a teacher: "I regard teaching international students as a major challenge, responsibility and blessing. A challenge, because of barriers due to language, culture, etc. A responsibility, because I deeply desire to be teaching the Word accurately in a manner that communicates God's truth to every student. A blessing, because I regularly feel overwhelmed to realize I have the privilege of being involved in the task of world evangelization by assisting in the training of leaders for not just here in North America, but in various nations of our world."

Be in prayer for each of the seminary students, especially our international ones. They have left family members, congregations, and countries to come and study with us. Each one faces unique challenges. But thankfully, God is good. He is at work at our seminary in a way that will reach the ends of the earth. If you have an opportunity, stop by and see for yourself what God is doing at FLTS. You will be blessed. Champions of "the promise" are in training. "The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39).



Association Free Lutheran Seminary students, spring 2001

Harrison Akubala, Kenya
Karl Anderson, Minnesota
Rich Carr, Pennsylvania
Dana Coyle, Minnesota
Clint Hoff, Canada
Samuel Kariuki, Kenya
Michal Klus, Czech Republic
Brent Logeman, Illinois
Peter Makadi, Nigeria
Wade Mobley, South Dakota
Philemon Ngare, Kenya
Brent Olson, Minnesota
Jason Siemens, Canada
Matt Steendahl, Washington
Roland Tonisson, Estonia
Terry Wall, California
Calvin Willard, Washington

Learning to serve in local



— Solveig Hjermstad
with Lorraine Bentley
and Michele Mobley

When the Sunday morning worship service begins at Maranatha Free Lutheran in Spring Lake Park, Minnesota, about twenty Bible school and seminary students are there to join in the singing and worship. Their enthusiastic participation, not only at worship services, but also Sunday school, and Wednesday night Bible study is a welcome addition to the congregation. They represent many states and foreign countries and illustrate a wonderful picture of the family of God.

Maranatha's pastor, Wayne Hanson, considers one of the advantages of serving a church in the Twin Cities area is the privilege of having students from the schools bring love and vitality to the congregation.

That goes two ways. Ruth Borgersen of Kviteseid, Norway said, "From the first time I came to Maranatha, I felt very welcome. All the people in the congregation are nice, and I especially have come to appreciate the way Pastor and his wife show their love for the people attending their church. Their care and hospitality is a great example to me. I stayed in their home for a weekend, and the way they treat me has made me consider them as substitute parents while I'm away from home and attending Bible school. It keeps amazing me how God knows exactly what I need, and makes wonderful Christians' paths cross mine."

Maranatha member Mary Pollestad has seen this love in action in their small, young congregation. "We don't become anxious over what types of programs we have to offer these students," She said. "The biggest thing is to show how we love them and are concerned to ask them about their lives and what to pray for. Then we follow up the next time we see them and ask about that prayer or concern." Young people want to belong to a family and many are far away from home or perhaps don't even have a Christian home to be a part of.

Many older members of the congregation visit with the students each Sunday and when a student is absent, people are diligent to ask why they were gone and that they missed them. It's like the loving security of a family. And like any family member who moves away, according to Pastor Hanson, "We will miss them greatly when they return to their homes. (In the meantime) we are so glad to have had the opportunity to get to know them and have them with us."

Maranatha is not the only Minneapolis/St. Paul area congregation to share in the blessing of having the AFLC schools' campus nearby. On Wednesday evenings, the campus is rather quiet as students scatter to churches to participate in the Bible studies, or to assist in youth and children's ministries. In recent years, a van load of Bible school students travel west of the campus to Good Shepherd Lutheran in Cokato where they work with the youth group. At Faith

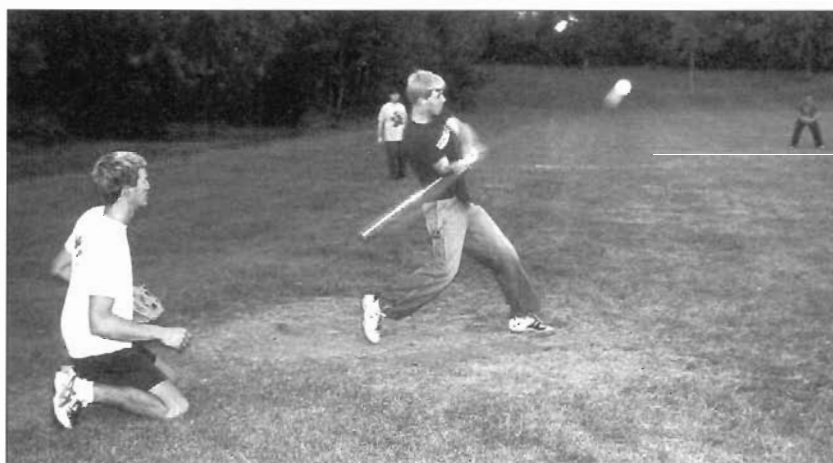
congregations

Lutheran in Shakopee, students lead the junior and senior high youth meetings. Each fall, the campus congregation, Medicine Lake Lutheran, hosts their annual welcome dinner for the seminarians and Bible school students. The list of congregations and students worshipping and working together in ministry could go on and on.

AFLBS requires their students to have one Christian service credit per year. That has encouraged them to find a local congregation and be more consistent in their attendance and participation. In recent years, there has been greater emphasis in the dorm life and leadership to foster this. Former women's residence head, Michele Mobley said, "We've stated over and over to the students how important it is to keep nourishing their personal devotional life and their need for faithful worship in a local congregation."



Liga Plaveniece and Nikolina Gordejeva, both of Riga, Latvia, role play the dangers of gossip to their senior AFLBS classmates.



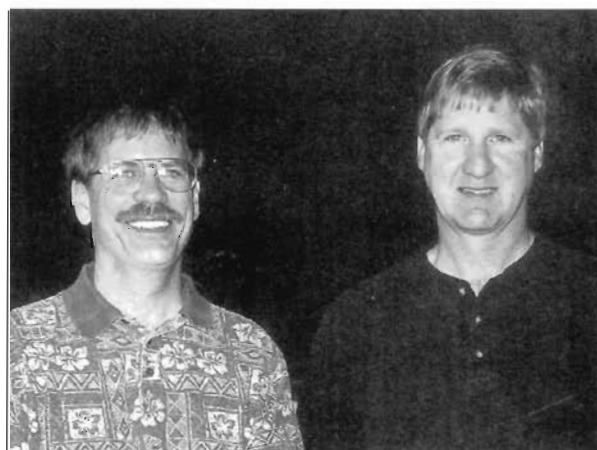
Long fall and spring evenings on campus are filled with intramural softball games.



Esther Moberg, AFLC school's librarian and Book Nook manager.



Michelle Mobley, director of student support services and seminary secretary.



Dean Nelson and Wayne Floan serve as campus maintenance men.



I am amazed at the students God sends to AFLBS. Our school is over thirty years old and each year its history continues to unfold. Who goes to AFLBS today? What are some of the challenges and blessings that we experience with each new class? To answer these questions, I gathered a small sampling of statistics from three groups of students: the classes of 1980, 1990 and our current student population.

In the incoming class of 1980, 71% percent of the student body came from AFLC congregations. Of those students, 52% came from long-time established AFLC churches and approximately 19% were from newer AFLC congregations. In addition 25% of the incoming 1980 class were from non-AFLC churches and 4% were international students.

The new class in 1990 consisted of 53% from established churches and 24% from new congregations. The rest were from non-AFLC

Who are the students at AFLBS?



— Mark Johnson
AFLBS Dean of Students
Minneapolis, Minnesota



churches (15%) and another 9% came as international students.

Our current student body breaks down in this way: 40% from older AFLC congregations and 24% from newer ones. Currently about a quarter of our students do not come from an AFLC congregation and about 13% are international students, mainly from Norway, Brazil, Mexico, and Eastern Europe.

I find it interesting to note that about two-thirds of our student body continues to come to AFLBS from AFLC congregations. Also, I discovered that many of our people from non-AFLC backgrounds, chose to come to Bible school because of the Colorado youth convention. Many of those are of a non-Lutheran background. These numbers seem consistent over the years.

Recently our international student population has increased due to the continued open doors for the gospel in the former Soviet bloc coun-



tries and through the continued relationships with evangelistic Lutheran churches in those countries.

One might think that with the continued breakdown of the home in America and increased exposure to blatant and open sin among young people, there are more challenges and problems to deal with. Yes, there are some. But the number of kids who come from unchurched or different backgrounds often bring new life and revival to our student body. Each and every soul, no matter what background, enhances and brings to light the power of the Word. I have the opportunity to see God at work in a mighty way over and over again. Here are some examples:

Student A comes from your average middle class home in the upper Midwest. While in high school, student A's life is almost destroyed by the effects of drugs and alcohol. As he begins to turn to the Lord for help he meets one of our students from Eastern Europe and visits AFLBS late one Friday evening. Student A is convinced that AFLBS is where God wants him. Today student A is among our top student leaders and is now involved in a Twin Cities AFLC church and has much to share.

Student B meets some of the AFLBS students at a local coffee shop and learns that there is a place where he can go to study the Word of God with 150 other young believers. Student B enrolls and again has blessed and encouraged many.

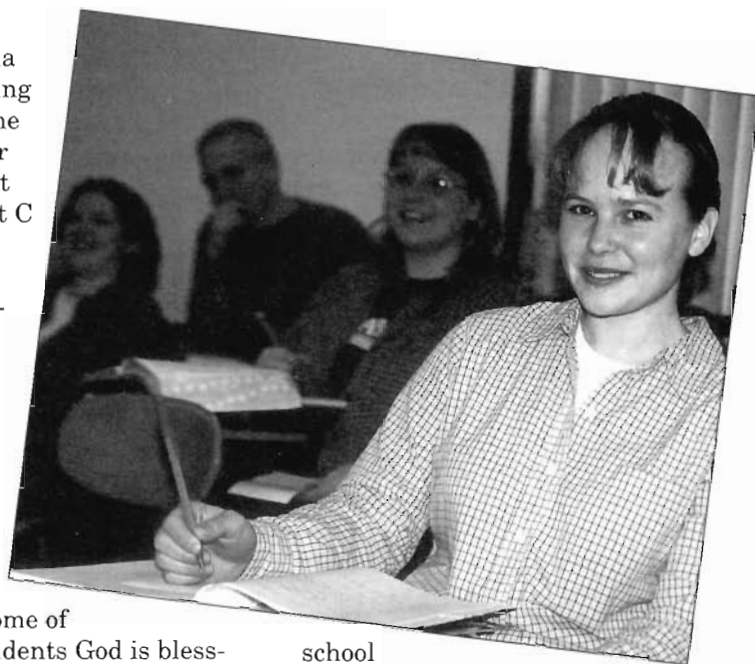
Student C hears about AFLBS at a mission conference in Vancouver,

British Columbia and begins talking with AFLC Home Mission Director Paul Nash about AFLBS. Student C is now a key member of our student-led worship team and also involved in the music ministry in a Twin Cities AFLC congregation.

This is just a small sampling and description of some of the amazing students God is blessing us with. I couldn't imagine what our school would be like without our international students. I certainly cannot imagine what AFLBS would be like without the outstanding students from our local AFLC congregations, who have been the mainstay of our student population since 1966. God knows those who should be at AFLBS and each year he sends a different group with various talents and gifts.

What I also find intriguing is the insight our AFLC forefathers had in starting a Bible school. It's hard to imagine how many of these students we would have lost to our church family without it. Many of our students work hard in their local congregations. Yes, some have moved on to other churches, but I can't say we have "lost" them. They are God's children whom He has equipped and sent to benefit the church-at-large. It's the Church of Jesus. He builds it. He calls and uses the workers where He wills. Though we love to see our students work in our corner of God's vineyard, it seems for every student who goes to another of God's pastures, we gain a non-AFLC supporter who becomes an active worker and leader. They didn't even know the AFLC existed before coming to AFLBS, but now are loyal supporters and friends.

It's a joy to see our students active as youth leaders, Sunday



school teachers, kids' club or worship team leaders in area congregations. We strongly encourage each to use their gifts in local congregations. Each spring, Dr. Francis Monseth teaches a course on "Principles of Congregational Life," with special emphasis given to our AFLC distinctives.

There is much work to be done, but I strongly believe God is continuing to raise up young leaders from among our students. Please continue to pray for them and for our staff as together we pray for continued revival in our school, churches, nation and world. Thank you for praying and caring. May God continue to give the increase.

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



Bible school by extension

A hope or dream has been held in the hearts of a number of AFLC pastors of the Pacific Northwest District over the past twenty years or more. That dream has been for the establishment of classes held on-site in the district, which could be overseen and accredited by our Bible school in Minneapolis — Bible school courses by extension. This past fall that dream became a reality. A request by Pacific Northwest

District pastors to authorize extension classes staffed by local pastors was enthusiastically approved by the board of our Bible school at the time of the annual conference last June. Planning of classes began in earnest — selecting classes, producing informational brochures, getting word to the district congregations, and, of course, securing instructors. By fall we were ready to begin classes with a student body of about six per class.

Ambassadors In Ministry

The resurgence of the vision for Bible school classes by extension came indirectly. Pastor Rick Long and a few people in the Arlington, Washington, congregation learned of churches in another denomination that had developed a congregation-based post-high school discipleship and on-the-job ministry training program. Almost immediately there was interest in starting a similar program at Arlington. What could make more sense than giving our post-high school young people, especially those still looking for life direction, an opportunity for more intensive discipleship as well as hands-on ministry training?

In conversation with Pastor Mike Crowell about these ideas, the suggestion was made that accredited Bible school courses, which could be offered to all of the people of the Pacific Northwest District, also form part of the curriculum for the new training program. Thus, two new ministries were born — *Ambassadors In Ministry*, a post-high school discipleship program which is a distinct ministry of Atonement Free Lutheran in Arlington, and *Bible School By Extension*, which offers classes each semester to all of the people of the Pacific Northwest District. All full-time Ambassadors In Ministry (AIM) students are automatically enrolled in the Bible school extension courses.

On February 6, 2001, five AIM young adults from Atonement Free Lutheran traveled to Curitiba, Brazil for three and a half weeks of working with Missionaries Paul and Becky Abel. The Abels planned evangelistic outreaches as well as having the students participate in the youth camp at the ARCA during Brazil's Carnival days. Pastor Long and Sandy Andrie from Atonement traveled with the students. During the same time, the four students from the Ministry Training Institute at AFLBS in Minneapolis, Minnesota worked together with the AIM students.



Ambassadors In Ministry students are (L. to R.): Jesse Long, Tamara Andrie, Sarah Long, Alicia Horneman and Lucas Long.

— *Pastor Richard Long*
Atonement Lutheran Church
Arlington, Washington

Classes Begin

In the fall of 2000, we offered three Bible school extension courses to the people of our district: "How To Conduct A Bible Study," "Exodus: A Devotional Overview," and "Evangelism and Discipleship." This winter/spring semester we have been able to offer four courses: "Children's Ministry" (two credits, on Thursday mornings), "Cults & Isms" (two credits, on Saturdays), "Youth Ministry Strategies" (one credit, to be taught by Pastor Kevin Olson on March 30-31), and "Introduction to Greek" (one credit, Thursday evenings in March and April). Participation and cooperation has been great. People in the Pacific Northwest interested in plugging into classes should ask their pastor about a full winter/spring extension course brochure or call Pastor Long at (360) 435-9191.

Vision for the Future

Our vision for Bible school courses by extension is to offer different classes on a rotation of five to six years, ultimately giving people an opportunity to take many of the classes which form the core of the Bible school curriculum. We are excited about the opportunity that gives for another step in the discipleship of our local congregations and the substantial preparation for ministry that it ought to provide within our district. We are even considering how extension courses can be worked in with the missionary pilot training available here in Arlington through Pastor Mike Crowell and *Mission Aviation Training Academy (MATA)*.

Our vision for *Ambassadors In Ministry* is two-fold. On the one hand, we welcome young people from other congregations that would wish to be part of a congregation-based discipleship and ministry training program to consider coming out to be with us at Atonement. Arrangements can be made for out-of-town students. On the other hand, our hope is that other congregations will see the value and realistic possibility of beginning similar programs in their own churches. If we can help in any way, please give us a call at the number above or write: Ambassadors In Ministry, 6905 172nd Street NE, Arlington, WA 98223.



Songs of Christ in Eastern Europe

On April 18, 2001 Northwest-KLM Airlines Flight #1847 will land at the Vienna, Austria airport. Thirty-six members of the AFLBS Concert Choir, Director Jerry Nelson, and five other advisors will deplane, go through the passport and visa control and pick up one suitcase each. About twenty minutes later, they will board the bus chartered from the VTU-Valmiera Bus Company in Valmiera, Latvia. With this, the first ever AFLBS choir tour behind the former Iron Curtain will begin.

This choir tour was envisioned about five years ago as Dr. Fran Monseth, Mr. Jerry Nelson, and Pastor Don Richman, director of the East European Missions Network were conversing about such a possibility. In his regular trips to various East European countries in the fall of 1999, Pastor Richman reported that he found enthusiastic support for this idea from Lutheran Church leaders in the region.

The primary purpose of this choir tour is to use the vehicle of Christian song to praise and glorify God and present Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Both through public testimony during the concerts and in private conversation, the choir members will seek opportunities to give testimony to the reality of a personal, living relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The choir program

(continued on next page)

— *Pastor Don Richman*
Bloomington, Minnesota



The 2000-2001 AFLBS choir.

EASTERN EUROPE

will be translated into the appropriate language of each country.

AFLBS dean, Pastor James L. Johnson will be the evangelist while the choir sings in the central European countries. He will also write a special evangelistic tract with a message flowing out of this ministry of quality Christian music.

Because of his long relationship with pastors and leaders in the Baltic nations and Russia, Dr. Monseth, FLTS dean, will be the evangelist during those concerts. Pastor Rich-



Dr. Stanislav Pietak and his wife, Anna, from the Czech Republic and AFLBS student Tomasz Chmiel.

man will accompany the choir as "tour coordinator." AFLBS student and choir member, Tomasz Chmiel of the Czech Republic, will also assist. His knowledge of five languages will be of immense help to the choir.

From Austria, the bus will take the choir to Bratislava, Slovakia. Concerts will then be given in the Czech Republic, Poland, Latvia, Estonia, and finally Petrozavodsk and St. Petersburg, Russia. The itinerary in Poland includes a tour of Auschwitz, the infamous death camp of World War II. The members of the tour will stay in hotels and as much as possible, in private homes. They are scheduled to return on May 7.

In Psalm 96:1-3 the psalmist beautifully captures the heartbeat of this choir tour: "Sing to the Lord a new song; Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations and His marvelous works among all the peoples." A solid foundation of prayer and dependence upon the Holy Spirit, the musical skill of these young singers, their intensive preparation and love for their Jesus, are the ingredients the Lord will blend together to touch the lives of His precious people in these countries. Will you please add your prayer to the harmony of their song?

The cost of the trip will be about \$2,000 per person. Your financial partnership would be much appreciated. Unless you indicate otherwise, your contribution will be used to aid choir members who need assistance. Contributions may be sent to: East European Tour, AFLBS, 3120 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55441. Thank you and may God put the beautiful music of His praise into your heart.



The Proclaim choir, under the direction of Melissa Nakata, is taking their spring tour to the West as far as Colorado.

Lessons learned at Bible school

God has been working in my life since I have been at Bible school. I've been challenged more spiritually than any other time in my life. But it has also been a major time of struggle as well. God is revealing areas of my life that I have not given to Him and areas of sin that I have been ignoring.

The life of a Christian should be one of constant renewal, challenge and passion for the work God has called us to do. Complacency is not an option. Yet so often we fall into that trip. It is much easier to just go along with the world's philosophies. When God puts us into situations where we are challenged to speak out because of the convictions that He has given us, what is our reaction? Imagine you are with a group of your peers, just talking, laughing and enjoying the time you spend together. Then someone tells an inappropriate joke, takes the Lord's name in vain, or underhandedly mocks Christianity in some way. How would you react? The Christian talk is only talk until thrust into a potentially threatening situation. Then it's reality and time to show that we do believe and live what we so easily profess.

Another situation we are often challenged with is that of time. Do we give God more time than just a couple hours on Sunday morning and five minutes in the morning before we begin our day? Do we even give Him that much? Does He have our time where we listen to what He wants to tell us?

When it's time for that Wednesday night meeting or special service, it is much easier for me to just think, "I'm so tired. I'll just skip it this time." Work, school, friends, children and a host of other responsibilities offer excuses to stay home or do something else. But it all comes down to our priorities.

Revelation 3:14-22 speaks to us about being lukewarm. So often we use this term in a flippant way, but what does it really mean?

Water that is lukewarm is very distasteful. It is much better when it is either ice cold or very hot. God wants us to put this observation into practice in our lives. God knows our hearts and our inner motives. He says, "Because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth" (NKJV). The entire book of James challenges the Christian to put his faith into action.

Jesus promises the Christian that he has chosen the narrow, difficult way. Do not be disheartened, the rewards are great (Matthew 7:13,14). Praise God for the promise of eternal life. Think of the joy we will have on that glorious day when God says to us, "Well done, my good and faithful servant." Meanwhile here on earth, God wants us to turn to Him for the strength we need. Whatever the struggles, God offers all the strength we could ever possibly need and so much more. He wants our lives to be offered in total surrender at His altar

— Kristin Knutson
AFLBS junior

and then lived in reckless abandonment for Him.

Where does this leave us? In Matthew we are told to have faith as a mustard seed — so small, yet God can do amazing things. Let us look to the Lord for guidance, give our all to Him, and fulfill the Great Commission. Let God fire you up and put you on the frontlines. Jesus said, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38). Let us be the laborers.



(Taken from "The Country Church Connection," January/February 2001, the newsletter of Immanuel and Salem Lutheran Parish, Centerville and Freeman, South Dakota.)

A PLACE TO GROW





Steven Carlson

Hometown: Amery, Wisconsin.

Early Congregational Homes:
Balsam Lutheran Church (LCA)
and Amery Free Lutheran Church
(AFLC).

Parents: Lester and Kathy Carlson.

Education: I graduated from the Christian School in Amery and then went on to attend two years at AFLBS. After graduating from AFLBS, I attended the University of Wisconsin-Superior and received a B.S. in Secondary Education. After an interlude of several years, I began attending FLTS and am currently completing my final year.

Age: 31

Family: I have been married to Jennifer (Castro) for 8 1/2 years and we have a 21-month-old boy named Benjamin.

Journey of Spiritual Life and Ministry

I had the privilege of growing up in a Christian home. I was brought to the Lord in baptism as an infant and at an early age I consciously accepted Christ into my heart and endeavored to follow Him. My parents took their vows to God seriously and were very faithful to teach and instruct me in the ways of God as a child. As I continued through the growing pains and joys of life I grew and struggled with my faith in Jesus. It was early in life that I sensed closeness to God and a desire to serve Him whole-heartedly. This sense of call was not clearly defined, but it continued to develop over the years, never vanishing.

Attending the Christian school in

Amery kept spiritual matters focused in a central position. I was well grounded in the Word of God and had a heart that sincerely desired to serve God. While attending AFLBS greater depth was added to this grounding, along with many opportunities for Christian service.

During my years as a student at the University of Wisconsin-Superior (UWS), my faith and confidence in Christ and Scripture was routinely challenged. It was there, and in part due to the work of a campus ministry organization, that my faith became more than a private matter as it was thrust out into the public arena. My faith did not flounder, but it flourished. I was thrilled to discover that the Christian faith need not be sequestered to the hallowed halls of the Church and of the sympathetic Christian community. It could stand in the footpaths of secular life and learning and its voice went forth and informed our culture of the credibility and transformational power of the gospel truth. It was at UWS that the call to ministry was realized by serving in student leadership in the Christian organization that was evangelizing the campus.

After graduation from UWS, I went on staff with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) and continued to minister at UWS for five years. During these years I fell in love with studying the "text" of Scripture and was profoundly heartened to newly discover the practical, applicable truth that the Word spoke into our contemporary world. God had seized my attention and given me a thirst for His Word and for His world. Spiritually, I was becoming more attune to the heart of God for His world and under the direction of His Spirit, my prejudices and limited vision concerning how He might be at work in His diverse world, were beginning to be challenged.

The next leg of this journey was to obey the clarified and unrelenting call to go to seminary. God miraculously opened the doors and windows of heaven to provide for us and to see us through seminary. I have

Meet the



Todd A. Erickson

Parents: Farrell and Anne Erickson

Hometown: Badger, MN

Home congregation: Oiland Free Lutheran, rural Greenbush, MN

Education: Graduated from AFLBS 1987

Graduated from Mayville State University (Mayville, ND) 1991

Family: Wife Joyce (Hovland); Children Katie (8), Tyler (5), Brett (1), and a baby due in July 2001.

been humbled and overwhelmed in reflecting on God's goodness to us. I am so thankful that "The One who calls is faithful and He will do it" (I Thessalonians 5:24). Not only does God call us to Himself and then freely provide for our salvation, but He also calls us into ministry and takes upon Himself the responsibility of our keeping. God be praised! While at seminary, my love for the text of Scripture was renewed and depth was added as I studied the original languages.

Presently I am fast concluding my seminary internship and final year of seminary. I have had the privilege of serving under Pastor David Skordahl at the three-point parish in Dalton, Minnesota. The opportunities have been many and the rewards overwhelming. I am grateful to God for placing us here and for continuing to break me and mold me according to His will. Lead On, Oh King Eternal!



graduating FLTS seniors

Testimony and Seminary Experience

I was privileged to grow up in a family that held church and Sunday school in very high regard. The true teaching of God's Word played a major role in my life and God was faithful. It was at the age of 10 or 11 that I consciously saw my need for a Savior when I heard the verse Romans 6:23 while attending Bible Camp in Lake Bronson, Minnesota. The words have always been precious to me as I daily remember my condition without Christ, and then see the free gift of eternal life that I have through Jesus Christ my Lord. It wasn't long after this that the accidental death of a young friend greatly affected our family. Our family began to have family devotions and God truly became the head of our home.

Throughout high school God was faithful, giving me a set of Christian friends. We began to meet at Marty and Barb Johnson's home on Friday nights for Bible study, and later we were able to share Jesus Christ through song and testimony at many churches throughout the area. Oh, there were up and down times throughout those teen years, but God was always there.

It was during this time also that I attended Campus Days at the Bible School and knew that was where God wanted me. So after graduation it was off to AFLBS; two years that I wouldn't trade for anything. God strengthened my walk with Him and provided a solid foundation through hearing and taking to heart the faithful teaching of His Word. I was also privileged to meet my wife, Joyce, at "Bridal" school and we were married in June of 1988. God used many experiences with friends, ministry teams, and particularly a mission conference night to let me know that He was calling me to full-time ministry as a pastor.

After Bible school I attended college and once again God placed wonderful people in my path. These



Peter Ward

One Thursday night in July 1986, I was born again into the Kingdom of God in our living room across the street from Bethel Free Lutheran in Grafton, North Dakota. The burdens of business and the accountability for the souls of our triplet boys born six months earlier, drove me to my knees for relief of my sins and to seek help in my time of need. Four years later, I sensed God calling me away from my work in the agricultural seed business. After six more years passed, it became obvious it was now God's time to apply to the seminary at the Medicine Lake campus.

included fellow students involved in InterVarsity Fellowship, and a wonderful church family at Valley Free Lutheran in Portland, North Dakota. God has used them mightily in my own life as well as my family's life. He especially used a group of youth who faithfully met to hear God's Word and encourage a skinny youth director to keep plugging away for Jesus Christ.

During those years and after college we stayed in the Red River Valley where I taught high school math and science and coached basketball at a local high school in Thompson, North Dakota. It was a wonderful experience, but God confirmed the call into the pastoral ministry in the spring of 1997. Once again God has been faithful through these years at FLTS and now on internship with Pastor Allen Monson at Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church in

I was born in rural Manitoba in 1954. In 1968, my parents, Russell and Wilna moved our entire family from Winnipeg to manage a wild rice farm in north central Minnesota. After graduating from Aitkin High School, there were two years at the University of Minnesota in Duluth, followed by two more years at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul, to earn a degree in Agronomy and Plant Genetics. Mary Ann (Weston) and I were married in 1975 two months after college. In 1984 the Lord blessed us with Stefany (now in 11th grade) and in 1986 along came Tony, Mitch, and Mike (now in 9th grade).

My memorable seminary experience is Christ's people. Everyday life does not stand still during seminary. I cherish the thoughts of our small class and being able to watch the Lord perform His works of grace in our lives during the struggles of homework, jobs, family life and spiritual growth as He challenged our convictions. I thank the Lord for how my life has been touched permanently through my three classmates and the professors who stood before us teaching the truth of God's love in Jesus Christ.

(continued on next page)

Lakeville, Minnesota.

The provisions, struggles, friendships and stories are numerous, but two highlights stick out in my mind of the time in seminary. First are the daily morning devotions that began each day at seminary. It was a time of kneeling before God and putting our lives (students and faculty) in His hands and praying for each other and every person and congregation within the AFLC. Second is the miraculous way in which God met and continues to meet our every need spiritually and physically. Thank you to everyone for your friendship, prayers and gifts. God has used you to make Deuteronomy 31:8 a reality in our life. "The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."



More than eighteen years after I graduated from the Association Free Lutheran Bible School, the major crisis of my life occurred. I now realize that the solid foundation I received through the Word at AFLBS is what enabled me to deal with those difficult days.

It was the week of April Fools Day, 1992, when we found out that mom had AIDS. She had been sick for several months and a final biopsy of her lungs revealed cystic pneumonia.

At first our family concluded that mom must have contracted the fatal

Bible school helped

virus through work as a home health care nurse working with AIDS patients. However, the truth was exposed as dad came under pressure to confess he had been practicing a homosexual lifestyle for some 25 years.

Talk about a crisis! At that time, Dad was the president of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, so the news media began calling and the story was soon covered on national broadcasts as well as local papers. Dad's picture was on the front page of the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, as well as St. Paul's *Pioneer Press*. At my parents' home, the phone began to ring with calls from reporters who had questions.

At first I considered moving far away where no one would know who I was or any of my family history. I felt like crawling into a hole and staying there, but as the days progressed, I began to experience the presence of the Lord through the prayers of our AFLC family and a shelter that only the Lord could provide. Scripture verses I learned from Bible school days, came back bringing comfort.

"For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal

me under the cover of his tent, he will set me high upon a rock" (Psalm 27:5).

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed" (II Corinthians 4:7-9).

"For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal" (II Corinthians 4:17-18).

SENIORS

With grateful praise let us thank the Lord for the truth that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. With no less gratitude, we are to be thankful that the seminary of the AFLC holds to and teaches the inspired and inerrant Word of God. Nothing will prepare a man more for pastoral ministry than Scripture taught in the stewardship of the Holy Spirit.

The internship experience has reinforced my awareness of the power of God's Word and the necessity of prayer. As an individual and as a family, we are greatly indebted to the people of Westaker Free Lutheran Church for the love, the prayers and the fellowship offered to us this past year. How helpful it is to be able to step confidently into the pulpit with the Word of God in hand, knowing that the petitions of His people have been raised.

On behalf of Mary Ann, Steffany, Mitch, Mike, Tony and myself we want to say thank you to the people of the AFLC. There are innumerable people and parties of the Lord's choosing whom He has woven into our lives for our financial, spiritual and emotional support. If there is but one memory I would be allowed, it is the realization that it is the whole body of Christ that answers the call for every single man that goes to seminary.



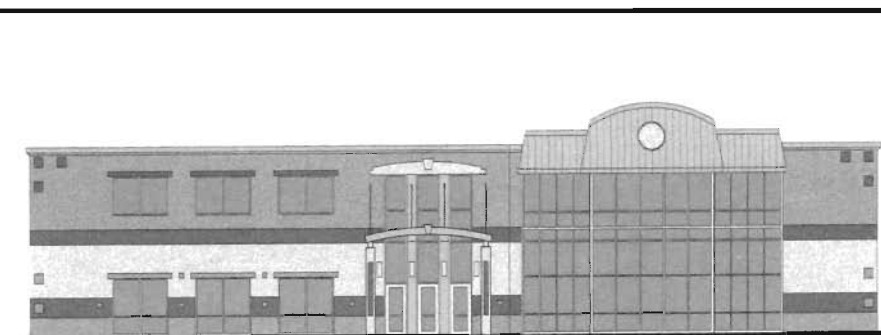
The seminary classroom located in the campus chapel.

— **Karen M. Floan**
Administrative Assistant for
Vision 2004
Minneapolis, Minnesota

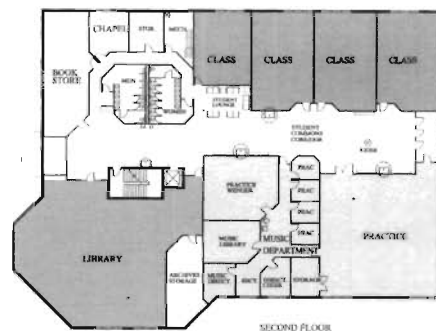
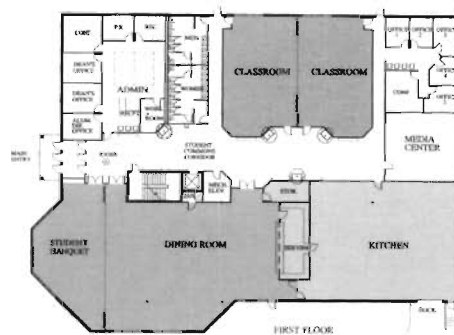
How thankful I am to have attended a school that not only prepared me for daily Christian living but also for future days of major crisis, as my family continued to deal with heartache in the loss of our mother, brother, father, father-in-law, and just recently, nephew.

All of us at some time will encounter difficulties and troubles, (Matthew 6:34). Some may encounter a major crisis of life where they feel like running away. Consider this, how important is it to prepare our young people in giving them a spiritual solution? More than ever we need to implement the expansion of our schools through the Vision 2004 project to meet the needs of students and staff. Our dorms are full as more students desire to come study the Word. The Lord is moving among young people today.

How wonderful it is for those attending Bible school to experience the solid foundation of the Word, which will enable them to deal not only with the problems of the day but also any major crisis of life. I am so grateful for our schools and the foundation in Jesus they pointed me to.



Proposed AFLBS Student Center



A report from the Urbana Missions Conference

As InterVarsity worship leaders Sundee and Matt Frazier directed us from the Urbana platform, voice upon voice filled the mammoth space of the University of Illinois Assembly Hall with singing.

*Grow something new in our lives
oh God.*

*Grow something peaceful,
grow something true.*

*Grow something new in our hearts,
oh God. Grow something new.*

Turn our hope back to you.

Give us hope that's in you.

—by Matt Frazier, TAI Music, 1994

A heart for the nations — because God first loved us

Over the next four days God would grow new thoughts, new attitudes, new convictions, and new callings into the open hearts and minds of the 20,000 participants at Urbana 2000. He would grow new hope.

Many discovered new hope through the inspirational, challenging and winsome Bible studies lead by Pastor Ken Uyeda Fong. Others were caught up by, and directed to a new call to mission through the moving praise and worship experiences. Many found new guidance through the hundreds of workshops,

—**Pastor Rob Lewis**
Camrose, Alberta, Canada
On loan from the AFLC to the
World Mission Prayer League

seminars and exhibits that were available each afternoon. Actor Bruce Kuhn, along with InterVarsity staff workers Nina Thiel and Jess Delegencia presented Scripture with such passion and drama, that many Urbana delegates cheered for the Word of God, as they felt renewed by its truth. In small groups, led
(continued on next page)

URBANA

by InterVarsity staff and volunteers, participants experienced new growth through inductive Bible study. Urbana was awesome!

But even beyond the awesomeness of personal experience, God was doing something else more noticeable and remarkable. Without doubt, Urbana produced in participants a new love for the nations and a new heart for those who have yet to know Jesus.

In typical fashion, George Verwer, founder and director of Operation Mobilization started off the general sessions by mounting the stage with his huge inflatable globe, to lead us in heart-deep prayer for the suffering and unreached people of the world.

Was this, as one speaker asked, just "stadium hype"? No! We were fully warned about the cost of discipleship as Ruth Padilla De Borst shared the agony of seeing her husband murdered while serving in Ecuador. God took what could have become bitterness and turned it into beauty. Rallied by the support of God's people and the power of the Holy Spirit, Ruth continues in loving service to the people of Latin America, because God first loved her. Gordon College professor, Paul Borthwick, laid the cost on the line as he reminded Urbana delegates that some present in the Assembly Hall that evening would be called to give their very lives for the gospel, enabled by the love of Christ.

Challenged by Brenda Salter-McNeil, Urbana participants had to come face to face with the reality that in order to love the nations we must first love each other, regardless of our color, ethnic background, denomination or theological distinctives. Led by conference chaplain Alex Gee, and Urbana emcee Jimmy McGee, we realized this may involve reconciling ourselves with those we have offended or those who have offended us. It will involve intentional participation in "*becoming a beloved community*". It may involve asking God to forgive us for racist attitudes and denominational arrogance. It will require acting justly,



Curitiba, Brazil — Pictured is Christina Abel, daughter of Missionaries Paul and Becky Abel, with three of her friends. The Abel's oldest daughter, Joanna, spent Christmas in Curitiba and is now back at Hillcrest Academy in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, where she is a senior.

Jerez, Mexico — pictured below is Adriana (Adri) and her three daughters. When Missionaries Dan and Debbie Giles began their new ministry in Jerez last year,

loving mercy and walking humbly with our God (Micah 6:8). And of course, it will involve change: change that is bought about by the conviction of the Holy Spirit and the assurance that God forgives us when we confess our sin.

For many decades dating back to 1946, the triennial Urbana Student Missionary Convention has brought young people from all over the world together to uphold mission as primary, and bring growth to God's global cause. In 1961, World Mission Prayer League Director, Paul Lindell along with Billy Graham, Eugene Nida, Arthur Glasser and Festo Kivenge, challenged students from the Urbana podium, under the theme *Commission, Conflict, Commitment!*

Thank the Lord for Urbana! God willing, the next convention will take place at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign during the college Christmas break of 2003. Let's start praying for it now and thinking of young people we can encourage to attend.



they led a Bible study in a neighborhood home where Adri did housework. One evening she was invited to join the group and come to church. She and her girls are now radiant Christians. Join with this family in praying for their father and husband, that he would come to know Christ.

Harvey and Amy Matheson, Amery, Wisconsin, are with the Giles this winter. "They are a wonderful help in so many ways, and we enjoy their company and fellowship," the Giles wrote. Anyone interested in a winter home with the Giles, contact them at giles@jerezn.net.com.mx



Second in a series on
"A Woman of Excellence"

Priscilla

— Michele Mobley
AFLBS staff member
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Edith Deen in her book "All of the Women of the Bible," described Priscilla as, "One of the most influential women in the New Testament Church" yet her name is mentioned only in the context of approximately six verses of the New Testament. To be quite honest, I knew Priscilla was a Bible character, but my knowledge stopped there. So just how significant is she?

The Apostle Paul's first meeting with Aquila and his wife Priscilla was in Corinth (Acts 18:1-3). Aquila and Priscilla had recently arrived in Corinth from Italy, following Claudius' command that all Jews must leave Rome. The Scripture does not record how Paul came to meet this couple, but we know that they, as Paul, shared the craftsmanship of tent making.

Priscilla opened her home to a man that we can suppose she knew very little of. A seemingly insignificant act, but one which led to great significance in the spiritual life of Priscilla and her husband and also to the life of the future churches of Ephesus and Rome. For even though Paul was met with great opposition from the Jews of Corinth, two Jews

not only received him into their home, but also received the word he was teaching into their hearts. We do not know for sure if Priscilla or Aquila had ever heard of Jesus as the Christ before Paul came to live with them. We do know, though, that God was at work in this couple, for when the time came for Paul to leave Corinth, Priscilla and Aquila were with him (Acts 18:18).

Priscilla and Aquila traveled with Paul as far as Ephesus. I wonder if Priscilla ever pondered how her willingness back in Corinth to make an extra bed, feed an extra mouth, and take on extra laundry had changed the course of her and her husband's life? Priscilla, in a year and six months, had been transformed from a tent maker into a disciple-maker. In Ephesus, she, along with her husband, discipled the great teacher Apollos. Apollos was familiar with the ministry of John the Baptist, but as Priscilla and Aquila explained to Apollos "the way of God more accurately," he went on to Achaia and "greatly helped those who had believed through grace." Apollos used the Scriptures to powerfully proclaim to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

As Paul's ministry continued, so did that of Priscilla and Aquila. Their home, whether in Ephesus or in Rome, was open to the church. In Romans 16:3-5a, Paul writes, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; also greet the church that is in their house." Again in II Timothy 4:19, Paul sends his greetings to this special couple whose ministry was expanding the Church of God.

Significant? Priscilla? Yes! As Paul's relationship with this couple grew and the ministry of Priscilla and Aquila expanded, her name was given honor in its placement before her husband's name. I do not believe Priscilla tried to "steal the show" from her husband as her name is never mentioned without his. I have grown, though, to not only recognize "Priscilla" as a biblical name, but as a name that signifies a woman of obedience. When the call for hospitality or discipleship was given, she was found willing. Priscilla's home most likely needed frequent cleanings and she probably had to keep the "coffee pot" continually on. Bed-time may not have always fallen when she desired and she most likely experienced few moments of "curling up with a good book."

God, though, was glorified through Priscilla's willingness to be used; even in the seemingly "little things." How many opportunities for ministry have I missed because the task seemed too insignificant or inconvenient? How about you? I pray that together we would learn from the life of Priscilla and claim as our own, Paul's frequent farewell to his fellow workers, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (I Corinthians 16:24).



Curitiba, Brazil — Pictured is short-term missionary Sarah Nystrom. Sarah visited with the Paul Abel family at the ARCA, before returning home January 11. She worked at the Miriam Infant Home in Campo Mourão for the past six months. She was supported by her home congregation. Good Shepherd Lutheran in Cokato, Minnesota.

Pastor Michael and Jeannie Brandt, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, left on February 19 for two and a half weeks of ministry in Brazil. Missionary Connely Dyrud, on behalf of the Brazilian AFLC, invited the Brandts to speak at their annual conference.

Pastor Don Richman, Bloomington, Minnesota, attended the 49th Annual National Prayer Breakfast in Washington D.C. on January 31, 2001. After the breakfast and hearing President George W. Bush speak, Pastor Richman spent the rest of the day in sessions led by congressmen.



Lisbon, Portugal — Pictured is a street scene in Lisbon. Missionaries David and Sarah Nelson are three months into their new ministry and getting to know the area and neighbors. They write, "It is a very different culture than what we knew in Brazil. Brazilians generally are very open and friendly. The Portuguese treasure their privacy, and therefore, friendships are established slowly." They request prayer for their congregation, the only Lutheran church in that nation, that they would see growth in maturity and in numbers. They are also seeking guidance for a better meeting place. The Nelsons are praying for favor on the part of the Portuguese government in granting a residence visa.



The Nelsons were happy to meet Valmir, a Brazilian working in Lisbon. He is from a Lutheran church in Curitiba, Brazil.

Two congregations join the AFLC

St. Louis, Missouri — Gloria Dei Lutheran was accepted onto the AFLC congregational roster at the January AFLC Coordinating Committee meeting. The two-year-old congregation meets in a school and is served by Pastor Billy Secoy.

Brownsville, Texas — Free Lutheran Fellowship Church was accepted into the AFLC at the same January meeting. This young congregation began in homes two years ago and currently meets in the Hawthorn Suites Hotel.

Pastor Joseph O'Bell serves the congregation which has members from various Lutheran groups. Pastor O'Bell was originally ordained as a Catholic priest in 1965. In 1979 he joined the Lutheran church. For twenty years he served in a Spanish speaking ministry and an ELCA congregation in Brownsville. The new congregation learned about the

AFLC through the internet and when two members traveled to Faith Lutheran in Weslaco, Texas to visit with Pastor Louis Balderach and his congregation. Winter Texans are welcome to visit the Free Lutheran Fellowship Church. For more information, call Pastor O'Bell at 956-546-7374.



AFLC President Robert Lee (far right) shared dinner with members of the Brownsville congregation after a recent visit.

Nels C. Pedersen, 86, passed away on January 11, 2001 in Decorah, Iowa where he had been in a nursing home since 1999. The son of Andrew and Anna Pedersen, Nels was born on May 26, 1914 in Fairmont, Minnesota. The family moved to a farm near East Chain, Minnesota, where he lived until he went to automotive mechanic school in Cleveland, Ohio. He worked for several years at a Ford garage in Fairmont and married Evelyn Hovland on May 26, 1939. During World War II, Nels worked on B29 bombers, including the Enola Gay for Martin Aircraft in Omaha, Nebraska.

After the war, Nels graduated from the Lutheran Bible Institute in Minneapolis, and began serving churches in Siren and Falun, Wisconsin. He returned to Minneapolis and became a traveling evangelist throughout Minnesota and Canada. His ministry was especially fruitful in Canada; many times spending three to four weeks at a time in that country. He spoke at the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement's Deeper Life Conferences at Medicine Lake, (now known as Mission Farms and

located just north and west of the AFLC campus and headquarters). He accepted the call to travel with the LEM full time and his ministry took on a wider scope. He served with Pastors Sterling Johnson and Ken Ellingson and during some years they would conduct up to 30 area conferences. He retired in 1976.

Retired AFLC Pastor Laurel Udden was the Director of the LEM from 1973-82, and knew Evangelist Pedersen well. "He saved the LEM a lot of money because he could always fix our vans. I remember working with him during the Illinois area conferences and his daily afternoon walks. He sure saw a lot of fruit and probably led more people to the Lord than the rest of us put together. He was really a soul winner."

Nels was preceded in death by his wife, Evelyn, in 1998. He is survived by two daughters and two sons, six grandchildren and one great-grandson. Funeral services were held at Morgan Avenue Lutheran Church in Minneapolis on January 17, with Pastor John Skeie officiating.

Blessed be his memory.

Pastor Ray Ballmann, Kopperl, Texas and pastor of Word of Truth Lutheran Church in Burleson, Texas, returned home with his family from Sunday evening services to see thirteen fire trucks surrounding their burning home. The family lost everything in that January 14, 2001 fire, likely caused by electrical trouble. Ray and Cindy Ballmann have seven children, ages 4 to 21. All were living in their one-year-old home. They lost their home school supplies, office, and business equipment. Cindy collects antiques. Those along with family photos and heirlooms, create an irreplaceable loss. "But we are thankful that no one was hurt and we are all together as a family," said Pastor Ballmann.

Insurance will help the Ballmanns rebuild another home on the same site. However, they were underinsured for their household

items. They are currently searching for a mobile home while cleaning up the lot and rebuilding. Home Missions Director Paul Nash visited the Ballmanns shortly after the fire. One area of help may be sent in the form of gift certificates from K-Mart, Wal-Mart, or Target stores. Their address is Rt. 1 Box 118F, Kopperl, TX 76652-9731. Phone 254-797-3208.

Pastor Greg Schram, Northwood, North Dakota, was accepted on the AFLC Fellowship Clergy Roster at the coordinating committee's January meeting. He serves Ebenezer Lutheran Church which recently joined the AFLC.

Pastor David Barnhart, Melbourne, Florida, will speak at the Emmaus Prophecy Conference during March 8-10, in Bloomington, Minnesota. Call 952-884-4751 for more information.

Kelly Nelson, Minneapolis, Minnesota has served as the AFLBS receptionist for the past year and a half. From January 3-16, 2001, she left the office phones and traveled to Newurengoi, Siberia. She went as one of five team members of Eppic Ministries based in Bloomington, Minnesota; an evangelical, non-denominational organization which shares the gospel in mime.

Newurengoi is a city of about 10,000 and is just below the Arctic Circle in northwest Siberia. Average temperatures ranged from -40 C. to -60 C. Partnering with Russian ministries, the group performed in music halls, churches, orphanages and schools in the Newurengoi area. In spite of the cold, Kelly said, "I enjoyed the hospitable and warm people. They were open to what we shared and asked many questions."

A time of refreshing *Report on the AFLC Pastors' Retreat*

Pastors from around the country gathered at the Association Retreat Center in Osceola, Wisconsin, January 16 to 18 for the 2001 AFLC Pastors' Retreat. The theme was "Refresh My Heart in Christ," taken from Philemon 20.

The retreat began with an evening with the AFLBS choir. Along with sharing musically, various members of the choir gave testimonies about what their pastor means to them: "He lives out his Christian faith." "It's been an

encouragement to see him live his faith everywhere he goes." "Keep on doing what you're doing. ... Thank you for what you do."

The evening ended with some pizza and fellowship time among the pastors and between the pastors and the choir.

Pastor Richard Gunderson led the retreat's Bible hours. Workshops were offered on various topics. Some of the ones included were: opportunities for radio ministry, preaching through adversity, new

tools for ministry, preachers and politics, ministry to college students, ministry in an urban and multicultural environment, and soul care in a crisis.

A recent addition to the AFLC Fellowship Clergy Roster, Dr. John Eidsmoe, a professor of law in Alabama, spoke at the Wednesday evening banquet. He addressed the topic of Christians being involved in politics and the call to be in but not of the world. He sees a need for the "Christian right" of today to have an infusion of Lutheran doctrine and its emphasis on salvation by grace through faith. "The Christian right can mistakenly move toward salvation by works. ... No one is going to be saved by conservative political activity." The need exists to recognize the limits as to how much government can do, and yet church and state have both been ordained by God but with different functions.

The retreat also included a service of Holy Communion and a session on news and discussion about the work of the AFLC.



The AFLBS Choir sang and shared during the opening session of the retreat.



People & Places

Pastor Steven Odegaard, Tioga, North Dakota, resigned as the pastor of Beaver Creek and Norman Lutheran Parish where he has served for thirteen and a half years. He and his wife Linda are moving to Snohomish, Washington where he accepted the call to serve New Hope Lutheran. He begins his new ministry on May 1, 2001.

Pastor Tom Schierkolk, Northome, Minnesota, resigned as the pastor of Hope and Bethesda Lutheran Parish where he has served since 1997, in order to accept the call to Calvary Lutheran in Eben Junction, Michigan. The Schierkolks expect to begin their new ministry in the middle of June. Calvary Lutheran has been without a full-time pastor for nearly three years.

Pastor S. Jerome Elness, of Our Redeemer Free Lutheran Church in Superior, Wisconsin, is organizing and hosting an 18-day tour to China and Hong Kong, June 13-30, 2001. He is a former Lutheran Free Church missionary to Taiwan and Hong Kong and has hosted five previous tours to these nations. This year's tour will include Beijing, the Great Wall, the Ming Tombs, Tiananmen Square, a cruise on the Yangtze River and numerous other highlights. Pastor Elness speaks both Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese and has an understanding of the history and culture. There will be opportunities to visit Christian churches and seminaries in China and Hong Kong. For more information call: 218-724-1068.

AFLC 2001 Budget Percentages

Following is a list showing how gifts to the AFLC are divided. These are gifts that are not designated and are over \$80.

General Fund 24%
AFLBS 15%
AFLTS 11%
World Missions 18%
Home Missions 22%
Capital Investment 1%
Parish Education 7%
Church Extension 2%

AFLC memorials

December 2000 to January 2001

Department given to In memory of

AFLBS

Hazel Wahlberg
David Jacobson
Erling Hoseth
Alice Hagen
Ervin Foote
Kenneth Eggen
Esther Burton
Ella Blestrud
Mildred Qualley

Vision 2004

Geneva Engh
Albert Bartsch
Edwin M. Anderson
Harriet Dalager
Virgil Newell
Vernon Nelson
David Jacobson

AFLTS

Dorothy Pentti
Herb Suelzle
Harriet Dalager
Gordon Hanson

Youth Ministries

Clara Grove

F.L.A.P.S.

Robert A. Olson
Jordan Walker

Evangelism

Dorothy Pentti
David Jacobson
Billie Jo Kjelland

Parish Education

Vernon Nelson

General Fund

David Jacobson
In Honor of Dorothy Presteng

Home Missions

Adeline Rundhaug
Ed Janda
David Jacobson
Hulda Ruprecht
Timothy Knapp
Paul Midgarden
Gene Berg

World Missions

Harriet Dalager
Leroy Jurgens
Gertie Joens
Ida Louise Kroenke
Nels Pedersen
In Honor of Betty Schroeder

Association Retreat Center

Peter Westlake

Legacies

Florence Lundsten to
Church Extension

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (1 month) – January 1 - January 31, 2001

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN JANUARY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$267,241.00	\$33,293.20	33,293.20	12
Seminary	126,462.00	14,706.70	14,706.70	12
Bible School	162,545.00	17,254.17	17,254.17	11
Home Missions.	242,838.00	25,830.37	25,830.37	11
World Missions.	206,762.00	21,595.06	21,595.06	10
Capital Investment	9,490.00	886.54	886.54	9
Parish Education	78,302.00	9,949.67	9,949.67	13
Church Extension	26,119.00	1,249.56	1,249.56	5
TOTALS	\$1,119,759.00	124,765.27	124,765.27	11
TOTALS 2000	1,147,510.00	97,122.73	97,122.73	8
Goal 8%				

All kinds of training needed

On a football team it is not only the quarterback who receives instruction from the coach. Various coaches work with the defensive players. Others train those who block. Some give special attention to those who run the ball and others to those who catch it. Even the kickers usually have their own special assistant coach.

Each player on the team gets training and instruction. That applies to football teams and to congregations.

We have a seminary to train men to serve as pastors of local congregations. That is an important and needed ministry and plays a vital role in the future of our association. But those who have been called to serve in the local church in other ways, those who play a different position than pastor, need training as well.

Not everyone is called to be a pastor. The questions are asked in I Corinthians 12:29: "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?" The context indicates that the answer is, "no." Not everyone who is a member of God's family receives the same calling, but everyone has some type of calling. To prepare for those unique callings, training is needed.

Before the questions in I Corinthians the declaration is made, "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it" (I Corinthians 12:27, NIV). Then he goes on to list some of the wide variety of positions to which God has appointed people and gifts He has given. People can effectively and powerfully serve the Lord in all kinds of ways. The message is clear: everyone who believes in Jesus is part of the team and every part of the team is important. For the team to function best, each part needs to be prepared to serve in the ways God has called them.

Part of the vision behind the start of the Ministry Training Institute on the campus of the AFLC schools this past year was the recognition of the wide range of callings in God's kingdom. The institute's director for the first year, Missionary Todd Schierkolk, recently described it as "an excellent place of preparation for people who believe God has called them to the foreign field but who may feel led to a ministry other than that of an ordained pastor."

The Bible school is also a place of preparation. The majority attending AFLBS are not called to be pastors, but they still are called to important roles on God's team and training for them is vital.

A player who practices hard, follows the coach's instructions, but never gets to play in the game, often gets frustrated. He wants to put the training he has received to use.

In the body of Christ no one is called to only receive training. Sometimes at schools or seminars, camps or conferences, the temptation can arise to think it would be good to just remain there, taking in the good instruction. But God wants us to have a desire to get in the game, to go out into the world serving Him and spreading the good news of His love. Jesus said, "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world" (John 17:18, NIV). He also gave the command, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations ..." (Matthew 28:19, NIV).

The Lord wants His people to be prepared, but the goal is for us to eventually leave the place of preparation and enter the place of service. He describes the work of those who train in Ephesians 4:12: "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

At our AFLC schools people are being prepared to serve. We hope they love their time of training, but that they love serving in the local congregation even more. And for the local congregation and our association of congregations, the need exists to be prepared to give those being trained opportunities to serve.

It can become quite easy to develop a limited vision as to the ways in which people can serve. The students being trained today have unique talents and gifts they have received from God. They may be called to serve in ways unlike what is presently going on in our congregations.

Sometimes a coach discovers a player who has a unique talent. He then may change his offense around to make use of this player's special skills. The goal of scoring touchdowns remains the same, but because of the players he has the coach does some changes to the way he attempts to reach the goal.

Likewise in a congregation, our goal of spreading the good news of Jesus is unchanging. The ways of reaching that goal, however, may change. The congregation is to make use of the players God has given it.

Players are being trained at our schools today and preparing to serve. We look forward to seeing the unique ways in which the Lord will use them in His service in the years ahead.

—Pastor Craig Johnson

"The congregation is to make use of the players God has given it."

SOMETHING TO SHARE

Some thoughts gathered while harvesting

Living on a farm has opened my mind to so many truths so plainly, that had I lived in the city, I fear I would've missed them. Metaphors and parables of all kinds come from men, too, but (aside from those of our Lord) the most perfect of these come from creation itself, and the means by which we interact with what has been created — in this case, the harvest.

As the sun was setting one day last fall, casting its otherworldly glow over the fields of grain near my home, I was alone in one of these fields, with a combine beneath me and a truck set on the horizon.

The harvest was abundant. The grain came from the heads to the hopper with such wild and sweet abandon one would think the kernels somehow knew this was what they had been waiting for. And as I pushed the harvest on further with a quiet joy, I considered how much more a fruitful harvest stirred these emotions than one of less reward.

I considered how much more thrilling it will be when we set to the fields of souls waiting to know the Hand who placed them there — how much more reward if many seeds have been planted rather than

a few. And in this I considered a potential misconception in my understanding of evangelism.

Though the harvest is the consummation of a long season of growth, it cannot (by any standard) be considered all there is to farming. One who knows anything of the soil or the seasons knows there is much to the nurture of a seed from the ground upward — including that of the seed getting there in the first place — that causes the harvest to be what it is.



Sometimes I fear I shrink from opportunities to witness because I haven't recently memorized the four spiritual laws, or I feel I lack the energy or wit to guide a soul to the praying of the sinner's prayer. But to understand the soil and the sea-

"I tell you, open your eyes
and look at the fields!
They are ripe for harvest."
— Jesus (John 4:35)

sons is to also understand that we're not all combines all the time.

In I Corinthians 3:6, Paul explains that he planted, and Apollos watered (yet God caused the growth). What I see here, I understand.

On the farm, we don't cultivate the soil with combines, and we don't sow with them either. In the advancement of God's Kingdom, we are, in the Master's hands, tools that are crafted for His unique purpose in any given moment of time.

By being sensitive to the Spirit's guiding, we may know whether we are called, in any specific encounter, to cultivate the heart with truth, to plant a seed with the Word, or to gather a soul into the Kingdom with a prayer. And indeed we are called! So the responsibility is still ours — not to change a heart, but to be a willing tool in the hand of the One who can.

So today I exhort my soul: please, sow with abandon! Sow generously and passionately! Sow often, sow well — watching and waiting always for the field that awaits a combine. Having sowed much, the harvest you reap for your Master will be generous and passionate as well.

— **Jeremy Erickson**
Badger, Minnesota