

# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

January 8, 2002

## EVANGELISM

*The heartbeat of Heaven*

### Features

#### Fishers of men

Commission  
on Evangelism  
offers lay seminars.



4

#### The source

When looking  
for answers,  
the place to go  
is the Word of  
God.



10

#### Now what?

Follow-up  
means  
giving new  
Christians a  
strong foundation.



15

# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

January 8, 2002  
Volume 40, Number 1



The magazine of the Association of  
Free Lutheran Congregations, 3110  
East Medicine Lake Blvd.,  
Minneapolis, MN 55441.  
763-545-5631

**Editor:** Rev. Craig Johnson  
**Assistant to the Editor:**  
Ruth Gunderson

**Editorial Board:** Rev. John Mundfrom,  
Oryen Benrud, Rev. Jerry Moan, Rev.  
James L. Johnson.

## CONTENTS

Reach out to those in times of trial	page 6
Evangelism is a team effort	page 8
Passing the torch to a new generation	page 12
Talk about Jesus	page 14

### The Lutheran Ambassador

(USPS 588-620 ISSN 0746-3413)

is published every three weeks except  
monthly in June and July (16 issues per  
year) by the Association of Free Lutheran  
Congregations.

### For editorial inquiries and information:

The Lutheran Ambassador, 3110 E. Med-  
icine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441;  
763-545-5631; fax 763-545-0079;  
e-mail [craigj@teleport.com](mailto:craigj@teleport.com)  
[ruthg@aflc.org](mailto:ruthg@aflc.org)

### For subscription changes and informa-

**tion:** The Lutheran Ambassador, 3110 E.  
Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Min-  
nesota 55441. 763-545-5631 or e-mail at  
[luthamb@aflc.org](mailto:luthamb@aflc.org)

### Subscriptions rates:

- \$15.00 a year, Group Rate, U. S.
- \$16.00 a year, Individual, U. S.
- \$18.00 a year, International

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

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

## AN ENCOURAGING WORD

### Coming to our senses

**C**an you imagine stepping  
out of your car into three  
inches of bright, fresh  
snow. It looks like a great  
place for a walk. You hear

it crunch with each step as it com-  
pacts under your feet. The hairs in  
your nose seem to freeze each time  
you inhale the 28-degree air. With  
your right hand in your pocket fid-  
dling with 48 cents in change and  
your left hand holding a cold, yel-  
lowish/red Royal Gala apple, with  
its stem tightly clenched between  
your index and middle fingers, you  
slowly make your way toward a  
nearby pond that is surrounded by a  
wide assortment of trees. You pause  
for a moment to soak in the beauty  
and savor the taste of your juicy  
apple.

Within seconds you find yourself  
accompanied by about 500 mallard  
ducks, 20 ring-billed gulls, a dozen or  
so domestic geese, a few Chinese  
geese, a couple of squirrels and a  
half-dozen white trumpeter swans  
who decide to stay in the water.  
They're all talking to you. Can you  
hear them? They're quite loud.  
Webbed feet are flopping in the snow  
all around you. A Chinese goose tries  
to bite your apple. You hear the sound  
of a few reddish/orange berries hit  
the ground after brushing by an over-  
hanging mountain ash tree. A distant  
train whistle. The honk of a car. The  
sound and smell of a diesel pickup  
truck. The bark of a dog. The sight of  
a snow-covered playground 50 yards  
ahead of you.

Your senses are coming alive.

The birds let you continue the  
walk alone, except for one black swan  
with a red bill that floats alongside  
you. You look into the swan's eyes,  
and with your senses in overdrive,  
God speaks to you: "You will be ever  
hearing but never understanding; you  
will be ever seeing but never perceiv-  
ing. For this people's heart has  
become calloused; they hardly hear  
with their ears, and they have closed

their eyes. Otherwise they might see  
with their eyes, hear with their ears,  
understand with their hearts and  
turn, and I would heal them" (Mat-  
thew 13:14-15).

Over the next few issues, I will be  
encouraging you to exercise your  
senses, both physically and spiritual-  
ly. We will explore various Scripture  
passages that speak of the five senses:  
hear, touch, smell, see and taste. We  
will see how God uses these metaphors  
to teach us wonderful things and draw  
us into a closer relationship with  
Him.

Regarding Jesus, God has said,  
"This is My Son, whom I love. Listen  
to Him" (Mark 9:7). And from Psalm  
34:8, "Taste and see that the Lord is  
good ..." Spiritually speaking, if we  
don't exercise these senses, if we  
don't taste and see His goodness, if  
we don't smell the fragrance of His  
grace, if we don't touch the robe of  
His righteousness, if we don't listen  
to His tender voice, we run the risk of  
becoming desensitized — no longer  
sensitive to the things of the Lord. If  
we "come to our senses," we avoid  
that condition.

It is also my hope that through  
examples and practical suggestions we  
will discover ways to better appreciate  
the physical senses God has blessed us  
with. Even if we're lacking in some  
(i.e. hard of hearing, blind, etc.),  
appreciating what we do have will  
greatly enhance our experiences this  
side of heaven. Let's explore it togeth-  
er.

You better head back to your car  
now. Unless, of course, you'd like to  
see what it feels like to slide down  
that curvy slide into that pile of snow.

Come on, let's do it!



— Paul  
Kneeland  
Youth Pastor  
Faith &  
Stillwater Free  
Lutheran  
Kalispell, Mont.

## Sound Bites

Truth be told,  
evangelism often  
fails to happen  
because in our  
innermost being  
we don't really

**1** care much about people who are outside of God's family. We see them as a nuisance, a bad influence, or even as the enemy. We need to let God change our minds and warm our hearts toward those he loves so much.

— *Mark Mittelberg*

Mission had to be a central concern for the congregation,  
Sverdrup asserted, for no

**4** one could have the spirit of truth without wanting to share it. Sverdrup subscribed to the general idea of

mission work, as expressed by him in pious terms: the gospel was entrusted to the congregation, not to enable the congregation to possess the message for itself, but so that it could allow the light to shine both at home and abroad.

— *James Hamre, "Georg Sverdrup: Educator, Theologian, Churchman"*

**2**

The purpose of too many evangelical churches has fallen from one of glorifying God simply to growing larger.

— *Mark Dever*

**3**

Mission and evangelism should come as naturally to the Christian church as breathing.

— *Eberhard Jungel*

**5**

I believe that the real incentive for witnessing comes from the worship of God. It is the adoring love of Christ that compels me to declare the glory of His grace.

— *Robert Coleman*

# EVANGELISM

# Fishers of men

## The AFLC's Commission on Evangelism offers seminars on "Fishing in the 21st Century"

**A**s hunters were out on the opening day of deer season this fall, four men from Our Savior's Free Lutheran in Argyle, Minn., headed to East Grand Forks, Minn., for a "fishing seminar." Members of Christ the King Lutheran hosted the "Fishing in the 21st Century" as sponsored by the AFLC Commission on Evangelism. There were individuals from nearly 30 congregations present to take in the teachings.

Pastors Joel Rolf, Tim Johnson and Dale Finstrom each gave anointed and inspirational messages. There were various concurrent sessions on methods of evangelizing, including helpful hints and tools to be used for evangelism.

The main emphasis was that each believer is called by Christ to be a fisher of men. Jesus told Peter and the disciples He would make them fishers of men. They weren't all well educated and trained in how to evangelize. Jesus wasn't looking for ability. Rather, He sought availability. We need to make ourselves available to the Holy Spirit's leading.

It is surprising what can be done when we step out of our comfort zone. Don't panic. God won't give us more than what we can handle. "Quietly trust yourself to Christ your Lord, and if anybody asks why you believe as you do, be ready to tell him, and do it in a gentle and respectful way" (I Peter 3:15). God's Word is the key. Rely on the Bible, not your opinion, and who can argue with you?

A fisherman prepares before he goes out fishing. So we, too, must prepare ourselves by going to the

Lord in prayer. Pray for the desire to effectually go forth. Pray for the Lord to show you whom you should talk to. Pray for wisdom and a gentle spirit. Pray that the work you do will give glory to God. Pray for open doors. Pray for strength. Pray for protection.

Each church should be doing some evangelism training already. One is by means of Sunday school and adult Bible study. From the teaching of salvation through Jesus Christ, each child and adult should be able to tell his or her neighbor about Jesus. There are family members that hear about the good news from their children. I'm sure many of you never thought of Sunday school as evangelism training.

The Christmas programs that are presented in our churches are another opportunity to present the message of salvation. Each year there are family members, parents, grandparents and friends that attend our Sunday school Christmas program. Everyone in attendance hears from the spoken word and song that Jesus came to this Earth to save and redeem — a message that is pure and simple, easy for all to understand. Scripture says that God's Word will not return void. Seeds are being planted. What is your church doing to equip the saints for witnessing?

You must seriously ask yourself if you want people to be saved. You cannot be effective in your witnessing if you do not desire others to be saved. You need a heart for the unsaved. II Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is ... not willing that any should perish, but that



# FEELTISM

all should come to repentance.” God wants everyone to know His Son as his or her Savior. Do you?

“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my father in heaven” (Matthew 10:32). We are commanded to tell people about Jesus.

Do you desire to be known as a Christian? Are you afraid to let people know? Is the Christian lifestyle something you wish to share with others? Can people tell by your actions that you are a Christian? Do you really want people to be saved? Are you willing to share Christ with others?

Take your church hymnal and look up the song, “Tell Me the Story of Jesus.” Can you visualize someone coming up to you and asking these questions? If someone were to ask you to tell him or her the story of Jesus, what would you say? Are you willing to let the Holy Spirit work through you? Do you wish to share the good news? How important is it to you?

Everyone who left Christ the King Lutheran that evening was challenged to go out and evangelize: not under our own power, but that of the Holy Spirit. The need is great to share the good news of salvation. As Scripture says, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few” (Luke 10:2). God is asking you to do your part.

I wish you well on your next fishing trip.

— *Tim Urbaniak*  
*Our Savior's Free Lutheran*  
*Argyle, Minn.*



# Outreach

## Seize the opportunity

**A**ccidents, injuries, cancer, heart problems or other serious diseases; the burden of broken relationships, homes and families; the heart-wrenching grief over the suffering and death of loved ones; the stress and uncertainties of daily life. These are some of the trials people face in the course of life. No one enjoys these trials. No one looks forward to them. No one would even choose to face them.

And yet, it is often through hard times like these that God is able to reach through and win hearts and lives for Jesus.

I know this from personal experience. It was in the darkest hour of my life that God was finally able to break through my sin-hardened heart and bring me to faith in Christ. The details of how God did this will be clear in my memory as long as I live.

I was 18 years old and looking forward to college when I received news of the tragic death of my best friend. His death rocked my life like none other had ever done. I met Mark in eighth grade when my family moved to a new neighborhood. I didn't know anyone in my new school, but Mark quickly accepted me as a friend. His acceptance caused others to do the same. We had much in common, and through the years our friendship grew stronger and stronger. After graduation, Mark took a summer job out of town. But on a trip home he fell asleep at the wheel, went off the road and was killed instantly.

The following months were the most difficult, hopeless, grief-filled days of my life. I was stunned by Mark's death and lost all interest in the details of life. I didn't care about school or my job or even about my family and friends who loved me. It seemed that no one understood the loss I was feeling or seemed to care, and I was totally alone. So I quickly reached the point where I didn't feel life was worth living anymore.

It was at this low point of despair and darkness in my life that God was reaching out to me in His love and mercy – longing to heal my hurts, forgive my sins, save

my soul and give me a purpose for this life and eternity.

He did this through several Christians who didn't know me well but who cared enough to reach out to me. They were teachers, classmates and strangers who loved the Lord, saw that I was hurting and knew Jesus could meet the needs of my heart. So they patiently and lovingly kept seeking to get involved in my life.

They invited me to a lock-in at a local church where people my age were having a great time without alcohol or drugs. These peers had a peace and joy that struck me the moment I walked into the church gymnasium.

They invited me to home Bible studies where they talked about Jesus as though He was in the room and active in their lives.

Finally, they invited me to a series of evangelistic services being held in our city. There, on the opening night, I heard clearly for the first time the way of salvation. I heard I was a sinner, that Jesus died for me and would forgive my sin and grant me eternal life if I would simply surrender my heart to Him in repentance. Jesus saved me that evening.

Trials provide a wonderful opportunity to reach hurting people for Jesus. People facing trials are usually far more receptive to the Lord than at any other time.

Christians, if you have friends or loved ones going through trials, seize the opportunity! Get involved in their lives. Empathize with them. Shower them with compassion, understanding and unconditional love. Show you care and, more importantly, that God cares for them. Pray for them and introduce them to Jesus because He is the only one who can meet the needs of their lives and souls.

— *Pastor Brian Pearson*  
*St. Olaf Lutheran*  
*Montgomery, Ill.*



MISERY  
PAIN  
CANCER  
DEATH  
GRIEF TRIALS  
DISEASE



# TEAM EFFORT





**I**f Christian outreach wasn't intended to be a team effort, Jesus could have just stayed on this Earth and done it all Himself. But He didn't. Instead, He trained disciples and sent them out with a mission to train others to do the same. Thus we have the principle of multiplication. So many more can be reached if the church continues to train people to reach others rather than leaving outreach in the hands of a few. Team effort is clearly God's plan.

What hinders churches from this team effort? I am convinced that one of the biggest hindrances to team effort is the pastor and parishioners' misconceptions about what each of their roles are to be in the local congregation.

Years ago, I read a book by John Stott that stimulated my thinking in this area. In the book, "One People: Laymen and Clergy in God's Church," Stott suggests these views of the relationship between clergy and laity:

**Clericalism:** That is the clerical domination of the laity. Sometimes "... laity plead they have no time, or that they are untrained and prefer to leave things to the expert, or that they bear heavy responsibilities in the world and would prefer to be passive and docile and occupy a back seat in the Church. And with such pleas they hand over to the clergy obligations and privileges, which are theirs by divine right as Christian people." At the same time, there may be others in congregations crying out for meaningful ministry and instead being limited and held back by the pastor.

**Anticlericalism:** "The laity wishing the clergy didn't exist." You can get the picture without further explanation on that one.

**Dualism:** "Both laity and clergy exist with separate territories into which the other must never trespass." I believe we need to break down some barriers and share ministry opportunities more freely as God opens doors for and gifts people in the local congregation.

**Service:** "The laity are the Church and they (the clergy) are appointed to serve them, to seek to equip them to be what God intends them to be." This is the principle described in Ephesians 4:11.

At Bethel Free Lutheran, we have seen God expand some of our ministries when we have developed official teams to minister in each area. For instance, two years ago, after years of repeatedly wearing out our youth advisers, we mapped out a Youth Ministry Team concept. Then we called people to serve in each area. They include an elder, adult counselors, parent advisers, youth representatives and, some years, a hired part-time youth director. The feeling of being part of a team is evident at each planning meeting and in our weekly ministry. Since we had seen God bless our youth ministry through this team concept, this year we decided to try

the same thing with our Wednesday night kid's club. We now have a WINGS ministry team that is working together to minister to our children and reach out to others. Our elder board is looking into the possibility of this next year developing a Visitation Team as well. I personally am beginning to see that our entire ministry in a local congregation needs to be a team effort, whether it is an organized, structured team that has set meeting times, or only a mindset in the congregation.

We need each other. We are not all created by God with the same personality types or personal styles. But God can accomplish great things in and through us when we put aside petty differences and opinions on insignificant things and focus together on our mission of building followers of Jesus Christ. We are not all gifted by God in the same way. We are, instead, like parts of the human body. Each part has a specific function to fulfill (I Corinthians 12:1-31). Together, we make up the body of Christ. What a tremendous privilege is ours, to be part of His body and have a part in impacting the world of our day with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

How is this team concept carried out in the outreach of a congregation? There is a family who has come to be a part of our fellowship in the last year. A couple years ago, a neighbor of theirs, knowing they

didn't attend church anywhere, had invited them to come to our church. But it was much later that God seemed to stamp an impression on one of the parent's hearts that it was time to start going to church as a family.

They began exploring churches. They found that after a service they would get in the car and ask each other, "what did you think?" Several different Sundays they ended up saying to each other, "What was he talking about anyway?" Then one Sunday they visited Bethel and after the service said, "Now, that I understood." And so they came back again. They found a sense of warmth in the congregation, and were invited to stay for potluck dinners. They enrolled their children in Sunday school and confirmation class, and found caring teachers. The parents went through a membership exploration class. And this fall, as a public profession of faith, they took the step of membership. Many parishioners shared in the outreach to this family in many different ways. It was a team effort.

I am thankful to be a part of one of the warmest, friendliest congregations I know, and to see God working among us to build more and more of a team concept of ministry as we together seek to build followers of Jesus Christ!

— *Pastor Lloyd Quanbeck*  
*Bethel Free Lutheran*  
*Minot, N.D.*



# Go to The Source

*Looking for answers? Read God's Word*

**Y**es, there was a man named Nicholas who secretly gave gifts to needy children. But the idea of what he did has evolved into the modern-day fairy tale of Santa Claus. By now, most of us know that Santa is not real. But how do we know that God is real?

Many people do not believe He is.

If the true meaning of Christmas sounds like a fairy tale to you, if you are someone who must have proof, then go to the source, ask God to reveal Himself to you. You might say something like, "God, if you are real then please show yourself to me and please give me the eyes to see you."

And then watch for the ways. God reveals Himself in many ways.

One way is through Jesus. Hebrews 1 says, "in these last days he has spoken to us by his son ... The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being ..." Read Matthew, Mark, Luke and John to find out about Jesus' life. From beginning to end, the Bible is the best book resource we have.

God also reveals himself through other people. Talk to and spend some time with several people who call themselves born again Christians. Their lives can be a strong witness.

God also uses prayer. Philippians 4:6 says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." He wants us to talk to Him.

Nature is another incredible way in which God reveals Himself to us. Look around you and research the evidence. Creation is not a theory. Read Genesis.

For me, Christian radio continues to have a huge impact in my life. Try listening to only Christian radio for a few months. Then listen to the secular stations. The emptiness and promotion of sin will be obvious. There is a popular Twin Cities Christian station that has been in business for more than 50

years. How could they get away with a lie for that long?

Maybe you are someone who accepts that God exists and that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, but the knowledge of that has not really penetrated your life. You are happy with the way your life is. You don't need "religion." Things are going well for you. Or maybe you are afraid you'll have to give up things you enjoy. Has someone who calls himself Christian let you down? Does he or she seem hypocritical? To you, I would say, I was there. I acknowledged His existence and even prayed during rough times. But soon, I forgot about Him when all was fine. The Christians I knew were considered outcasts, and all I wanted to do was blend in with the crowd.

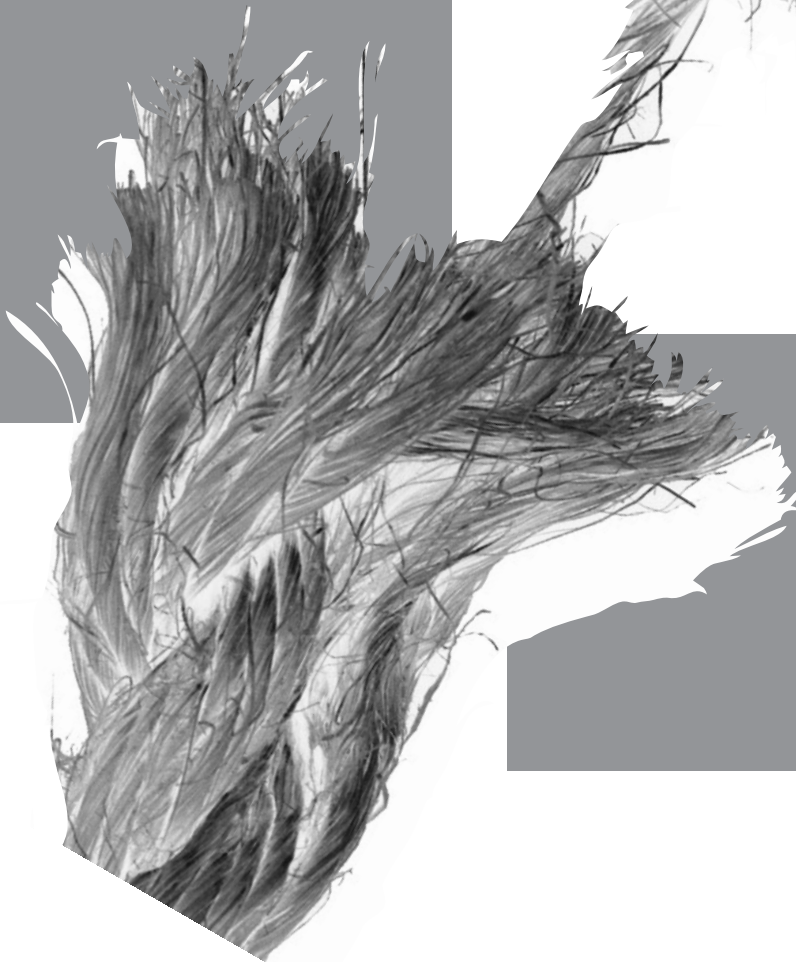
That is, until I met a Christian that really impressed me about the same time that the "crowd" no longer did — which I believe was no coincidence. Jesus used her friendship to help me see Him. She truly mirrored Him. Before Christ changed me, I didn't think I was so bad compared to a lot of people. Now I see how selfish, sinful and weak I really was.

If you are someone who is ready to receive the forgiveness, healing and hope that only Jesus can give, then pray the following prayer. Make it your own in your heart and allow Jesus to change your life: "Dear Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I know that you came to Earth on Christmas, lived a perfect life and died for me, to pay for my sins. Please forgive me and make me one of your own, that I may live in heaven with you for all eternity. Amen." 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." II Corinthians 5:17 assures us that "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come."

— **Lori Stowell**  
**Solid Rock Free Lutheran**  
**Anoka, Minn.**



The Son is  
the radiance of  
God's glory  
and the exact  
representation  
of His being.  
Hebrews 1



Has someone who calls  
himself Christian let you  
down? Does  
he or she seem  
hypocritical? To you,  
I would say, I was there.





Our passion for God's Word  
won't last unless we share it

**ass it o**



“**F**or the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the Earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His,”  
(II Chronicles 16:9).

“This is too good to be true,” was the phrase that echoed through my mind when I had my first encounter with the AFLC. After a disillusioning experience at a larger seminary, I was longing to find a Lutheran seminary and church body where allegiance to the Bible and evangelism (soul-winning) was a priority. After a brief meeting with the dean of the Free Lutheran Seminary, Dr. Iver Olson, my spirit was hesitantly joyful. Joyful, because God had led me to a place where the inerrant Word of God was believed and taught. Joyful, because the primary concern for men and women, boys and girls was the salvation of their souls through faith in Christ alone. Hesitant, because I wondered, “How long will it last?” Hesitant, because I had already witnessed other Christ-centered churches slowly drift away from the Word. Their description would best be characterized by the words of Jesus in Revelation 3:15-16, “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot, I would that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot or cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.” Would the AFLC also drift into a lukewarm, even cold, state?

How had this lukewarm spirit come to prevail in churches that once honored Christ? In most cases, it happened gradually. First, the authority of the Word of God was undermined. Obedience became optional. The great commission became the great omission. The evangelization of souls became a sidelight rather than a priority. Religious rituals and the misuse of the sacraments replaced a living, born again, relationship with Jesus Christ. “Churchianity” took the place of heartfelt Christianity. Church dogma and the philosophies of theologians were given priority. As time progressed, the Bible was called into question. The seriousness of sin was diminished. Genuine repentance and confession of sin were superseded by a “feel-good-about-yourself” theology. The need for a sinless Savior and His cleansing blood were no longer treasured but considered sadistic. Even His bodily resurrection became optional. His second coming was canceled and in an attempt to foster tolerance, Christ was relegated to being one amongst many spiritual guides. Lukewarmness and, eventually, coldness were inescapable.

Sadly, the process of becoming lukewarm

only takes the carelessness of one generation. Its evidence has been noted repeatedly in Israel’s spiritual history. When the leaders’ hearts were wholly His, they and the nation were blessed. When leaders passed this conviction on to their successors, the blessing continued. However, when a king’s heart was compromised or his descendants turned to other gods, the hand of God’s blessing was removed. Without wholly committed leaders, compromise was inevitable. With few exceptions, if one leader failed to pass on the baton of genuine faith, the next generation suffered the consequences of becoming lukewarm.

Remember my question, “How long will it last?” Now, there is, however, a significant difference to consider. The first time I asked that question, I was an outsider looking in. Now, I am an insider who needs to look within. As far as I am concerned, the whole weight of that question hinges on two vital issues. The first is answered in II Chronicles 16:9. When my heart is wholly His, allegiance to His Word will be my first priority. Thus, the answer in part is, “It will last as long as the commitment of those whose heart is completely His.”

Secondly, the answer hinges on my commitment to pass it on. Leaders need to consciously pass on the heritage of a Word-centered, soul-winning faith. When anyone takes this for granted, disaster strikes. Yes, it must be taught, but it must also be caught. The moment it is assumed that the next generation will automatically carry on this Biblical conviction, the flames of a burning faith will begin to flicker and fade. Coolness toward the Word and the salvation of souls will eventually turn to coldness.

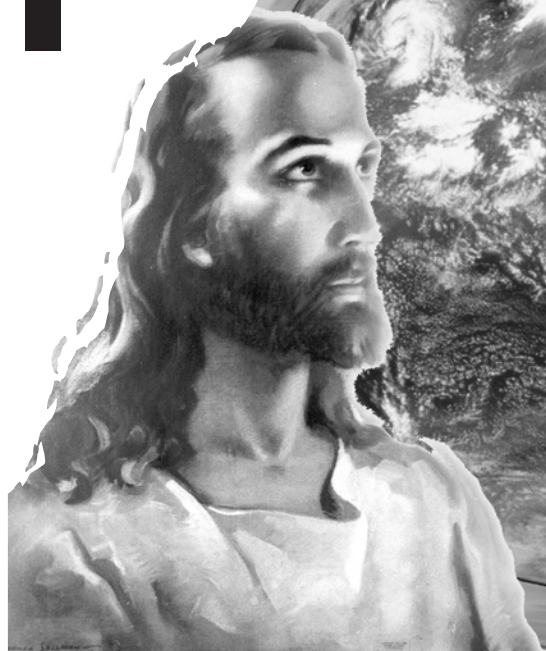
Our AFLC, its congregations and ministries are not exempt. Unless we are vigilant, what has sadly happened to others can happen to us. Each believer, each congregation, and each leader in our AFLC must take accountability for faithfully holding and passing on the heritage of a Word-centered, evangelistic faith.

By the way, how is it in your life and in your congregation? Like it or not, it also hinges on your heart being wholly His. By His grace, Christ is counting on you to pass on this heritage of a living faith. Your family, your church, the AFLC are counting on you. May all who come behind us find us faithful. Then our final answer will be, “It will last until Jesus comes again!”

— **Pastor Michael Brandt**  
*Abiding Savior Free Lutheran*  
*Sioux Falls, S.D.*







# Talk about Jesus

**Muslims need to hear the good news of Jesus. The purpose of this series is to provide practical ideas for sharing this news with a Muslim friend.**

As Islam continues to make the headlines of our newspapers and magazines, one of the growing concerns for believers today is how to talk to our Muslim friends, colleagues or neighbors about the Good News.

Our initial reaction is to think that the average Muslim is miles away from us in belief and behavior, and, therefore, we really don't have much in common with him or her. However, upon simple study of the faith of Islam, one finds that there is much common ground and that our Muslim friends are ready to discuss, compare and argue subjects of religion.

For example, in the Qur'an, there is much to say about the character of God (He has 99 beautiful names), the importance of prayer and fasting, true faith and piety, morality, sin and the prophets. And of the 124,000 prophets in Islam, Jesus is revered as one of the greatest.

One of the most effective "tools" we can use in conversation is to

bring up some of the names of Jesus in the Qur'an and/or verses that refer to Him. It is very acceptable to our Muslim brothers and sisters to compliment them on the way Jesus is so respectfully referred to in the Qur'an.

Jesus is mentioned 93 times in the Qur'an — more times than Muhammad. There are nine specific names by which Jesus is called, each of which we would find agreeable, if not powerful: Jesus, the Messiah, the Word of God, the Spirit from God, Prophet, Messenger of God, the Word of Truth, Sign and Illustrious/Honorable. Along with these names, some of His miracles are mentioned as well.

Here is one of the most clear verses in the Qur'an about Jesus: "Behold, the angels said, 'O Mary! God giveth thee glad tidings of a Word from Him: His name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honor in this world and the hereafter and the company of those nearest to God'" (Surah 3:45).

There are no other "prophets" in the Qur'an who have the above credentials or who are referred to so gloriously in this world and the next.

If we are able to connect on such common ground as the names and character of Jesus, we are on our way to helping our Muslim friend to learn more about the real Jesus. Respecting what this book, the Qur'an, says about Jesus and what it says about other topics will open the door for us to share ideas from the Bible.

So, the next time you have an opportunity to engage in a conversation with your Muslim friend, step out by faith and talk about Jesus. You will most likely be the first American Christian to discuss "religion" with him or her, and the interaction will bring a whole new spiritual richness into your life.

— **Abdul Malik**

*Note: The author (using a pen name which literally means "Slave of the King") has lived in the Middle East for 16 years and has been working with Muslims for 25 years.*



# UP FOLLOW

## GIVING NEW CHRISTIANS A STRONG FOUNDATION

**L**uke 6:46-49 records these words of Jesus: “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When the flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like the man who built his house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house it collapsed and its destruction was complete.”

Follow-up with new Christians is comparable to Christ’s use of the word “foundation” in the passage above. Just as it is necessary to build a good concrete foundation for a house, it’s even more necessary to provide a new believer with an adequate spiritual foundation for Christian life. One of Stan’s favorite targets is the new Christian, who needs to learn how to overcome his temptations.

A Christian foundation consists of the basics:

- Assurance of salvation: I John 5:11-13
- How to deal with sin: I John 1:9
- Ministry of the Holy Spirit: John 14:16-17
- How to use the Bible: II Timothy 3:16-17
- How to pray: Matthew 6:9-13
- Fellowship: Hebrews 10:24-25
- Witnessing: Acts 1:8

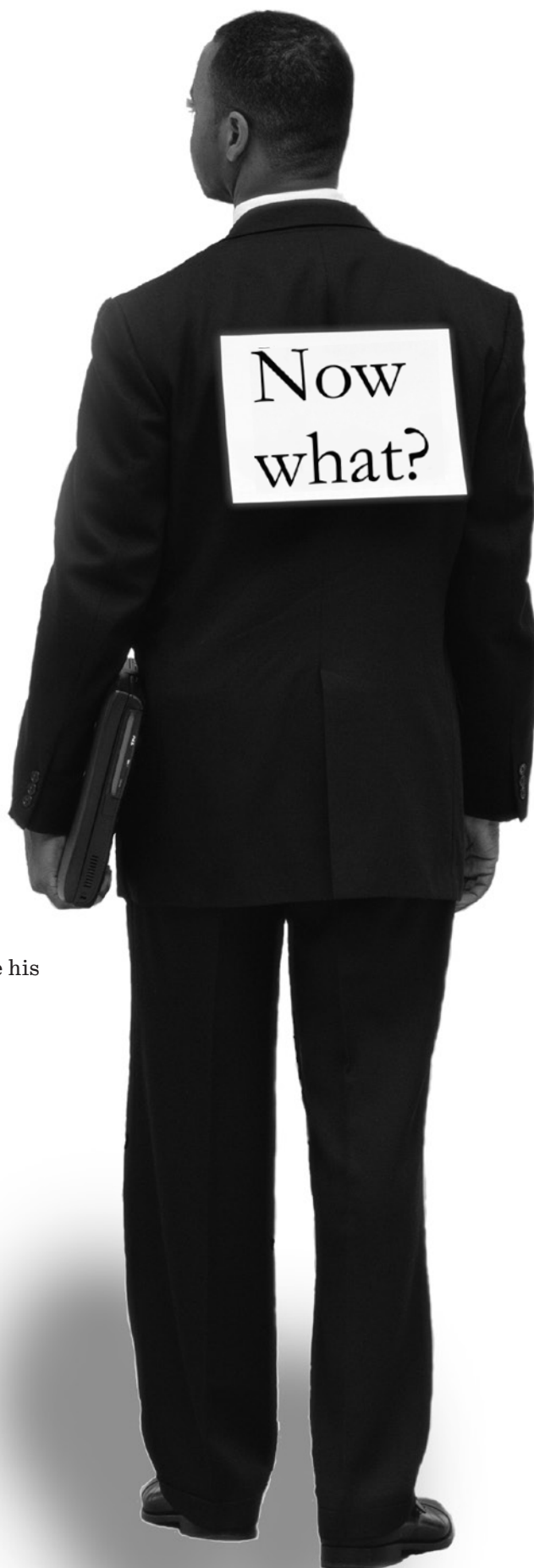
The Commission on Evangelism has researched several materials dealing with follow-up with new Christians and recommends several books:

*The Owners Manual* from Faith Studies International, PO Box 786, Chanhassen, MN 55317.

*Knowing God Personally* and *One to One Discipleship* from Multiplication Ministries, PO Box 1270, Vista, CA 92085.

*Beginning Your Christian Life* from World Wide Publications, 1303 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55403.

— Gene Quist  
Chairman, Commission on Evangelism



# At home or afar, find your mission

During a recent trip to Brazil, Becky Abel, Carolyn Dyrud and I shared ideas on winning, building and equipping the women in Brazil to fulfill Christ's Great Commission. It was obvious that what was true for the women in Brazil was true for the women of our AFLC no matter where they live in the world. Even the needs that our women had for belonging, becoming (being built up in the Lord) and being equipped to serve Him were the same.

The women in several of the churches in Brazil are seeking to find ways to reach out in order to minister to their unchurched neighborhood women. They are trying to be creative in finding a time that accommodates the young working-women's schedule. Does that sound like your town? Becky and Carolyn eagerly watched the "Extraordinary Women" videos in order to minister more effectively to the women they serve. Several churches in the United States are taking advantage of this opportunity, also.

A question then surfaces, "Where is our mission field?" I do believe we all know the answer to that one: It's where the Lord has called us to fulfill His Great Commission. For some, that just happens to be in Brazil or St. Paul, Minn., or Kirkland, Wash. Someone once said, "A world Christian starts thinking locally before thinking globally."

What do you think? How do you and your WMF fit into the mission picture? What can you do? Maybe you won't go to a foreign mission field, but you and your WMF can support foreign missions financially. At home, befriend a neighbor; show concern for a young woman inside or outside of



Yara (left), a young woman Becky Abel is encouraging, is a great help at Bateias Church and the ARCA in Brazil.

your church. Don't be afraid to be part of God's plan. A vision for missions begins when we realize our need and the awesomeness of what He has done for us.

— **Faith Nelson**  
**WMF Director**  
**Maranatha Free Lutheran**  
**Willmar, Minn.**

## Bible study: Becoming women of wisdom

Our WMF Bible study this year is a challenge to become women of wisdom, focusing on the pearls of wisdom found in the book of Proverbs. Rose Carlson, author of the study, encourages us to study Proverbs by reading one chapter each day of each of the 12 months (Proverbs has 31 chapters).

Proverbs 1:7, the study's theme verse, tells us, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline." The "fear of the Lord" is a loving reverence for God. This involves submission to His lordship and His commands. To have wisdom, we must seek it whole-heartedly, and the place to find it is in God's Word.

"By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms

**"If the time should ever come when women are not Christians and houses are not homes, then we shall have lost the chief cornerstones on which civilization rests."**

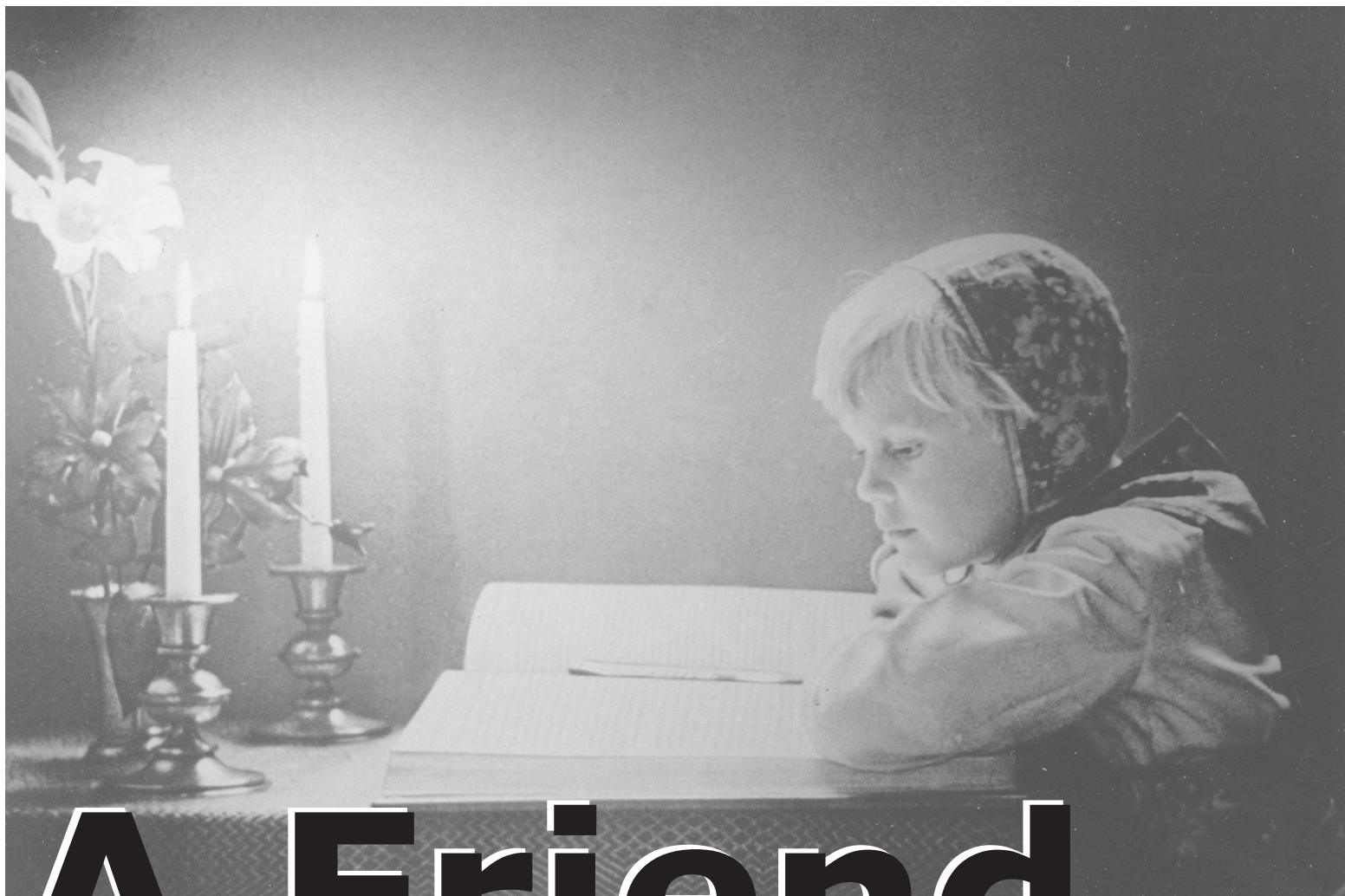
— **Andrew D. White**  
**(1832-1918)**

are filled with rare and beautiful treasures" (Proverbs 24:3-4).

Whether you are working on your spiritual house (your heart) or your physical house (your family home), God's Word is a firm foundation. Let us build our houses and fill them with the rare and beautiful treasures found in God's Word.

As women of God, let us seek to grow in wisdom and righteousness, applying God's Word to our hearts and lives and become wise women of the Word. Such a desire to grow could impact our individual lives in a dramatic way. Could it also impact our church and the AFLC?

— **Cheryl Aakre**  
**WMF Executive Secretary**  
**Our Savior's Lutheran**  
**Arlyle, Minn.**



# A Friend

Here's a narrative poem for you  
We'll see how I've done  
A story about a little girl  
And what she's become

She was raised in a little home  
Filled with love and care  
Where you're taught to go to  
church  
And all your toys you share

Her mother was a kind woman  
And loved her family so  
That they had a special place  
Her children came to know

Her father was a strict man  
But with a gentle heart  
And when it came to caring  
He always fit the part

Her brother and sister twins  
Were two years less her age  
They all got along together  
For after school they played

So she had a good family  
One that suited her best  
And with that she could ask  
For no more or no less

So what about her friends you ask  
Where did they come in  
Some had a very bad heart  
Filled with dishonesty and sin

But she did have a good one  
A great friend yes indeed  
One who was always there  
Even when she was in need

He helped her overcome her fears  
And guided her on her way  
He taught her of His kindness  
That He showed each day

He reminded her of the scriptures  
Her family once read to her  
And when she learned how He  
had died  
It brought a loving tear

For her friend was no other than  
Jesus, yes Himself  
He taught her of love and pain  
And the real true wealth

She was a changed person now  
Who lived with a kind heart  
And her children are told this  
story  
But that's another start

So remember what a friend  
you'll find  
In the greatest book of all  
You'll learn of Jesus and His deeds  
And hear His loving call.

— Angela Juarez, 14  
Faith Free Lutheran  
Brockton, Mont.





## AFLC SCHOOLS



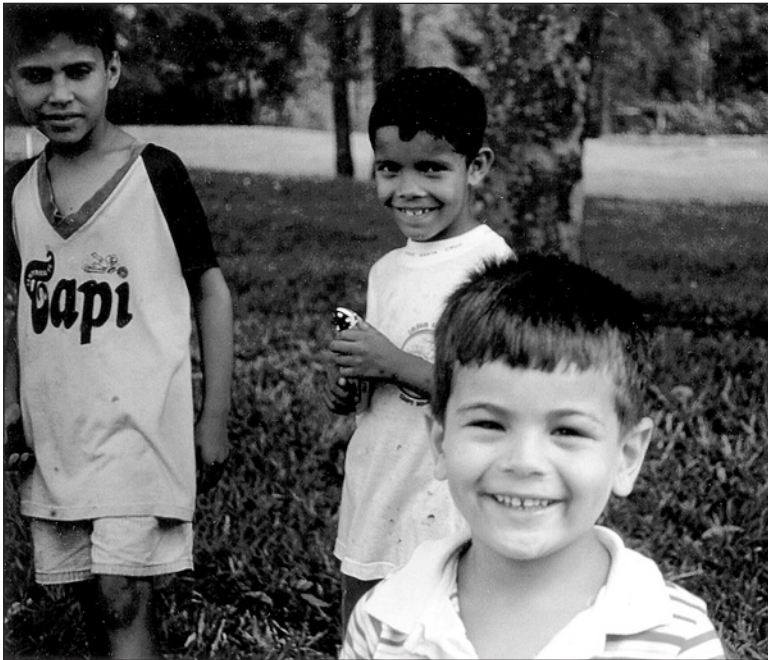
**TOP:** Members of the AFLBS Concert Choir, led by Jerry Nelson, performed during the annual Christmas Concert Dec. 8 and 9 in the AFLBS chapel.

**MIDDLE LEFT:** Jennifer Martz, Portland, N.D., and Rachel Skramstad, Zumbrota, Minn., played clarinets in the wind ensemble.

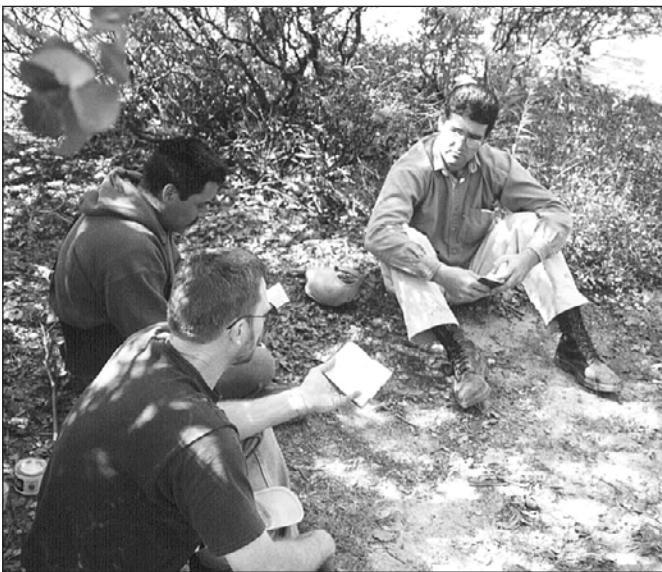
**MIDDLE RIGHT:** Members of Proclaim, led by Melissa Nakata, include (front row) Manuela Alves, Parana, Brazil, Christina Berge, Larimore, N.D., and Gretchen Flaten, Newfolden, Minn.



A tradition at the AFLBS Christmas Concert, members of the audience were invited to join the Concert Choir and Proclaim in the Hallelujah Chorus.



On a recent trip to Brazil, AFLC Vice President Elden Nelson and his wife, WMF director Faith Nelson, met Roberto (above), a blind member of La Parana Church, who is able to "read" God's Word via a CD player. The Nelsons also visited the Miriam Infant Home in Camp Mourão, Brazil. Pictured (left) are some of the orphans who live there.

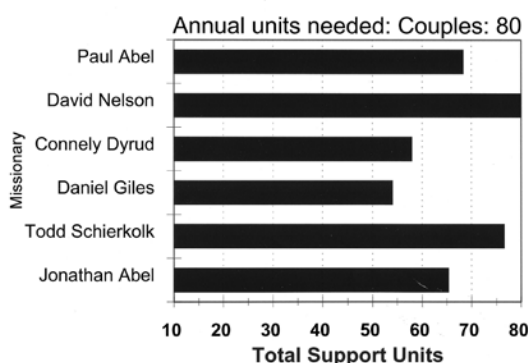


The ladies of Free Lutheran Church (near left) of Jerez, Mexico, made Advent wreaths at one of their recent Bible studies where they studied the meaning of Advent.

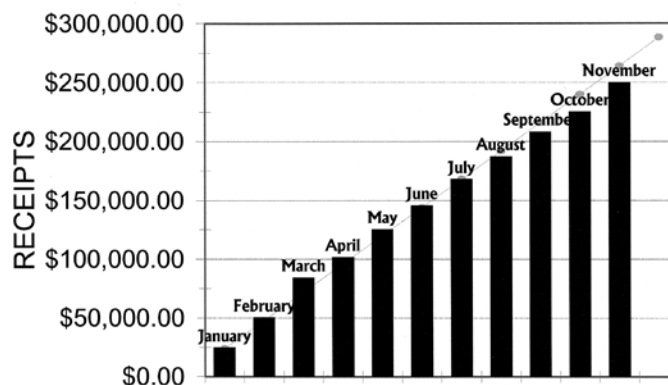
Dan Giles (far left) leads a study with two men who came to a recent men's retreat in Jerez, Mexico. The retreat was a three-hour hike up to the top of a nearby mountain, where they spent the night.

## "PS" PERSONAL SUPPORT UNITS

January / November Goal = 73.3 Units



## NOVEMBER "PS" TOTALS







**Dr. Francis Monseth, dean of AFLTS, was honored Dec. 8, 2001, for his 30 years with the seminary.**

## Monseth thanked for years of service

Dr. Francis Monseth was honored Dec. 8 for his 30 years of teaching with the seminary. To mark the event, members of the AFLBS/AFLTS Board of Trustees announced their decision to name the library in the proposed student center after Monseth.

Speakers at the reception, hosted at the Ramada Inn, included his sons, Ben and Nathan Monseth, AFLBS Dean Jim Johnson, seminarian Brent Logeman, Pastor Mike Brandt, AFLC President Robert Lee and Pastor Amos Dyrud.

"I join you in praising God for His faithfulness in your life and in mine," said Monseth. "The Lord has given us such joy and peace at the ministry at the schools. ... We all at the schools feel so prayed for and we know that's the answer."

A record enrollment at the Bible school has focused attention on a lack of space in the dorms and classrooms. A fund-raising blitz campaign, headed by Vision 2004, is now under way to finance a new student center on the AFLBS campus. Planners hope to break ground by May.



**Members of Our Redeemer Lutheran, Superior, Wis., dedicated their new church building (above right) on Nov. 18, 2001. Present at the service were (above left, front row, from left) Pastor Harris Van Someren, Pastor Frank Cherney, Dr. Francis Monseth, (back row, from left) Clinton Hoff, Pastor Paul Nash, Pastor Roy Warwick and Pastor Jerome Elness, who serves the church.**



**Clarice Dean**, 76, of Green Lake Lutheran, Spicer, Minn., died Oct. 28, 2001. Dean was the widow of AFLC licensed pastor Verle Dean.

**Pastor Walter Beaman** has resigned as pastor of the Pukwana Lutheran parish, Pukwana, S.D., and has accepted a call to serve Hosanna Free Lutheran, St. James, Minn. He begins his ministry in January. His wife, Ellen, continues to recuperate from a car accident in Minot, N.D.

**Pastor Arlin Olson**, a WMPL missionary in Afghanistan, is serving as interim pastor at Bethel

Lutheran Church, Elbow, Saskatchewan, Canada. He replaces licensed pastor Martin and Arlene Christensen. Olson attended FLS in 1991-2.

Pastor Gene Sundby, president of AFLC in Canada, installed **Pastor Peter Ward** Oct. 17, 2001, at Living Word Lutheran, Vernon, British Columbia, Canada.

**Dallas Block** has been called as a full-time youth worker at Bethel Lutheran, Frontier, Saskatchewan.

**Pastor Harris Van Someren** is serving as part-time pastor at Victory in Christ Free Lutheran Church,

Maplewood, Minn.

**Michelle Satren** and **Steve Walswick** have accepted a call to work as part-time youth workers at Emmaus Lutheran, Bloomington, Minn.

Satren works as a dorm assistant at AFLBS, where she graduated in 2001. She is also a student at the University of Minnesota. Walswick grew up in the Lutheran Brethren Church and plans to attend seminary.

**Pastor Al Pinno**, Nipawin, Saskatchewan, recently spent 10 days in Moscow and 10 days in Siberia, where he visited five schools, four churches and a training center.





Pastor Dave Hinrichs officiated a service where 17 people were accepted into membership on Sept. 23, 2001, at Abiding Faith Free Lutheran, Ortonville, Minn.



Members of St. John's Lutheran Church, Duluth, Minn., toured the AFLC schools and administration building in November. Pictured with the members is Pastor Frank Cherney.

## Youth camps slated for February at ARC

Junior Sno Daze, a camp for youths in grades four through seven, is set for Feb. 8-10 at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis. Pastor Jonathan Unverzagt, who serves at Christ is Lord Lutheran in LaCrosse, Wis, will lead the sessions. Andy Britz, an AFLBS alumnus, will lead the praise and worship time.

SIDEbySIDE, a camp for youths in grades 7 through 12, will coincide

with the Sno Daze camp at the ARC. Session leaders include Pastor Steve Carlson, who will get the students "Diggin' In" to God's Word, Andy Britz, who will lead a concert of prayer, and Brenda Stilley and Brandon Pangman, who will talk about "Identity Issues."

Contact the ARC for more information on either camp, 1-800-294-2877, or Pam Olson, 1-888-748-3969.



Members of Faith Free Lutheran, Minneapolis, recently began a project to renovate the 80-year-old church, specifically fixing and replacing its windows. Part of the project included installing this stained glass window at the front of the sanctuary. "As Christians we want to lift up the cross of Christ, the Savior that Christmas is named for," said Pastor David Johnson.

## Foundation board seeks director of development

Members of the AFLC Foundation Board are accepting applications for the AFLC Director of Development position. Candidates must be able to share with others the current needs of the various ministries of the AFLC and raise funds through deferred and present gifts. For a job description or to send your resume, contact Paul Handsaker, 3339 Ziegler Ave., Radcliffe, IA 50230. Or call (515) 899-2438, fax (515) 899-7742, or email [pbhandsaker@hotmail.com](mailto:pbhandsaker@hotmail.com).

## AAL matches gifts to Medicine Lake Academy

Aid Association for Lutherans recently presented \$1,050 to Medicine Lake Lutheran Academy, Crystal, Minn., through the AAL Member Gift-Matching Program.

Annual gifts of \$25 to \$100 made by AAL members to participating Lutheran elementary and secondary schools, colleges or seminaries are matched by AAL. For more information, contact your local AAL representative.

## Home Missions presents pastor training clinic at ARC

The Home Missions Department will present a pastoral training clinic Jan. 14-15 at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wis. Titled "Building for the Future," the clinic will feature sessions focusing on the five "C's" of a living congregation: the centrality, cultivation, caring, communication and celebration of Christ. For more information, contact the Home Missions Department at (763) 545-5631.

## Dates set for AFLC conference in Calgary

The AFLC in Canada's annual meeting will be April 5-7 in Calgary. The theme for the conference is "Saved by Grace," based on Ephesians 2:8. Pastor Peter Ward will be the Bible study leader, Pastor Martin Christensen will speak Friday night and licensed pastor Collin Hauch will speak Saturday evening.

## New AFLBS Web site

AFLBS' new Web site, located at [www.aflbs.org](http://www.aflbs.org) or [www.flbs.org](http://www.flbs.org), is now online. Previously found under the AFLC's domain name, the new site was recently purchased by the Bible school and updated by Karen Floan, contact for Vision 2004.

The site contains information on AFLBS classes, MTI, Vision 2004 projects and student testimonies.

# AFLC Memorial Gifts

### November

#### Department given to ...

*In memory of...*

#### Vision 2004

*Simon and Hilda Rekedal  
Gust Smidt  
Ed Overland  
Vernon Howe  
Russell Wasser*

*Paul Bjornson  
George Hulse  
Irene Meyer  
Travis Carder  
Ella Moenck*

#### Home Missions

*Oscar Lee  
Dorothy Mortenson  
Evangeline Rye  
Don Ketletvedt*

*Marion Hermes  
Elder Oscarson  
Mayme Syvertson*

#### AFLBS

*Florence Ferguson  
Kenneth Knudsvig  
Clarice Dean*

*Walter Frie  
Evangeline Rye*

#### AFLT

*Anna Larson*

#### Evangelism

*Arnold Haas*

*Royce and Beatrice Rasmussen*

#### World Missions

*Russell Wasser*

*Lydia McCarlson*

*In honor of...*

#### Vision 2004

*Wendell and Judy Berg  
Bill and Lois Kinney*

*Legacies...*

#### Church Extension

*Edna Folden*

### Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

#### AFLC Benevolences (11 months) – January 1 - November 30, 2001

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN AUGUST	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund . . . . .	\$267,241.00	\$25,012.06	\$250,172.41	94
Seminary . . . . .	126,462.00	33,356.97	149,516.42	118
Bible School . . . . .	162,545.00	23,393.42	201,596.61	124
Home Missions . . . . .	242,838.00	21,419.87	244,728.30	101
World Missions . . . . .	206,762.00	32,492.709	187,730.03	91
Capital Investment . . . . .	9,490.00	390.46	6,829.19	72
Parish Education . . . . .	78,302.00	4,782.23	69,680.67	89
Church Extension . . . . .	26,119.00	887.79	18,096.09	69
Youth Ministries . . . . .	48,375.00	1,235.00	27,627.51	57
<b>TOTALS . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,168,134.00</b>	<b>\$142,970.50</b>	<b>\$1,155,977.23</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>TOTALS 2000 . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,147,510.00</b>	<b>\$107,824.30</b>	<b>\$914,628.37</b>	<b>80</b>

**Goal 92%**

(2000 figures do not include Youth Ministries)

The Evangelism Department received \$7,003.90 in November.

## Motivation matters

“If we could get that new program started ... or had some dynamic speaker come ... or the right kind of music ... or a fancier building in a better location ... or some slick advertising and a cool Web site ....”

If things were different, more effective evangelism would be going on. That’s a sentiment probably held by many people in our congregations, and it has an element of truth. The question is, however, what is it that needs to be different?

We tend to look at our methods and stress how those need to be changed. Sometimes they do need adjusting. The message of Christ is unchanging, but the method in which we share it should not be held in the same kind of reverence. When a missionary first enters a new country, he or she learns the language of the people they wish to evangelize. Likewise Christians in North America need to learn the language of the people around us and consider how we can most effectively communicate the unchanging gospel of Jesus with these people in this day.

One method that has been very effective and used by the Lord in days past has been meetings held over a series of evenings with a special speaker. That continues to be an effective method in some places, but it may not work so well in other settings. Some places may be better off using a different method. What is most important is getting out the message, even if it means changing methods.

Simply changing the method, however, to the hot, new idea that seems to be working elsewhere, does not guarantee success in our outreach efforts. Often what needs to be changed more than our method is our motivation.

“In many settings evangelism is an ‘ought to’ but not a ‘want to.’ People know they should be doing evangelism — or at least they know the church leaders think they should be doing evangelism — but the dreaded ‘E-word’ evokes feelings of guilt, fear, and inadequacy. How can we overcome this obstacle? How can we help people get a new view of evangelism? What will it take to get them to see evangelism as a privilege and an adventure — one that can evoke feelings of ‘want to’ or even ‘get to?’” (Mark Mittelberg, *Building a Contagious Church*).

Many, if not most, people in our congregations know

they ought to be involved in evangelism. They have heard about the importance of witnessing, about inviting others, about the need to tell people about Jesus. But if the motivation is nothing more than guilt and fear, evangelism won’t be done in the way God desires.

“For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died” (II Corinthians 5:14, NIV). Guilt can be a compelling force for a time. But that is not what we look to for motivation or the means we use to motivate others. It is the incredible love of Jesus that compels us. He loves us so much that He died on the cross in our place. “He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world” (I John 2:2, NIV). Because of His great love for us and others, we go and tell.

Too often, the law is looked to as the means that will make people evangelistic. Attempts are made to strike fear into people’s hearts about what will happen to them and their friends if they don’t witness. Or the thought is to make them feel guilty and then they’ll invite others to church. Or get them thinking guilt will go away if they tell others about Jesus.

We are not to rely on the law to turn people into effective witnesses for Christ. The law kills. The gospel gives life. It is the gospel, the good news of what Jesus has done, that motivates, equips and transforms us into servants of God who can impact the world for Him. Yet, far too often, messages that are supposed to motivate people to being better witnesses, seminars that are intended to encourage people to be more involved in evangelism, contain little or no gospel. If people are only told what to do, but not told what God has done, they are not going to be motivated in a truly lasting and powerful way. I hope to never hear again a supposedly evangelistic sermon that contains no gospel.

The first witnesses for Jesus were not motivated by guilt. They said, “we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20, NIV). What motivated them were the amazing things they had seen and heard, the marvelous work God had done.

“God demonstrates His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8, NIV). God has done great things. More time spent hearing about, talking about and contemplating those things that Christ has done will result in more effective witnesses for Him.

— Pastor Craig Johnson

**But if the motivation  
is nothing more  
than guilt and fear,  
evangelism won’t be  
done in the way God  
desires.**



---

## THE ASSOCIATION RETREAT CENTER

---

### Reservations required

Our family unloaded all the goods from the weekend of celebrations from the car into the house — everything scrambled around the house as it was plopped down wherever the tired bodies chose to leave it. A quiet evening at home now awaited us. I delighted in the thought of kicking up my feet, reading the paper by the fireplace and sipping hot chocolate. The dishes, the scrambled heaps of “stuff” could wait until tomorrow— I was home.

Until a knock came at the door. Oh, no. I hoped it was a salesman that I could politely shuffle off, who wouldn’t get past the door to see the storm that seemed to leave its debris in our home. Instead, to my uncertain delight, it was our dear friends and their family. OHHH! How I wished they had called ahead— just so that I could have delighted in anticipation of their arrival instead of feeling terribly unprepared for them.

I have sadly experienced rejection when turned away from restaurants that allow only those with reservations. Most major motel chains require 24-hour notice. And if you are planning a wedding ... well, some need to get it on the schedule a year in advance.

With the increased use of the ARC, reservations are needed to make sure we have accommodations for you. We want to pray for you and anticipate your arrival. To

“just show up” leaves us scrambling to find a bed, make sure there’s enough food and make last minute adjustments. We love dear friends stopping by, and we want our facility to be a place of welcome and rest. Please allow us to delight in it.

**God will not be left  
scrambling. The God  
of order will be  
expecting me. All  
things will be in  
place. All things will  
be made ready.  
Ready to sit. Sit in  
the glory of God.**

I praise the Lord that Christ made our reservation for us in heaven. II Corinthians 1:21-22 says, “Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.” Without His shed blood on Calvary, I could not have the promise of forgiveness, no reassurance of what is to come. Through Him, and Him only, I know what is to come. Jesus says in John 14:2, “In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with

me that you also may be where I am.” God will not be left scrambling. The God of order will be expecting me. All things will be in place. All things will be made ready. Ready to sit. Sit in the glory of God.

I’ve got my reservation. How ‘bout you?

— Pam Olson  
ARC Program Coordinator