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Light up your neighborhood with the love of Jesus!

# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

January 4, 2000 Volume 38, Number 1



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# AN ENCOURAGING WORD

# Three things God has given

"For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of power and love and discipline"

> - II Timothy 1:7 (American Standard)

e have all at some time approached a mountain range or even a row of hills and have not seen how the road runs in order to get through. But proceeding, by faith, we have found the way across.

It is something like that for us today as we stand on the edge of not only a new year, but a new century. We may know from experience some things that are likely to be, if all things remain equal. But there is so much of which we can't be certain.

Moses, standing on Mt. Pisgah and viewing the land of Canaan from afar, and Joshua, ready to go across the Jordan, trusted in the Lord God and so must we. God holds the centuries in His hands, even as He holds the world, the planets, our sun, and all of the universe in His hands. "My times are in thy hand" (Psalm 31), wrote David, confident in the steadfast love of God.

The Apostle Paul tells us that the spirit of fearfulness does not come from the Lord. That comes from some place else. There is much that can give rise to fear and foreboding. None of us want to be pessimistic about the future, but the temptation is there. The spirit of fear lies close at hand, but it is not of God.

God has given the spirit of power, first of all. He has given it already. According to the promise of Jesus, power came upon the believing community at Pentecost and made them courageous witnesses of His death and resurrection.

Paul found power in the resurrection of Jesus (Philippians 3) and in the gospel, which he saw as "the power of God for salvation" (Romans 1:16). So may we as we rest in the finished work of Christ and go forth in His name.

The Lord has given us the spirit of love. He is the great example of love. He said so much about the need to love. Love for one's neighbor is the second great commandment, Jesus said (Matthew 22). He will enable us to love others as ourselves.

Finally, He has given us the spirit of discipline. Other translators have rendered the Greek word as sound mind or self-control. The original has the idea of sobering. Whatever English word is used, there is a great need for discipline in Christian living in our time.

God has given power, love and discipline to His own. That doesn't mean any of these are full grown in any of us, even as the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5) is not fully matured in this life. There is always the possibility of being more and more open to God and His blessings.

(Bible quotations are from the Revised Standard Version.)



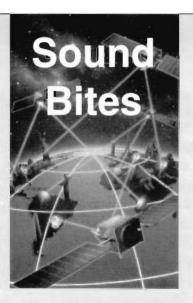
 Pastor Raynard Huglen Newfolden, Minnesota

I have found that the greatest way I can influence others is not through eloquent sermons or clever presentations of the Christian message, but by identifying with my audience and allowing them to see me as I really am - that I am a fellow sinner with human weaknesses just as they are and that I too am in the process and struggle to become the person God wants me to be.

- Dick Innes

Many people have a narrow view of evangelism. Some think it refers solely to gospel crusades or church calling programs or approaching total strangers with questions about their eternal destiny. Evangelism is wider than all these. It includes any and all methods Christians use to invite people to repent of their sins and believe the good news of what Christ has done to redeem them.

- Philip Bickel





We lure people to God by portraying Him week in and week out as infinitely superior to all the fleeting

pleasures of sin. We cultivate in our people's souls a thirst for God, and then satisfy it each week with refreshment from His Word. This will make Him supreme, and this will make our people holy. - John Piper

The Word of God has shown me that my duty as a Christian is to help lead others to Christ, to allow God to use me as an instrument in His hands. I want to witness both in word and in deed ... For the present, and by the grace of God, I will witness here among relatives and friends, but I am willing to go whenever, and wherever the Lord would have me go.

- Jacob Andreasen



I want things happening around our church that cannot be explained by my effort. Kingdom success is something that is beyond human effort. Though human effort is important, I can't work a person into the kingdom.

- Anthony Laird



The most effective method of proclamation is "living" the good news. The most successful evangelism efforts are not those accompanied by a lot of bells and whistles, but those which are offered in simplicity and sincerity.

- George Barna

# Evangelism in a post-Christian culture

description of some of Paul's evangelistic methods is given in Acts 17. When he was with the Jews, he reasoned with them from the Scriptures because they accepted God as creator and they were looking for a deliverer. However, when he spoke to the Greek philosophers on Mars Hill, his evangelistic message did not start by quoting Scripture. Paul began where they were and quoted a Greek poet, then moved toward their need of repentance. Some reacted with sneers while others believed.

We are living in a culture where many of our neighbors and colleagues in the workplace are like the ancient Greeks. To meet the challenges of non-Christian and even some "Christian" friends who have adopted much of the world's thinking, we must study to "be ready to make a defense to everyone who asks us to give an account for the hope that is in us, yet with gentleness and reverence" (I Peter 3:15).

In my geology classes I address the question, "How old is the earth?" I understand that when I ask that question, I do so in a post-Christian culture. My students have been bombarded with statements that the earth is about 4.6 billion years old.

It is important to realize why this popular theory developed when science does not have access to the past. Evolution grew out of atheism. By denying the existence of God and, therefore, His right to set the rules (the Ten Commandments and the rest of the biblical record), mankind could excuse his sin-

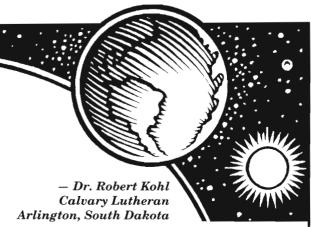
ful behavior as "normal." In his autobiography, Charles Darwin said it accurately, "A man who has no assured and ever present belief in the existence of a personal God or of a future existence with retribution and reward, can have for his rule of life, as far as I can see, only to follow those impulses and instincts which are the strongest or which seem to him the best ones."

Man may deny God's existence so he can do his own thing but the question always arises in his mind: where did I come from? Evolution was the story developed to answer this question. However, the more these atheistic supporters thought about how evolution could take place, the more time they thought was needed. Soon they were thinking of a vast to almost unlimited time.

Physicists and astronomers developed ideas of how the universe came to be like we observe it, but without a creator. Presently the idea of a Big Bang is in vogue. With this idea, everything in the universe started from one little point much smaller than a basketball and exploded to what we see. This took a long time, now guessed to be about 15 billion years. Within that scenario, the earth is given an age of about 4.6 billion years.

This does not coincide with the biblical estimate. A straightforward reading of Scripture states that God created everything in six days. In the first chapter of Genesis, God describes what He created on each day and carefully states there was an evening and a morning and a number associated with each day. Scripture always uses the Hebrew word for day (yom) to mean a 24-hour day when associated with either morning or evening or a number. Here in Genesis, each day is designated with both. Using simple addition with the ages of the patriarchs in Genesis 5 and 7, the Flood occurred 1656 years after creation. Genesis 11 indicates that Terah, the father of Abraham was born 1878 years after creation. Abraham was born about 2000 B.C., so the earth is approximately 6000 years old from the biblical record.

While God does not give us all of the details of how He created everything, He was there. He does tell us that He did it by



the almighty power of His Word. We should be able to trust Him, especially since His Word has stood the test of time. As He said. "Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure" (Isaiah 46:9-10). Only God could accurately foretell the future which He has done from Genesis through Revelation.

Satan's old method of questioning God's Word continues. Hugh Ross, a self-proclaimed Christian is basing his arguments on the speed of light and the red shift to prove the universe is old. His ideas include millions of years of death and dying before Adam and Eve and claims that the Bible only refers to a spiritual existence, not the natural world. Hugh Ross has been answered both theologically and scientifically, but he is still making inroads into the Christian community. Questioning God's Word leads to progressively destroying the Virgin Birth and ultimately, the gospel message itself.

Satan is subtle and the age of the earth question has been one of his best weapons in our current society. There are books in Christian literature answering the challenges and one can say little in a short article. Our problem is accepting man's fallible perspectives and assumptions and then trying to force our interpretation of the Bible into that model. Instead we should begin with an inerrant Word of God and then interpret man's efforts in light of that Word.

We can learn some apologetics (providing some answers to our critical friends) and not let the world force us into its mold (Romans 12:2). Some will sneer while others will believe. Christians must take back our nation one soul at a time or face God's judgment on our apostate culture.

# From our Evangelist/Director of Evangelism

It has been an exciting year in evangelism in the AFLC. The Lord has opened doors into many congregations, from the Pacific Northwest to Illinois. God is providing our immediate needs financially. As you know, we receive only gifts which are specifically earmarked for evangelism.

I visited about 48 different congregations last year. God gave me safety and freedom to share His Word. There have also been opportunities to teach at AFLBS and AFLTS, and we have



Pastor Jim Rasmussen

shared the work of evangelism at a number of AFLC gatherings. A \$5,000 grant from Aid Association for Lutherans helped us produce a new video for aid in helping congregations prepare for evangelism meetings.

The commission on evangelism has dreams of being able to reach every district of the AFLC with a seminar called "Friend to Friend." We also



The evangelism seminar in Vernon, B.C.

have a need for a teaching tool called Power Point. This is a dynamic presentation utilizing a computer, projector and animated slides. We used this format when we went to Vernon, B.C. to teach new evangelism concepts to our brothers and sisters in Canada. At that time we borrowed equipment from Vision 2004.

Please pray for openings for me to come to your congregations to share the work of AFLC Evangelism. Some weekends remain open this winter and spring.

Pray for the work of evangelism in the AFLC and beyond. "The fields are ripe unto harvest" (John 4:35). Consider your own part in prayer for lost souls.

There are many evangelism tools available to help you and your congregation develop a lifelong adventure in bringing the gospel of Jesus to the lost. The ability to share Jesus comes from the Holy Spirit, as we yield our lives to Him.

"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8).

# Friends reaching friends



Phil Jenson
 Abiding Savior
 Lutheran
 Sioux Falls, South
 Dakota

hat goes through your mind when you think about the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19-20, "Therefore (you) go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you"? Do you feel a sense of guilt and failure because you are unable to preach and expound like a gifted evangelist? Do you shrink back in fear at the thought of debating Scripture with a complete stranger in an effort to force him into God's family? Or do you set your mind at ease by thinking evangelism is not your job?

I gained new understanding in how to be a part of the Great Commission when my wife and I recently attended the "Friend to Friend Seminar" presented by Dr. Don Bierle, of Faith Studies International. The sessions explain "a biblical strategy that enables the whole church to reach its community with the gospel." It focuses on "how to reach the people in our circle of influence." This was not just another seminar, but it was truly a refreshing learning experience. I benefited from the common sense information presented, including some important statistics. Dr. Bierle teaches how the Great Commission can be carried out in our everyday lives.

The majority of Americans do not believe in absolute truth as presented in God's Word. This fundamental shift away from absolutes is a result of the biblical illiteracy in our society. It drastically affects how non-believers perceive Christians and evangelism in general. In fact, a study showed that 50 percent of non-believers find evangelism annoying!

The power of the gospel of Christ has not changed, but how non-believers are brought to a point of hearing the gospel can change with the culture. The need to share the good news is great. Do your friends know that you follow Jesus?

One of the most significant statistics shared at the seminar was a survey of 20,000 Christians which said that an overwhelming 82.5 percent had come to Christ as the result of a friend. If friendships are the key to non-believers eventually hearing the gospel message, it puts tremendous importance on each Christian's opportunity to build relationships in his or her everyday life. This is exciting to me!

Friendship evangelism is an "intentional lifestyle" that bridges non-believers to a future opportunity to hear and receive new life in Christ. This may help explain why Satan and the world want all of us to be so busy that we hardly take time to smile or say hello to those we come in contact with.

I was also impressed how the seminar identified several myths that paralyze our ability to influence, and how the truth of Scripture sets us free to use the gifts God has given us. Dr. Bierle detailed five action steps for us to take to be a successful spiritual influence. These action steps are all things that any Christian can do as a part of his lifestyle. The question we must ask ourselves is, "Do I have a heart to reach others for Christ?"

Is there anything more important than someone coming to Christ? Building relationships within our circle of influence is a natural, non-threatening part of our everyday life. Each one of us has gifts to evangelize, and all are vital to fulfilling the Great Commission. I am convinced that many of us have neglected this opportunity in the past. The "Friend to Friend Seminar" can change your life and the lives of those around you for all time and eternity. If you have opportunity to attend this seminar, don't pass it up!

# It happened at the grocery store

couple of weeks ago I was at the grocery store in the express checkout line, musing at the fact that the man in front of me had more than twelve items in his cart. As he was paying for his groceries, my idle thoughts turned to alarm when I realized that he was purposely leaving two items in his cart, not seen by the cashier. As my own groceries were being tallied, my mind raced with thoughts of how

to respond. I found myself writing a check for my own groceries and insisting that I pay for the groceries stolen by the man in front of me.

As I walked to the end of the line to bag my purchases, the man walked past me toward the door, stolen groceries in hand. I approached him asking if he knew anything about Jesus. He responded with a puzzled look as I told him that I had seen that he had stolen the groceries and that I had also

paid for them. The Lord gave me the words to explain briefly that Jesus paid our debt to God, just like I had paid his debt to the store. The man couldn't talk for long. We parted ways and I joyfully went home, praising God that I was able to be a messenger of His grace to someone.

As it turned out, that was not the end of the story. Last week, my fiancé, Nathan and I were standing at that store's deli counter, wondering which pasta salad would best satisfy our hunger. I glanced across the isle and there stood the man I had encountered two weeks earlier, except now he wore a uniform and was stocking the freezers with goods. We approached him and introduced ourselves and invited him to talk with us after he was done with his shift. He met us at the appointed time, at which point Nathan explained the gospel in more depth to him.

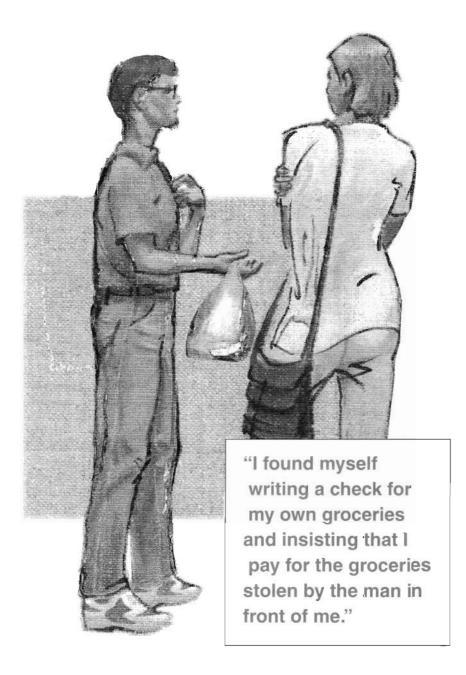
As we talked together the man explained that he had just moved to Minneapolis from Chicago three weeks ago. The night after my first encounter with him, he prayed and asked God to forgive him for everything he had done. The next day he had gone back to the grocery store and asked for a job!

We visited a little while longer and encouraged him to grow in his faith in Jesus. Another member at Emmaus is going to give him a Bible, as well as befriend him and help him to walk with Jesus. What a privilege it was to be a part of God's plan to touch another person with His life-transforming love and grace!



- Sara Montie taken from "The Light", May 1999 Emmaus Lutheran, Bloomington, Minnesota

(The author is a teacher at a Christian high school. She and Nathan Hembree were married at Emmaus last summer.)



When Joshua and the people of God were about to enter the Promised Land, they experienced God working in the midst of the flooded Jordan River. God "pushed back" the flood waters and miraculously let them cross on dry land. They left twelve stones behind in the middle of the river as a testimony that God had allowed them to be there and took with them 12 stones from the river as reminders of what the Lord had done.

# Blessings from our area crusade



Pastor Craig
Wentzel
Living Word and
Zoar Lutheran
Parish
Edmore, North
Dakota

'n recent years, the Devils Lake area in ■North Dakota has been flooded with the rising waters of the lake and the corresponding financial flood of agricultural problems. In the midst of this, the Lord has brought about a great work through the "Lake Region Celebration '99," a Ralph Bell crusade. Last October, the Spirit of God pushed apart the region's troubles long enough to enable His people to find the solid ground of His promises. From an eighty mile radius around the city of Devils Lake, Christians left many things on the "dry ground" of the crusade, such as their fear of witnessing, spiritual apathy, distrust of other churches, and unscriptural barriers between pastors. They also picked up many "stones" of blessing to carry away with them.



Concentrated spiritual atmosphere.

During the weeks of preparation for the

crusade, area pastors experienced a greater freedom in preaching and ministry. I was amazed one Saturday night as the Lord brought a visitor to my home and then "opened the doors" for me to share the way of salvation. I never expected a positive response, but the person prayed to receive Christ. Did that inspire my preaching the next morning!



Classes for equipping and training the saints to witness.

A Lutheran Brethren pastor in a small town reported that twenty of his people attended the Christian Life and Witness Classes that were required for counseling at the crusade. Pastor Les Johnson of Christ Free Lutheran in Devils Lake and Trinity Free in Minnewaukan said, "The mobilization of the laity and the training of the laity were the greatest blessing for our church, ... and in general, for the community."



Changed hearts and lives.

Prior to the crusade, 5,000 cookies along with "Peace With God" tracts were delivered to area businesses as a "thank you" for their service and an invitation to attend the crusade. One man read the tract 10 times and was ready for a friend to lead him to Christ. During the course of the crusade, 647 responded by receiving Christ or rededicating their lives to Him. Only forty-four of these were adults, the rest were youth and children. Nine children from our parish alone responded! On youth night, more than 300 youth rushed forward without waiting for the invitation to be given.



Concern for souls.

We all became more aware of the lost around us, but it was great to see Christians and pastors of mainstream churches becoming more evangelistic.



Common bond of unity with other pastors.

Regardless of our background, we were united in prayer and purpose to reach the lost.

### Cooperation between pastors



Over the last couple years, the Lord has been using various events to bring about cooperation between area pastors, and out of prayerful concern, the Bell Crusade came about. As one pastor shared, the "tracks" of prayer and cooperation have now been laid for God to move other blessings our way.



Conversations with God for our neighbors.

Christians began participating in the Lighthouse of Prayer movement and walked the streets of their communities, praying for individual homes, or else prayed through the listings of their local telephone books.



Concerns were exposed.

Our participation or lack of participation in the crusade has shown something about us, where our concerns are - with our own kingdoms, or with Jesus' kingdom.



Christ's desires for our communities became more clear.

A woman who has worked with Lighthouses of Prayer under Ed Silvoso, says we Christians are used to asking for a "visitation" of the Lord, but in cities around the world Christians have seen a "habitation" of the Lord where He dwells in a city and changes it. Perhaps the Lord has greater plans for our communities than we can imagine!

The Lord has given us special stones of blessing in the Devils Lake region. What will we build with them?

# Mobilizing for Evangelism video

The Commission on Evangelism of our Association of Free Lutheran Congregations has recently produced a video entitled "Mobilizing for Evangelism." The production of this video was made possible by a grant received from Aid Association for Lutherans. A copy is being made available to each congregation or parish in our AFLC. Many of you reading this article will have already received your

The commission on evangelism hopes this video will be one more source of encouragement and instruction in the area of evangelism. For the most part, the biblical principles presented will apply to both smaller and larger evangelistic events. The underlying conviction behind this video is summed up in the following statement: Spirit-directed preparation leads to effective evangelistic efforts.

Hopefully, pastors and lay leaders will use the video as an inspirational and teaching tool. It has been formatted in one video consisting of three sessions approximately 25 minutes in length. The three sessions are: 1) Mobilizing Leadership; 2) Mobilizing Prayer; 3) Mobilizing Design. An updated copy of Pastor Herb Franz's article, "Preparing for Evangelistic Services," together with an outline of each session in the video is included. These materials are meant to be copied and used along with the video presentation. Other biblically sound materials are also available in the area of training leaders, prayer coordinators, and counselors. Call our evangelism office for additional information

Dividing the video into three sessions permits adequate time for discussion. It was the commission's desire to make it usable by keeping it flexible. Those planning an evangelistic event could view the video on three separate occasions providing time to think over the issues they heard and discussed. If there are individual committees assigned to each of the three respective areas represented in the video, they could watch that single session. No matter how it is used, we believe God will honor the efforts made to enhance the spiritual effectiveness of our evangelistic ministry to reach the souls of men and women, boys and girls. As the video proclaims, "It's all about the HAR-VEST!"

> - Pastor Michael Brandt member of Commission on Evangelism



"Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, 'Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch ... was sitting in his charior, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go near and overtake this chariot.'

"So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, 'Do you understand what you are reading?"

"And he said, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. ... Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him."

Acts 8:26-35 (NKJV)

**"T**he Lord has used many people in different ways to reach me," said Paul Blom, 23, an AFLBS student from Alexandria, Minnesota. "But one of the most significant individuals I can think of was a Christian named Jason Walkup. He was bold and on fire for Jesus. I had never seen anyone have a personal relationship with Jesus the way Jason did. Before I met him, I didn't know such a relationship was possible. He was not ashamed to talk about Jesus in any and every situation, no matter if it was in the midst of believers or non-believers. He was bold. I needed to know what it was that he had, and he introduced me to Jesus."



# How the Lord

"One day last October, I was in the school library," said Nikolina Gordejeva, an AFLBS student from Riga, Latvia. "I saw Joe Lombardo, a fellow student, in the library and suddenly for no reason, I said to him 'Hey, are you saved?'

"Joe smiled and answered, 'Yeah,' and then he asked me, 'Are you saved?'

"I didn't know what to answer, so I said that I didn't know. And we started to talk.

"I come from a Christian family and my mother is starting a Christian school in Latvia this year. I have long believed in God and I wanted to follow Christ. But I didn't know my sins were forgiven. Every time I sinned, I felt like I needed to pray again.

"Later that day, Joe came back with a piece of paper with several verses written on it. One of the verses was John 5:24, 'I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned: he has crossed over from death to life.'

"The words stuck.

"The next Sunday at Medicine Lake Lutheran, Dr. Fran Monseth preached about the Lutheran Reformation and the free gift of salvation. The words about that gift through faith began to reform my heart. I thought something must be wrong here! He's speaking about salvation. But it was very right. I believed in Jesus and received forgiveness, full and free. The whole thing relieved me. That day I understood that God wanted me to know that He loves me, even if I cannot improve myself by my own good works."

**"M**y parents not only prayed for our family every day, they talked the talk and walked the walk. Without even knowing it, I learned more about who Jesus was just by watching my parents," according to Michele L. Schroeder, mother of two and member of Trinity Lutheran in Janesville, Wisconsin. "Even before their children were baptized, they vowed to teach them about Jesus. Especially my mom, through a quiet, gentle and loving way, she not only introduced me to Christ, but helped show me the way to keep Him in my life and in my heart. My mom made Christ a member of our family. We celebrated His birthday, His life, and all of the wonders of who He is in all of us."

**"W**hen I was 13," said Jon Arnold, 20, of St. Louis Park, Minnesota, "I had a few friends at church, but not many. I was the outsider of the youth group and felt almost looked down upon. The youth director of our church encouraged me to get involved with basketball, volleyball and other activities of the church. I did, and as a result I made more friends. Because I had more friends in the group, I kept going to the church. Because I kept going to the church, I got to know Jesus. Because I learned to know Jesus, I was saved. If it were not for that vouth director who encouraged me to get involved with basketball, I would not have kept going to church and not been saved."

# used someone to reach me for Christ

**"W**hen I think about how someone reached out to me, I think of my grandfather, Frantisek Chalupski," said Michal Klus, an AFLBS student who came to America last September after graduating with a degree in architecture from a university in the Czech Republic. "The German army invaded Czechoslovakia in 1938 when the Western Allies and Russia made a covenant and exchanged our country for one year of peace. One year later there was mobilization and many men had to go into the army to fight on the side of the Germans, although they were our enemies. My grandfather also had to go.

"He was fighting near Stalingrad during a fierce battle against the Russian forces and saw that things were going badly for the German army. Although he had no personal relationship with Jesus, he prayed hard. He asked Jesus to save him from this battle. He promised to serve Him to the end of his life. Soon after he prayed, he was injured and sent home. Grandfather knew God used this injury to save his life, because most of the German soldiers in his unit died on that battlefield. My grandfather fulfilled what he had promised, and God made him a wonderful servant. He spent the rest of his life as God's tool. He prayed for his family and led his five daughters to a personal relationship with God. One of them was my mother.

"My grandfather prayed also for the fall of communism. In 1989, fifty years after giving his heart to Christ and after 50 years of praying, he died — three months before

communism fell.

"I see a big impact of my grandfather's life on me and my family's life. I think that is why I am here today. I know that I am not saved by the faith of my parents or grandparents, but they taught me to know Jesus Christ since my childhood and they were great examples. I went regularly to Sunday school and later to confirmation. I believed in God the same way I believed in my parents. When I was twelve years old I had already read the whole Bible. But I didn't have a true relationship with Jesus.

"After my confirmation, I participated in meetings for teenagers. I saw that something in my life needed to be changed. God was to be more than only an abstract person. I understood that He wanted to have a relationship with me, and that He wanted to be my friend, my personal leader and my Savior. Since that time I have known that only through Him, His death and His resurrection, it is possible that my sins are forgiven and I can be called a child of God.

"I can say that Jesus is leading me through my life. Every day I can see how good He is. God also gave me a great wife, Sarka. We try to do everything together and we have a common desire to serve the Lord. That is why we are here at Bible school. We see many possibilities to serve the Lord back in Czech, but we want to be sure that we are going to do what His will is. Our country really needs workers for God because it is one of the most atheistic countries in the world."

# Evangelism through hospitality

n the Book of Romans, Paul tells the church to "Practice hospitality" (Romans 12:13b). Webster's Dictionary tells us that being hospitable is "welcoming guests with warmth and generosity, being receptive, entertaining, and being well-disposed toward strangers."

Elim Free Lutheran Church in Lake Stevens, Washington made use of their gifts of hospitality to reach out to their community. The congregation hosted a "Be Our Guest" open house on September 26, 1999. This event was planned to give the congregation a chance to invite friends and neighbors to a full day of activities.

Brooks Gilbertson, the event coordinator sums up the intentions, as he proposed the open house. "For over six years we at Elim, have had a building and remodeling dream. Through much prayer and hard work, the second phase of a five-step building program is now nearing completion. In addition, we have had a full-scale search for a new pastor going on. With Pastor Mark Molstre and his family now settled in Lake Stevens, this task

an eternal impact in the Lake Stevens community. I personally feel that God has something great in His plans for us here at Elim Lutheran Church! What better way to celebrate all that God has blessed us with than to kick off the fall worship season with an awesome open house having the community of Lake Stevens as our guest list." God did bless the day of events, beginning with warm and bright sunshine. The

is also complete. Moreover, Elim has repeat-

edly expressed their desire to grow and have

morning worship service was especially planned to be friendly to visitors. Following the service was Sunday school for all, and then the party moved outdoors. Neighbors and friends were welcomed to a complete salmon barbecue, and dined under canopies decorated with flowers and helium balloons.

Afternoon activities for children included a Bible story tent, game booths, arts and crafts booths, hand-spun cotton candy, and a giant inflatable bounce house. Teens especially enjoyed putt-putt golf, sand volleyball and a dunk tank. Everyone was treated to mini-concerts by vocal and pianist Tim Almli, gospel group "Hard Road," and Elim's choir.

Reflecting on this event several months later, we see how God has used this for His good. Several families are regularly attending church that came to Elim for the first time at the open house, and others have visited again because of this contact. We experienced firsthand how God used us to reach out to our community. Advertising included the local paper, flyers, mailings, canvassing neighborhoods, and personally inviting friends and neighbors. It was evident that the majority of those who came as guests were there because someone had prayed for them and personally invited them.

An unexpected blessing the congregation received was the unity and bonding that occurred as we worked together on this project. As we prepared for "company" by planning, cleaning, and cooking we grew together. As we served we were blessed!

When we practiced the gift of hospitality, God blessed us with a love for our community and each other. Our desire is to continue to see the community of Lake Stevens as "our guest."

- Karen Cornish Elim Free Lutheran Lake Stevens, Washington



# A testimony of what God has done

o experience the meaning of acceptance and forgiveness is to find them in a Person who is both human and divine. I once did not know that there is such a Person alive, nor that He is the One who gives the gifts of acceptance and forgiveness.

I was born seventy-seven years ago. I was the eldest of three preschool brothers when Dad died and Mother assumed the heavy responsibility of us three little children by herself.

Life was difficult. When I became a teenager, I had to quit school to find a job to help our moth-



er in providing an income. At the age of twenty, I enlisted for the war and was sent to England. In the army I met a friend who began

drinking alcohol with me. Soon the use of alcohol became the only experience which gave me the strength to continue on as a soldier in the medical corps of the infantry. Alcohol relieved my tension each day.

I then enlisted to serve in Japan. My drinking continued and no one tried to stop me. I began drinking rubbing alcohol and that created the only relaxation I could find.

When I returned to civilian life. I was a physical wreck and spent the next five years in army hospitals. There I experienced delirium tremors and was put into a straight jacket. This is not a treatment but a last straw. An army chaplain visited me in the hospital, but I was not able to understand anything that he tried to explain to me.

On my last discharge from army hospitals, "Home Care" sent me to live with Reuben and Louise Jordan and their family. Every morning their family gathered for devotions, reading from the Bible and praying for guidance for each day. That daily time of devotions made a deep impression of peacefulness upon me.

Reuben's brother was an area farmer who needed help so I went to live and work with them. Their

# Receiving the gifts of acceptance and forgiveness

home also was a place where I felt well accepted. They too, had that same trust in God. I felt that special atmosphere in their home although I did not understand it.

One evening I attended a special gathering at their church at which a visiting evangelist spoke. His name was Al Martin. He preached about the life of Jesus, the Son of God, particularly His trial at the judgment hall, His crucifixion on the cross as a criminal — all to pay the price of sin on our behalf.

My spiritual eyes opened and I could see Jesus on the cross dying for me, and I became a new person in Him. I came into that church as a sin-burdened man. I left cleansed and praising the Lord because my sins were covered by the blood of Jesus. In exchange, Jesus gave me a clean soul. The craving for alcohol was gone. The swearing and the desire for cigarettes disappeared completely gone.

In 1963 I moved to the New Hope Center in Minneapolis, a Bible-centered place for men who want to be free from addiction and to study the Bible. I claimed I Corinthians 10:4, "for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (KJV). While staying there, I took the winter short course at the Lutheran Bible Institute. It was wonderful to have so many of the best Bible teachers.

I met my wife-to-be at one of the auxiliary meetings held at the New Hope Center. One day she walked past the building and saw the large cross painted on its outdoor brick wall. She stopped in to ask for what purpose the building was used. The receptionist invited her to return in a few hours when a smorgasbord supper would be held for the supporters. A program of music and testimonies followed the meal. I was one of the



Edgar Gentz Morgan Avenue Lutheran Minneapolis, Minnesota

people who gave a testimony.

After the program, Freda was one of the visitors who came to thank all of us who shared. She asked me to come to a hospital where there was a special ward for people addicted to alcohol. I did and shared my testimony.

Freda and I were married three years later and together we have experienced the Lord's blessing. We attend Morgan Avenue Lutheran in Minneapolis and look forward to the weekly sermons. Bible studies and activities of the church. We are thankful for the leadership of Pastor John and Barbara Skeie and look forward to the exciting future of our church.

I continue to share what Christ has done for me. Christian tracts are a helpful way to tell the reason for my trust in Jesus Christ. I carry in my pocket well-chosen tracts to give to a new acquaintance, or to a stranger at an appropriate time. One's own testimony can be forgotten by others, but a tract can be reread and treasured.

The Word of God says, "Be ready always to give the answer to anyone who asks you the reason for your faith in Jesus." I like the Living Bible paraphrase of Colossians 4:5: "Make the most of your chances to tell others the Good News. Be wise in all your contacts with them. Let your conversation be gracious as well as sensible, for then you will have the right answer for everyone."

I count on God's promises. Second Timothy 1:12b says, "I know the One in whom I trust, and I am sure that He is able to safely guard all that I have given Him until the day of His return." 25

# Evangelism, what is it?

ooking to the source and derivation of the word "evangelism," we find it has its roots in the word "evangel." That comes from the Greek word, "Evangelos," meaning a message of glad tidings, or good news. This meaning is connected with the gospel, which is the good news that Jesus died on the cross to give us forgiveness of sins and rose again to give us eternal life.

Since the gospel is the good news, what are we to do with it? Evangel also means to announce. The English used to have the town crier, whose job it was to announce the news to the public as he walked the streets. In a similar way the Church is to cry out to the world that Jesus saves!

The good news was given to us at Christmas. He is the Lamb of God promised by the Old Testament prophets. Into a world of sin and evil, of death and the devil, a humanity of fear and anxiety, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. "And as many as received Him to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12).

The Apostle Paul wrote that "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:13, 14).

Here is evangelism, getting the good news out!

The hymn writer Ira Sankey caught the principle of evangelism in his hymn which says, "I love to tell the story of Jesus and His love." Does Jesus love? Jesus is love! He inherited this from His heavenly Father of whom it is said, "God is love."

What then is Ira Sankey's story? It is an account of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus the Messiah, Jesus the Savior.

Since we are talking evangelism we must consider another word

coming out of the word evangel — that is evangelist. That word will cause some to remember old tent meetings where songs such as, "What can wash my sin, nothing but the blood of Jesus," and "The Old Rugged Cross" were sung. There were altar calls and decisions for Christ, all as part of the ministry of the evangelist.

Yes, here is the evangelist preaching the evangel to people. But also here is the pastor sitting by the altar rail of the steps with a group of children, telling them that Jesus loves them, that He died for them, and that He wants to live in their hearts.

Is this evangelism? Is the evangel being spoken? We must say,

Dear Editor,

A few years ago various congregations and parishes sponsored what was called "Pocket Testament Banquets." This was first called the "Pocket Testament League." Later the name became the "Pocket Testament Movement."

Youth were invited to a meal, to have fun, and to be challenged by a speaker. The speaker urged them to carry a copy of the New Testament with them wherever they went. Also, they were challenged to read the Bible on a daily basis.

They signed a pledge card which they were to carry with them. Many took this very seriously and it offered them opportunities to witness and share in school, etc.

I think this is a good idea for today.

Pastor Dennis Gray Grafton, North Dakota

"yes." We must ask ourselves one more question concerning the word evangel, and that is the question. "Are we evangelical?" One may say we do evangelism. We teach and preach the evangel. We become the evangelist. We announce the good news. So if we do evangelism, then must we not say that evangelical is a matter of being, a state of mind, a matter of caring about whether people are saved or lost? Church denominations take the word evangelical as part of their name. If we honor the evangel and follow the Great Commission, then we must be evangelistic and evangelical. To do all this and be all this is evangelism.

# Plan to share it!

Special outreach issue planned - The Lutheran Ambassador is preparing a unique issue. It will be designed to be given away with the goal that in it someone with little familiarity with the Bible will have the chance to read an understandable and clear presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Individuals or congregations wishing to order extra copies of this March 14, 2000 issue to distribute can contact the secretary at The Lutheran Ambassador, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441 or phone 612-545-5631. People who wish to can give 50 cents per extra copy ordered, but there is no required charge for copies that people and congregations plan to distribute. The goal and prayer is that many who are not familiar with the gospel of Jesus, will be given a copy of this issue and get the chance to read the best news they will ever hear.

# Thank you

The Lutheran Ambassador would like to thank those who have written columns for us this past year. Pastor Elden Nelson was the writer of "An Encouraging Word." Jon Dryburgh served as

writer of the "Building the Base" column and Jeannie Brandt helped us in learning to share the good news of Jesus in the "Something to Share" column. Thanks for being used by God!

Women In Service for Him

# Getting in shape

oday my copy of "Spiritual Shape-Up" arrived in the mail. What a mixture of emotions followed — excitement and relief! It was humbling to think that God could use me in this way.

At an AFLC annual conference, then Women's Missionary Federation president, Dee Berkas asked me if I would be interested in writing the WMF Bible Study. This was something I had always wanted to do. Opportunity was knocking and I wanted to say "yes." But in the back of my mind I wondered if I really would be able, so I answered, "I will pray about this and then let you know."

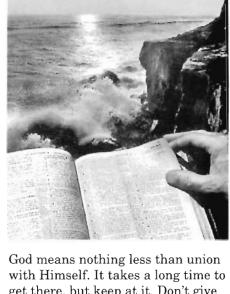
In the weeks that followed and through much prayer I felt led to say, "no."

The following year the desire to write a study book was still in my heart so I decided to just write one lesson and see how it would go. I enjoyed it but realized the big commitment it would be so I put it on the "back burner."

Dee called me again and said the Lord had continued to lay my name on her heart and would I consider writing the 2000 study. After much prayer, this time I said, "yes." The more inadequate I felt the more II Corinthians 12:9 became real to me: "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."

Over the past two years, I have become more aware of God's wonderful, matchless grace. I am so thankful for His power through the Holy Spirit. He has spoken to me in many ways, through articles, radio programs, sermons, and Scripture readings during the Sunday morning worship service. Friends have been there with the right word at the proper time when I needed it for a particular lesson.

It is my desire that as we study "Spiritual Shape-Up," we would have more of a hunger for the Word and that the Lord Jesus would help us grow in our faith as we meet the ordinary moments in our life. Oswald Chambers writes in "My Utmost For His Highest," "the test of a man's religious life and character is not what he does in the exceptional moments of life, but what he does in the ordinary times, when there is nothing tremendous or exciting going on. The worth of a man is revealed in his attitude to ordinary things. Spiritual truth is learned by atmosphere, not by intellectual reasoning. God's Spirit alters the atmosphere of our way of looking at things, and things begin to be possible which never were possible before. Getting into the stride of



God means nothing less than union with Himself. It takes a long time to get there, but keep at it. Don't give in because the pain is bad just now. Get on with it, and before long you will find you have a new vision and a new purpose."

Let's allow the Lord to stretch us in our spiritual life and be willing to exercise our faith as we share Jesus Christ with others.



— Kathie Klenner author of "Spiritual Shape-Up" the 2000 Women's Missionary Federation Bible Study Immanuel and Salem Lutheran Freeman, South Dakota

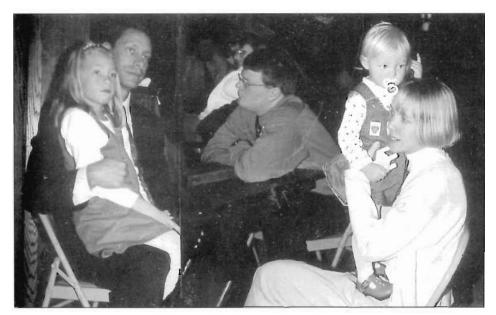


Pictured at last December's school's Christmas concert are: Karen Anderson, Minneapolis, Minnesota, the AFLC World Missions secretary and Sonja Dahl, AFLC missionary currently on leave while studying at Winona State University in Winona, Minnesota. Karen just completed her 30th year of service to the AFLC. She started working as then President John Strand's secretary.

### WMF Donations

in memory of —
Clifford Grahn, Roseau, MN
Victor Larson, Salol, MN
Mildred Kohl, Clinton, MN
Mrs. Trygve (Thelma) Dahle
 Tualatin, OR
Mary Ellen Davis Brandvold
 Billings, MT
Arlene Chooto, Springfield, MO
Roberta Gartley, Springfield, MO
Val Krenz, St. James, MN
Violet Lundemo, Roseau, MN
Flora Wallin, Sell Lake, MN
Mabel Kerbaugh, Ray, ND

Grace Mellum, Tioga, ND



Missionaries Todd and Barb Schierkolk are on furlough and visiting congregations before returning to Aguascalientes, Mexico next summer. The family has moved into a newly renovated home at the Association Retreat Center near Osceola, Wisconsin. They are pictured above while showing their mission video during a congregation's adult Sunday school hour. Also pictured are two of their three children, Rachel and Kirstie, along with their brother-in-law, Brent Peterson, Brookings, South Dakota. For more information on the mission in Aguascalientes, check out the web site at members.truepath.com/aflcmexico. The Schierkolk's phone number is 715-294-4539. Their address is 2372 30th Ave., Osceola, WI 54020.

Missionaries Paul and Becky Abel, Curitiba, Brazil hosted the AFLC missionaries in Brazil. Joining them for a time of fellowship and a look ahead to the new century were Pastor Connely and Carolyn Dyrud and Pastor Jonathan and Tamba Abel and family. They met at the ARCA on December 11. Missing this year were Missionaries David and Sarah Nelson and family who expect to return to Brazil at the end of their furlough next May.

The Paul Abel family was busy with several gatherings with friends and church people throughout December. Daughter Joanna's friends were together often before her departure to Hillcrest Academy in Fergus Falls, Minnesota on December 28. Joanna hopes to conclude her senior year at Hillcrest. The family ended 1999 at the ARCA with prayer and celebration with members from the three churches in the Curitiba area.

Missionaries Jonathan and Tamba Abel, Campo Grande, Brazil were joined by Pastor Iran and eight Bible school students for a weekend evangelistic crusade at their church and at the mission on the other side of the city. They report that it was an encouraging experience for all, with many decisions made for Christ.

The Abel family traveled to Curitiba to join family members for Christmas. The 16-hour bus trip was extra long with their daughter April wearing a body cast again. She broke her arm for the fourth time and x-rays showed a cyst has grown along with her own growth. The bone wall is paper thin. The Abels are waiting to see how this break heals before pursuing further tests.

# Retired from active mission service in Mexico

Missionaries Dick and Clara Gunderson, formerly of Puebla, Mexico, are now living at 8415 Spring Lake Road NE, North Branch, MN 55056. As of January 1, 2000 the Gundersons have retired from active missionary service.

Thirty-three years ago they sought the Lord for clear direction. Hebrews 13:5 provided His promise of His presence as they gave themselves to foreign mission service under the World Mission Prayer League. "Only let your manner of life be free from the love of money; be content with what you have. For God has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

Over the years the Lord led them to Bolivia; Mexico; Brooten, Minnesota; Escanaba, Michigan; Lake Stevens, Washington; and then in 1994, back to Mexico. The Gundersons wrote: "These years of formal service have been abundant ones. Those of you who have supported us in prayer have done so as God has placed this burden on your heart and we have been abundantly blessed. Those of you who have been a part of our financial support have done so faithfully and we have been abundantly taken care of. Cards, letters and phone calls have kept us informed and encouraged our hearts. Visitors have added a special dimension in our lives as we've had the privilege of 'showing off' our friends and fellow believers here.

"The fellowship of the World Mission Prayer League has been unequaled and our co-workers over the years have been the best of friends. We've experienced being the new kids on the block, learning from the old timers. Now these last years it has been our privilege to be mentors, letting our gray hair and bald head speak of our years of

# Annual AFLC Missions Conference — January 9-12, 2000

"Occupy The Land" is the theme for the missions week at the AFLC schools in Minneapolis. It is part of the January term for AFLBS students and the seminary inter-term.

experience!

"Way back in 1967, Dick was a member of the first class to be ordained by the AFLC. Though pastors were in short supply, through the farsightedness of the leaders, we were set apart to be missionaries of the WMPL. These last five years we have been financially supported in part by an AFLC congregation as well as receiving many special gifts by individuals and churches .... Thank you for being obedient in being partners with God, with us! With Paul in Philippians 4, we say, 'But though I appreciate your gifts, what makes me happiest is the wellearned reward you will have because of your kindness."

On December 5, the last Sunday in Mexico, the Gundersons had the joy of leading a man named Ernesto to the Lord after church. He is a man they had gotten to know in their travels when there was a huge landslide and they had five hours to wait for the road to be cleared. He expressed great interest in the gospel at the time and December 5 was the culmination of God's work for salvation.

Missionaries Darwin and MaryAnn Jackson, who had been serving in the Puebla, Mexico area with the Gundersons, recently moved to an area in the mountains outside of Puebla and the town of Huahuaxtla. They and the Gundersons had been traveling to that area frequently, working with the congregations there. With their relocation the Jacksons will be able to spend more time with the people there in evangelism and discipleship training.

Pastor Paul Nash, representing FLAPS (Free Lutheran Association of Pilot Supporters), receives the first distribution check of the AFLC Foundation funds from its treasurer, Bob Dietsche. This is the first of seven checks of \$100 each given to the various corporations of the AFLC. It is hoped that soon the checks could be another digit or two as the assets of the foundation grow. For more information call the AFLC headquarters at 1-612-545-5631 or Mark Johnson at 1-800-950-2109.

# May we help you?

The stock market has been increasing in value since the early 1980s. Many have been blessed with high appreciation in their stock portfolios. Net worth has increased, but still many stocks have low dividend yields producing little or no income. The only way for those wanting to increase income is to sell the stock. Upon the sale of the stock there is a capital gains tax. Short term rates to long term rates range from 39.6 percent, 28 percent, 25 percent, to 20 percent for most taxpayers.

Let us look at how one family solved the problem. The donors, we will call Tom and Mary, purchased \$10,000 worth of a small savings and loan company in 1977. Through various developments in the savings and loan industry this \$10,000 investment grew into \$1,000,000 in just 20 years.

Tom recently passed away and Mary has more then she needs with income from their pension plans and social security. Mary has two problems. First she is not well diversified with the majority of her assets in one bank stock. Secondly she has an estate tax problem and a large portion of her assets will go to estate taxes on her death.

If she sells the stock she will have to pay long term capital gains taxes on the sale. For every \$100,000 she will have to pay \$20,000 in income taxes. If she does not sell and the market drops she could lose even more.

If she leaves the stock in her estate until her death her family will be able to sell the stock without paying 20 percent in capital gain



– Mark D. Johnson AFLC Development Consultant Fountain Hills, Arizona

taxes. The estate, however, will have to pay approximately 40 percent in estate taxes.

Mary has three places to leave the estate: her family, charity and the government. We asked Mary, if we could eliminate one of the three beneficiaries which one would she like to eliminate. She indicated the government.

We suggested two ways to reduce her tax liability. One option was to give the stock directly to a charity. She would get a charitable income tax deduction and remove the stock from the estate. The charity now owns the stock, thus avoiding the capital gains tax and estate taxes.

The second option was to transfer the stock into a charitable remainder trust. The trust holds the stock or if sold the asset until she dies. She will receive an income tax charitable deduction, remove the asset from her estate, and avoid the capital gains tax. In addition, she will receive a lifetime income. Mary liked this option because she could use this lifetime income from the charitable remainder trust to purchase a life insurance policy. The insurance death benefit will go to the family to replace the assets that were placed into the trust. The insurance is owned by an irrevocable trust to avoid estate taxes.

Upon Mary's death the AFLC Foundation will receive a substantial charitable gift, the family will receive the cash from the life insurance and the government will get nothing. Mary has avoided the capital gains tax, the estate tax and diversified her portfolio. The family nets more because they avoided the taxes. The AFLC will receive a gift that would have gone to the government. Mary is happy because she has still provided for her family and left a nice gift for the Lord's work.

Call the AFLC Foundation today and let us show you how to maximize your estate for your family and charity. Mark D. Johnson, CFP is available to answer your questions. Call for a free consultation or proposal, 1-800-950-2109.





The Proclaim Choir performing at the December 5, 1999 Christmas concert.



Looking up the hill at 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, Minnesota. On the right is the new seminary housing, in the center the schools' chapel and on the left the Bible school dean's home.

# Vision 2004 update

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges in the Christian life is to pray. Yet "the effective fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16b). There is no greater peace, no greater impact on Vision 2004, than our prayers of dependence upon God.

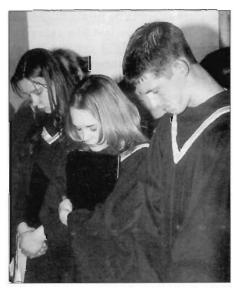
### **Praise God:**

- \* For His lovingkindness, salvation, and guidance through His Word and Spirit.
- \* For the AFLC Schools: Bible school, seminary, and future Ministry Training Institute.
- \* For His generous provision of seminary married student housing.

### Pray:

- \* For God's continuing guidance of the project.
- \* That ground breaking for the student center would occur in March, 2000, according to His will.
- \* For 75 percent (or more) of \$5 million to come in cash or pledges by January 23, according to His will.
- \* That each of us on campus, throughout the AFLC and beyond will be obedient to the Lord in our living and giving, that the good news of His salvation will be spread throughout the world.

# AFLC Schools Christmas Concert



The concert opened with prayer.



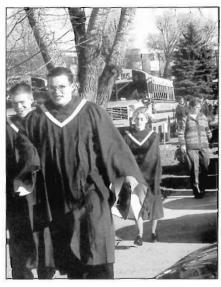
Melissa Nakata, Proclaim director.



Missionaries Bill and Rachel (Mundfrom) Chesley, on furlough from Bible translation work in Chad, Africa.



The concert choir.



A warm December day welcomed parents and guests to the campus.



The concert was a time for greeting friends.



Four members of the seminary chorus: Dana Coyle, Peter Ward, Peter Makadi and Wade Mobley.



Some of the audience at the 2 p.m. performance.



Friends and alumni joined the choirs in singing the "Hallelujah Chorus."

# PEOPLE & PLACES



Vernon, British Columbia — Living Word Lutheran is "seeing a time of refreshing in our whole congregation," said Pastor Gerald Gettis. Last fall, the AFLC home missions and evangelism departments led the "Miracle Mile Ministry Workshop" in Vernon. After much prayer the church council and the congregation "believed that God wanted us to minister to the youth of our area." Pastor Gettis added that the whole congregation was in prayer as to how they should minister to the youth.

They held "Friday night reach-out" sessions. After three weeks, attendance rose from nine to 30 young people.

"Our people are praying for the area that was surveyed in Vernon and I am asking that you pray over this area as often as the Lord shall lead you to do so," said Pastor Gettis.

The 38th Annual Conference of the AFLC, June 14-18, 2000 at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wisconsin

Northwest Minnesota District Winter Bible Conference will be held February 4-5 at Badger Creek Lutheran in Badger, Minnesota. AFLC Schools Old Testament teacher Jerry Holmaas will be the Saturday morning Bible teacher. Missionary Todd Schierkolk will speak at the Friday evening session at 7 p.m. The Schierkolks will share at the Saturday noon Women's Missionary Federation meeting. The district annual meeting will be held on Saturday just before the noon luncheon. Contact Pastor Alan Arneson of Badger for more information.

Eastern North Dakota Winter Bible Conference will be held at Trinity Lutheran in Grand Forks, North Dakota on Saturday, February 26, 2000. The guest speaker will be Pastor Jon Wellumson, Williston, North Dakota.

The district youth will also gather at the Grand Forks church for their winter retreat on February 20-21. After Bible sessions and supper at the church, they will go to the YMCA for recreation and an overnight lock-in.

Boscobel, Wisconsin — Trinity Lutheran installed their new pastor, Rev. Harold Reitz, on December 19. President Robert Lee conducted the service.



Pastor Robert Fedde, interim pastor at Trondhjem Lutheran in Volin, South Dakota, and Pastor Roy Johnson, Ortley, visit at the South Dakota district pastors' Christmas banquet. Pastor Fedde was the evening speaker.



Eric Manus, youth director at Christ the King Lutheran in Pipestone, Minnesota, and the interim pastor at Grace Lutheran in Aberdeen, South Dakota, Jim and Lori Keller of Wallace attended the South Dakota pastors' banquet. The December 10 event was held in Brookings and paid for with help from Aid Association for Lutherans "Just Say Thanks" program through the branch at Grace Lutheran in Bruce. South Dakota.

Pacific Northwest District Bible Conference — is scheduled for March 10-12 at Our Redeemer Lutheran in Kirkland, Washington. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Francis Monseth, dean of the Free Lutheran Theological Seminary in Minneapolis.

Oceanside, California — Community Lutheran prepared for Y2K in part by means of a spiritual emphasis week entitled, "New Discoveries for 2000 A.D." Pastor Dan Klug, East Grand Forks, Minnesota, was the guest speaker. Three area AFLC congregations participated and the concluding service featured a combined choir singing, "Lead On, O King Eternal." They also had a strong reformation emphasis during the week preceding October 31.

Cookbooks for sale - Triumph Lutheran WMF in Ferndale. Washington, has a new three-ring binder cookbook for sale. Cost is \$12 plus \$3 for shipping. Send check to Triumph Lutheran at 5719 Church Road, Ferndale, WA 98248.

**Wanted** — a copy of the book, Reminiscent Reflections, by G.H. Gerberding. Please contact Pastor Raynard Huglen at Box 128, Newfolden, MN 56738 or phone at 218-874-8465.

Matt Greven, Newark, Illinois, is serving a small village in Hungary. His ministry includes youth work and he is being allowed to teach a Bible curriculum in the village school at Repcelak.

## **Fourth Annual Youth Workers Retreat**

is scheduled for January 21-23, 2000, at the Red Willow Bible Camp north of Binford, North Dakota. This is a time for those serving in youth ministry to take a weekend furlough. The theme is "Millennial Ministry," a fitting way to begin this new year. For more information, call the youth office at 612-545-5631.

### With the Lord =

Lloyd B. Lee, 88, died on November 23 in Alpena, Michigan. Funeral services were held on November 27 in Escanaba, Michigan with Lay Pastor Orville Jensen officiating.

He was born on January 1, 1911, in Duluth, Minnesota, to Anna (Opdahl) Sletten and Ole Sletten, who died before his birth. His mother later married D. Louis Lee, whose last name Lloyd assumed. He was married to Eleanor Leece in 1939. To this union were born three children: Lois (deceased), Robert, and Carol. Employed for most of his career as an operating engineer, he and his family lived in various parts of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. He was a charter member of Escanaba Free Lutheran Church.

Lloyd Lee was preceded in death by his wife Eleanor in 1996. Survivors include Pastor Robert (Gloria) of Crystal, Minnesota; Carol (Sam) Boyer, Alpena, Michigan; four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Blessed be his memory.

Clarence W. Quanbeck, 78, McVille, North Dakota passed away on December 3, 1999 at the Altru Hospital in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Clarence was born November 2, 1921 near Bowbells, North Dakota, to William and Alma (Twedt) Quanbeck. He graduated from McVille High School in 1940. He married Edna Larson on July 8, 1950 and together they moved to Denver, Colorado where Clarence received his watch repair training. After moving back to McVille, they owned and operated the Quanbeck's Variety and Jewelers Store for 35 years before retiring in 1986. Clarence was a member of New Luther Valley Lutheran Church in McVille and was an active layman in the beginnings of the AFLC in 1963. He also served on the AFLC Coordinating Committee until 1980.

He is survived by his wife Edna; one son. Reuben. Grand Forks. North Dakota; two grandchildren and one brother, Orlin of McVille. Blessed be his memory.

Dorothy Lohafer, 77, Holstein, Iowa passed away on October 28, 1999. She is survived by Walter, her husband of 51 years; six children including Rev. Joel Lohafer of Triumph Lutheran in Ferndale. Washington; and nine grandchildren. Blessed be her memory.

Rev. Carl Olaf Rosenius Norheim, 93, Cooperstown, North Dakota, died December 8, 1999 at the Griggs County Nursing Home in Cooperstown. He was born November 27, 1906 in Maddock, North Dakota. He was a pastor in the Church of the Lutheran Brethren of America and served congregations in Brooklyn, New York; Eau Claire, Wisconsin; and Pasadena and Fullerton, California. For more than 55 years, he directed the "Lutheran Gospel Hour," a program broadcast over more than 100 radio stations across the United States and in the Philippines. He traveled extensively throughout Lutheran churches, singing and preaching in evangelistic meetings.

He was married to Thelma Fuglestad. She passed away in 1997. He is survived by two daughters, JoAnne (James) Wold, Luverne, North Dakota; Rhoda (Ed) Tuit, Santa Monica, California; two sons, Lowell (Sharon), Rosemead, California, and Ralph, Soledad, California; a sister, Freda Togstad, Sheridan, Oregon; eight grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.

Memorial services were December 18 at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Pasadena and on January 9 at Zion Lutheran Church in Cooperstown. Burial was at Forest Lawn Hollywood Hills Cemetery, Los Angeles. Blessed be his memory.

Four seminary interns

are available to begin their year's assignment on June 1, 2000. AFLC congregations seeking an intern pastor should make their request by February 1. Assignments will be made March 1.

### **Lutheran Brotherhood grant** given to congregations

In 1999, twenty-six AFLC congregations shared in the \$40,000 grant given through the Foundations' Church Extension program. The LBF grant program gives eight Lutheran national church bodies money to develop new congregations and assist established congregations undertake special evangelism programs.

**Pastor Orville and Florence** Hiepler, Fallbrook, California are planning to lead a tour to Europe's Oberammergau, Rhine River, Lutherland, and Switzerland beginning July 25, 2000. Lord willing, this will be the fifth time the Heiplers have attended the Oberammergau Passion Play, performed every ten years.

Pastor David and Chervl Skordahl, Dalton, Minnesota left on December 12 for Dubai, United Arab Emirates for a month's visit with their daughter and family who are teaching at an American school in that tiny nation on the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula.

# **AFLC Memorials**

Department given to...

In memory of...

**World Missions** 

Hildur Thompson

**Home Missions** 

Marlin Monson Luther Monson

Loretta Haarstad

**Church Extension** 

Hildur Thompson

**AFLTS** 

Florence Maxwell Huldah Converse

**AFLBS** 

Mrs. Harold Grindal David Thompson

Earl Peterson

Vision 2004 Doris L. Carlson

# Grant available for year 2000

Lutheran Brotherhood Foundation is again granting \$40,000 to the AFLC toward evangelism. Please contact the evangelism office immediately for an application if you are interested in participating. The deadline for getting the grant application back to the AFLC Commission on Evangelism is February

1999 AFLC Annual Reports available - To receive your report, send \$7 to the AFLC headquarters at 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441.

Milford, Illinois - St. John Lutheran Church of Schwer enjoyed a special Sunday last fall when Evelvn and Harry Heeren celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. In attendance was Evelyn's mother, Anna Smith. The five generation family sang "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." One Sunday in November, Anna Smith walked into church and requested the congregation sing, "Now Thank We All Our God." It was her 99th birthday!

### Pastor John Allstadt.

Wausau, Wisconsin was removed from the AFLC Clergy Roster at the December coordinating committee meeting at his request.

15, 2000. Write to us at 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth. MN 55441 or call 1-612-545-5631.

# A Giving Opportunity

At their December 1999 meeting, the commission on evangelism identified three specific financial challenges for the year 2000.

- 1. Our evangelist/director of evangelism has been invited by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association to attend Amsterdam 2000, an International Conference of Itinerant Evangelists to be held next August in Holland. The cost is \$2,500.
- 2. Raise \$6,000 to purchase equipment necessary to give the evangelism department the ability to use Power Point software for teaching presentations during evangelistic meetings and seminars.
- 3. Increase giving to the evangelism operating fund by 25 percent over the receipts of 1999, which are estimated to be about \$60,000. This increase would make it possible to add a much needed secretary to our staff.

- Gene Quist Chairman, AFLC Commission on Evangelism

### **Association of Free Lutheran Congregations**

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (11 months) - January 1 - November 30, 1999

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN NOVEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$234,385.00	\$26,578.23	227,536.92	97
Seminary	110,296.00	9,879.55	113,794.97	1.03
Bible School	147,674.00	-6,292.14*	115,290.37	78
Home Missions	238,152.00	19,897.83	190,098.28	80
World Missions	190,909.00	25,276.24	144,203.77	76
Capital Investment	14,065.00	928.99	7,125.58	51
Parish Education	56,854.00	8,275.83	62,820.98	1.10
Church Extension	21,051.00	1,340.86	17,257.87	82
TOTALS	\$1,013,386.00	85,885.39	878,128.74	87
TOTALS 1997	. 1,278,758.00	87,651.91	1,059,773.22	83
Goal 92%				

The Evangelism department received \$4,914.85 in November.

\*A gift for \$20,000 for Vision 2004 was incorrectly coded to the Bible School in a previous month.

# Are we willing to pay the price?

was at a used car lot. They were having a big sale. The day will come when I'll need to get a different car, so I was looking at what was available. The salesman and I walked by one car and he asked if I would like to drive that one away. "Is there a price you would pay for that car?" he asked. "Sure there is," I said. "But I'm pretty sure you won't sell it at that price." I was right, even though the salesman tried to convince me otherwise. I would have liked to drive away in that car, but I wouldn't pay the price necessary.

The issue in regards to evangelism is not just if there is interest. With those of us who call ourselves evangelicals some level of interest in seeing people come to Christ usually exists. But, as it was with me and the car, the issue is - are we willing to pay the

price necessary to make it happen?

Getting serious about evangelism will involve paying a price. It can cost us comfort. Doing things a certain way, the same way it has always been done; having the same people always around, knowing everyone in the room; those kinds of things can give a sense of security and stability. But what works best for us, may not be what works best for doing evangelism. The way we have always done it in our congregations, may not be the most effective way of sharing the good news with people today. Are we willing to change some things, if led to do so by the Holy Spirit? Are we willing to ask some

tough questions like not just what is most comfortable for us who are in the church, but what is the best way of reaching those who don't know Jesus?

I was part of a group that was discussing what time to do a program. Like most discussions of that nature, we began by considering what time was most convenient for us. But then we stopped and shifted the focus of the conversation. The program was intended to be a means of outreach to folks in the community who were not part of the church. We needed to consider, what time would be best for them? Maybe that would result in us having to adjust our schedules. That would be a small price to pay to tell more people the good news of Jesus.

The command to "look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:4, NIV), is to us as individuals, but it was written first of all to a congregation. We are not just to ask, what works best for our congregation? We are to consider what meeting times, what activities, what location works best for those who are apart from Jesus? The result of asking those kinds of questions could cost us some comfort, but result in great blessings.

Caring about lost people and getting involved in trying to reach them can cost us a part of our heart. The most effective evangelism does not come from trying to impress God and earn points with Him. It is not to be motivated only by duty or a fear of punishment if it is not done. The evangelism God desires is to come from a love for Him and a love for

"Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all

> your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:37-40, NIV).

Evangelism hangs on these two commandments as well. We are to have a love for our neighbors that results in our getting involved in trying to bring them to Jesus.

Loving them can be dangerous. They may say, "No." They may think we're nuts. Our relationship with them will probably be impacted. The possible tension and rejection of what we want

to share should, because we love them, tear at our hearts. The temptation comes to think, "I shouldn't care so much. I shouldn't try to win them to the Lord. It costs. It hurts."

When we hurt for the lost we follow the example of Jesus. "As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, 'If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace — but now it is hidden from your eyes" (Luke 19:41, 42, NIV).

Why pay the price? Because it is worth it. The joy, the blessing, the privilege of seeing someone we care about begin a relationship with Jesus is immeasurable. "Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him" (Psalm 126:5, 6, NIV).

- Pastor Craig Johnson

"Getting serious about evangelism will involve paying a price."

# THE ASSOCIATION RETREAT CENTER

### Theme for 2000 - "Be Bold!"

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

# Winter Calendar

**January 17-18** 

Home Mission

Pastor's Retreat

January 18-20

AFLC Pastors'

Conference

February 4-6

SIDEbySIDE

Youth Retreat for 7th-12th grades. \$55 (downhill skiing extra).

This year, the theme focuses on prayer, digging into God's Word, and locusts. Be sure to bring along an adventurous spirit and your appetite. Speakers for the weekend will include ARC director Eric Westlake, Michelle Alfson, Pastor David Johnson, and Wade Mobley. Come on out and check out our coffee shop, bookstore and enjoy the concert Saturday night! A great opportunity to bring an unsaved friend!

**February 18-20** Junior Sno Daze Junior Retreat for 4th-7th grades \$50

The plans for this retreat are still in the works but if you've come to Sno Daze at The ARC before, you know it'll be a great time! Bring some friends and extra warm clothes.

March 3-4 Men's Retreat \$35 The speaker for the weekend is Peter Franz, pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran in Cloquet, Minnesota. Come join other men for a weekend of inspirational teaching, worship and fellowship.



March 24-26

Couples' Retreat

\$90 per couple

Couples old and new will benefit from a weekend away from the normal routines of life. Our speakers, Pastor Elden and Faith Nelson, Kandiyohi, Minnesota, will share from God's Word and from their own life experiences. Bring your spouse and be blessed.

**April 28-30** Women's Retreat \$55 This favorite retreat promises to be a great one. At this writing we're still working on a speaker but the workshops are taking

shape. Dr. Jeanne Szarvinski from the Soteria Family Health Center, a Christian non-profit clinic, will speak to us about women's health issues. There will be a workshop on making and using a prayer journal, a great devotional tool! Of course, the usual great music, abundance of food and a new craft will be a part of the weekend. Bring your mom, daughters, sisters, and friends and join us for a great time away.

Registration forms are available at your local AFLC church or from the ARC. Please contact the ARC for more information:

2372 30th Ave., Osceola, WI 54020 Phone: 1-800-294-2877

### **General Retreat Information**

All retreats begin Friday evening with registration at 6:00 p.m. and the first session at 8:00 p.m. All retreats end Sunday morning at approximately 11:00 a.m. after brunch and the final session, with the exception of Men's Retreat, which concludes Saturday evening after dinner. Be sure to bring bedding, towels, personal items, Bible, notebook and spending money for souvenirs. There are a limited supply of linen sets — bedding and towels — available to rent for \$5.