

# The Lutheran AMBASSADOR

January 6, 1997<sup>8</sup>

Me?  
an  
Evangelist?



# THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

January 6, 1997  
Volume 36, Number 1



The magazine of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441. (612) 545-5631

**Editor:** Rev. Craig Johnson  
**Assistant to the Editor:** Solveig Hjermstad  
**Editorial Board:** Rev. John Mundfrom, Oryen Benrud, Rev. Jerry Moan.

## CONTENTS

The empty seat	p. 4
Me? An evangelist?	p. 4
Rise up man of God	p. 6
Mothering and evangelism	p. 8
Her business is people	p. 8
Seeing God's blessing	p. 10
Border crossing	p. 13
Christmas concert	p. 14
Whose plan?	p. 18

### 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, Box 423, Faith, SD 57626; (605) 967-2381; fax (605) 967-2382; e-mail [craigj@teleport.com](mailto:craigj@teleport.com)  
[solveighj@gwtc.com](mailto:solveighj@gwtc.com)

### For subscription changes and information:

The Lutheran Ambassador, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441. (612) 545-5631.

### 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

### Producing joy

*James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings. Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.* — James 1:1-4

**M** My first thought when considering the letter of James was Martin Luther's view that James' epistle is really an epistle of straw compared to the other epistles, for it had nothing of the nature of the gospel about it. And yet, Luther also said of the work of this "good, pious man," there are many good sayings in him.

As James began his letter, he sent a greeting to the twelve tribes which were scattered abroad. Suffering and hardship were primary reasons for the scattering. Even today, we are hearing about the suffering church throughout the world.

He has a message for the suffering church, *Consider it pure joy, my brother, whenever you face trials of many kinds.* As Christians we need to be prepared for trials. We are overlooking a significant message that can be learned from the suffering church. It should not be a question of "if" trials come, but "when" trials come. In God's hands, trials have a purpose. It is a time of testing that leads to perseverance.

No one knows what this new year will bring into our lives. Trials are possible. Reconcile in your own mind that no matter what happens in your life, God has a purpose to work for good. Paul wrote in Romans 8:28, *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.* And His purpose is stated in the following verse, *...to be conformed to the likeness of his Son.*

How did Jesus handle the various trials in life? Did He walk around with a long face? Did He question God by saying, "If you loved Me, you wouldn't make my life so miserable?" Rather God said at

Jesus' baptism, *This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,* and then Jesus was immediately led to the wilderness where He was tempted for 40 days. Jesus accepted God's will throughout His life which included hunger, thirst, exhaustion, accusations, and misunderstandings even by His own family.

Remember, God has purposed to conform our lives into the image of His Son which will include the fruit of patience under trials. Patience does not come from "trying" to be patient, but it comes through suffering and testing. It is learning to wait upon the Lord.

*Yet those that wait upon the Lord  
Will gain new strength;  
They will mount up with wings  
like eagles,  
They will run and not get tired,  
They will walk and not  
become weary.*

— Isaiah 40:31

God wants us to see circumstances from His perspective. Testing is a form of training that leads to completeness and maturity. Just as a child must learn how to walk by trial and error, the Christian must learn to walk by faith. Ultimately this testing produces joy.



— Pastor Jerry Peterson  
First Lutheran Church  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

# sound bites

"I am trying in my own small way to pipe the tune of grace. I do so

**1**

because I know, more surely than I know anything, that any pang of healing or forgiveness or goodness I have ever felt comes solely from the grace of God. I yearn for the church to become a nourishing culture of that grace." — Philip Yancy

"People tell me they are looking for a church where they can meet God, where there is the power of the Holy Spirit, and where their lives can be radically changed. ... The widespread spiritual thirst means that we have an extraordinary opportunity to reach people for Jesus Christ."

— Leith Anderson

**6**

"Any one coming in contact with fire is made to glow; a person who comes in contact with the fire of divine love is made to glow with love to God and his fellow-men."

— C.F.W. Walther

**2**

"Something completely new sprung up in me; something that recreated me. From that day Jesus became my best friend, and the God which formerly stood before me stern and cold now became my Father! He whom I before knew from a Book, Him I now knew in my own life."

— Ludwig Hope

"Let no one think that he has preached the Gospel simply because he has mentioned the name of Jesus.

**3**

There is much speaking about the cross and Jesus' love today, but much of it, I am afraid, is nothing but concealed Law-preaching.

It is Law-preaching because the great *pro nobis* is not there: Jesus died for us, for you and for me."

— Carl F. Wisloff

"In the deserts of the heart  
Let the healing fountain  
start,  
In the prison of his days  
Teach the free man how  
to praise."

— W.H. Auden

**5**

**L**ast April, Al, my husband for 52 years passed away. The Easter issue of *The Lutheran Ambassador* printed his testimony that he shared with our congregation shortly before his death. Since then I have handed out many copies of that testimony.

In June, I decided to take an Amtrak trip to Colorado and California to visit my daughters and friends. The last week before leaving, at the Sunday worship prayer request time at church, I asked for travel mercies and also that the congregation would pray with me that the person sitting next to me would be a blessing to me or perhaps that I would be an encouragement to them and witness of my faith in Christ. I had been praying about that for about a week.

The day came for my departure. As I walked in to my coach car the attendant said happily, "I have just the seat for you! The one next to you is broken so you'll have the seat to yourself."

"Thank you," I said but wondered, "How is God going to use this?"

**As I sat alone, I remembered that many people were praying for the right person for me to sit by, so I would just wait and see.**

Morning passed and I did not talk to anyone. About noon I asked two teenage girls if they would bring me a cup of tea. I gave them the money and some time later they returned with my tea.

Then we began to talk. The girls were going to a Nike volleyball camp so we visited about volleyball. Then I asked about their families — all the time praying in my heart for an opening to witness.

Kari said, "My grandfather was 80 years old last December." (My opening.) I said, "My husband was 80 years old last December, too, but he died in April. The girls started to cry and sympathize with me.

— Erna Jochum  
Ruthfred Lutheran  
Bethel Park,  
Pennsylvania

## Me? An evangelist?

**W**ell, perhaps — and if His light shines through me as I carry on this daily life of mine according to His Word, then surely, **Yes!** Psalm 27:13 says, "I am still confident of this — 'I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.'"

As an unmarried child of God, I have been blessed beyond my most fervent wishes. Certainly there was a time when the thought of being married sounded very inviting, but as I review the life my Lord Jesus has given me, I can only be grateful. Even when I seemed to start sliding away from Him, He kept me and held me close to Himself. II Timothy 2:19 says, "Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with the inscription: 'The Lord knows those who are His.'"

During my working years, I shared the love of our Savior with many people. My life experiences often enabled me to be a source of strength and comfort to others in their joys and sorrows as well as to confirm their relationship to a truly wonderful Lord and Friend.

As one of God's "unclaimed treasures," He led me with understanding love. In fact, being unmarried can also be very fulfilling. How glad I am to know that Lazarus, Martha, and Mary were dear friends of our Lord Jesus and they were unmarried. "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" (John 11:5). He also loves me!

Throughout life I have admired Anna, of whom it is said in Luke 2:37-38, "She was a widow until she was 84. She never left the temple, but worshiped day and night, fasting and praying." When she saw the baby Jesus, she told others of Him as they looked "forward to the redemption of Jerusalem." Anna was an evangelist.

Whatever our marital status, we can declare with joy that we can be an evangelist and serve with effectiveness in the ministries God has given each of us. John 10:14 says, "I am the Good Shepherd; I know My sheep, and My sheep know Me." That is encouragement and comfort.



# empty seat

— Ann Glimsdahl  
Triumph Lutheran Church  
Ferndale, Washington

But I responded, "That's OK. I know his forwarding address: it's heaven. He's just fine!" Then I asked them if they knew Jesus. One said, "Yes," and the other said, "No." I took out a couple of copies of my husband's testimony sharing how he had assurance in going to heaven and asked if they would like to read it. They both took a copy and began reading.

Two boys had been talking with the girls earlier that morning. They returned and sat on the floor near us. When the girls got up and left, one of the boys turned to me and asked, "Madam, what were you talking about with those girls?"

I said, "About my husband who died. I gave them a copy of the talk he gave to the children at our church. Would you like one?"

They did, so I gave them each a copy. As they sat there reading, two more boys stopped by and began reading over their shoulders. I pulled out two more copies and asked if they wanted them. They accepted them and sat on the floor and began reading. The girls came back to their seats. What a sight! All six young people were quietly reading my husband's testimony.

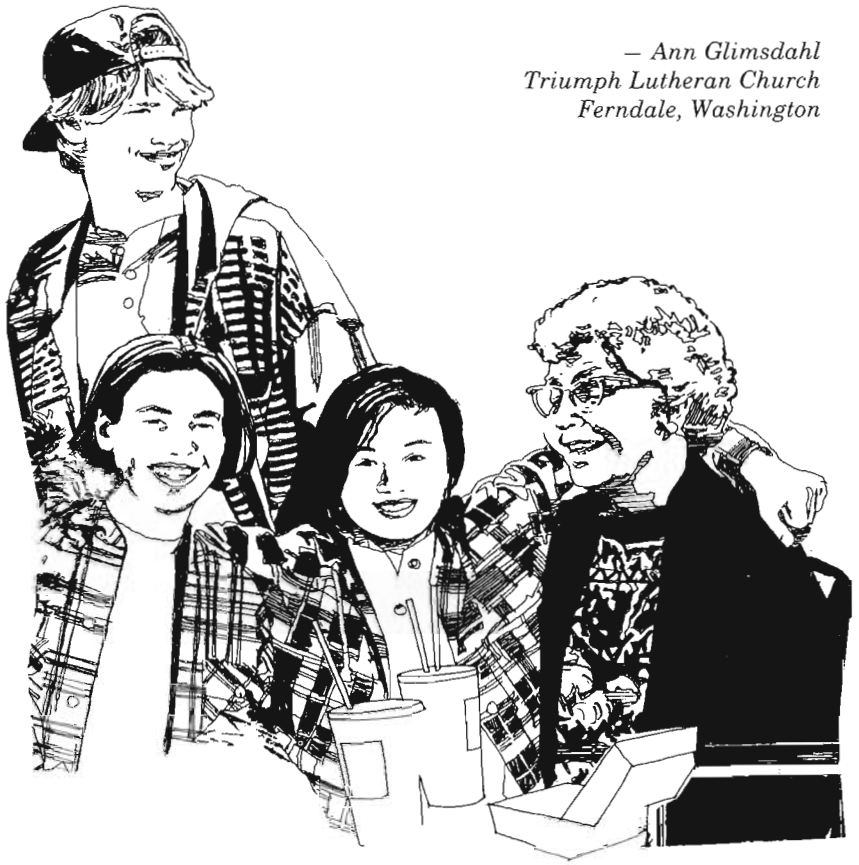
After a while the boys all left and I began talking with the girls as I knew they were soon to get off the train. I encouraged them to read their Bibles and said, "There will be a time in your life you will realize you are a sinner and need a Savior. Then you can pray that prayer as indicated in Al's article and you will know you have eternal life."

**They thanked me and when they left, I received hugs and kisses from them.**

Just after they left, one of the young boys came down the aisle and surprise of all surprises: he jumped over my knees and into the broken seat next to me.

The first words out of his mouth were, "You know, I don't really do bad things but I'm not real good either."

I explained to him that sin is sin whether big or small in God's sight. To God, if it isn't in His will, then it's sin. I shared Romans 3:23 and 6:23; I John 1:9 and John 3:16. We talked of Jesus' death on the cross for our sins and paying the price for us so we could have eternal life.



I sensed it wasn't right to press for a commitment to Christ right then, but I did say, "When you are ready to accept Jesus as your Savior and Lord in your life, then pray the prayer at the end of Al's article and Jesus will come into your heart and you'll be a new person." My young friend seemed very happy.

It was lunch time and my 12-year-old friend ate his pizza while I took out my lunch with a fresh cup of tea that he brought for me. I learned about soccer. He had been to Vancouver, British Columbia in a competition. He and his friend were on their way home to San Juan Capistrano.

That night I slept in the whole two seats. In the morning as I readied to get off near Oakland, California, my young friend came by to say, "Good-bye." A 12-year-old boy with baggy expensive clothes hugging a white hair 74-year-old lady — what a sight. God is so good! The Bible says in I Corinthians 3:7-8 that some plant and some water, but God gives the increase. I feel God used me to plant on that train.

The first Sunday after returning home, as I got out of my car at church the first question asked of me was, "Who sat in that empty seat next to you?"

My church family had really been praying for me. I shared this story during the service. Praise the Lord! He hears and answers the prayers of His children.



**T**here's a movement taking place in our society today. Men are rising up and taking their stand as men of God. This is a wonderful grass roots movement, with major rallies held across the country, as witnessed by hundreds of thousands even this past October on the Mall of our nation's capitol.

Our society today is changing. Our communities are changing. Churches are changing. Businesses are changing. Bible studies are changing. Men are being held accountable to one another. And most important, individual families are changing. What does it take to be a man of God? What does it take to rise up and take a stand for godliness and righteousness? What does it mean to be a man of integrity?

*Sports Illustrated* couldn't believe it. Orel Hershiser, right-handed pitcher for the LA Dodgers, finished the 1988 season with 23 wins, 8 losses, 59 consecutive innings without surrendering a single run. That was a record breaker! He led his team to victory at the World Series. He was the first pitcher in history to earn the Most Valuable Player Award in both the league championship and the World Series. He was later decorated with *Sporting News'* Major League Player of the Year Award, the Cy Young Award and *Sports Illustrated's* Sportsman of the Year Award. An amazing accomplishment for a man who by his own admission is an ordinary athlete with extraordinary determination.

### **Here's the way Hershiser explained the source of his success:**

"My greatest ambition for personal excellence is willingness to submit myself to God and saying, 'I'm going to be the best I can for You.' I don't have to worry when I fail. I don't have to worry about what tomorrow brings, because all tomorrow brings is God and me and doing my best with the talents He's given me. That's success, whether or not I win or lose a game. There are

— David Borg  
Good Shepherd Lutheran  
Cokato, Minnesota

# Rise up man of God



two different kinds of successes, as I see it. The success the world sees in winning and losing, making money, driving a nice car, living in a big house, the success of having a lot of friends and good health. Then there's the inner success anyone can have; an inner peace that comes from the Lord."

If you'd like to personally share in the secret of Orel Hershiser's inner success, a life filled with God's

power and direction, then turn to Christ. The Bible promises that whoever believes in Him has eternal life and shall receive forgiveness of sins. If you refuse, you're a loser forever. Today you can be a winner by believing that Jesus Christ took your place on the cross and your sins can be forgiven. If you believe this and confess to God that you've sinned and want Jesus to be your Savior, He is ready to answer your prayer now. **That's how to be a Man of God.**

The perfect Man, the Man/God - Jesus Christ, became sin for us. He who knew no sin, the perfect Man, took our sins so that we could have His righteousness. Only as the Son of God, could He accomplish that. God can make you a true man of God as you allow Jesus Christ to come into your life. Our spiritual life begins as we come to the Lord just as we are. And from there, we're drawn to be the men God designed us to be.

Dr. Larry Crabb, writing in his book, "God of My Fathers" said, "I'm in the dwindling minority of people





that have been drawn to love God by their father." Too often, "Father" is a bad word meaning one who abandons, or abuses, or demeans, or demands perfection. It's no wonder that fathers too often represent obstacles, not avenues, to embrace the idea of God as "Father." God intends His truth to be passed on through one person mentoring another. It's not only about fathers mentoring sons and daughters, but grandparents mentoring their younger generation. Larry Crabb says, "For Dad, relationships have always mattered deeply, but an unseen relationship mattered more."

Maybe that's a good summary of parenting. Make sure your kids know they're loved, but never put them in the place of God. That place can never be shared. If we expect our children to follow God the Father, then we have to model godly fatherhood in their lives. We're getting into a great issue of society today when talking about this.

James Dobson, in his book titled, "Straight Talk To Men and Their Wives" says: "It occurred to me first in 1969. I was running at an incredible speed, working myself to death like every other man I knew; eight or ten unofficial responsibilities added to my already full-time commitment. I once worked 17 nights straight without being home in the evening. Our five-year-old daughter would stand in the doorway and cry as I left in the morning, knowing she might not see me until the next sunrise. Activities were bringing me professional achievement and trappings of financial success, but my dad was not impressed. He had observed my hectic lifestyle and felt obligated to express his concern. One time, when flying from Los Angeles to Hawaii, he used that quiet opportunity to write me a lengthy letter."

*Your daughter is growing up in the wickedest section of the world, much further gone into moral decline than the world into which you were born. I've observed that the greatest delusion is to suppose that our children will be devoted to Christianity simply because their parents have been, or that any of them will enter into the Christian faith in any other way than through the parents' deep travail of prayer and faith. But this prayer demands time; time that cannot be given if it's all signed and conscripted and laid on the altar of career. Failure for you at this point would make mere success in your occupation a very pale and washed-out affair indeed.*

Those words hit Dobson like a hammer. My wife and family can describe in different, yet similar ways, how my priorities were backwards and running 90 miles an hour trying to reach personal, financial and occupational goals. Like Dobson, I've also had that hammer hit me very hard. I can never get back what I missed when my children were young, yet I thank God for helping me deal with those things. I thank God for a loving, prayerful and understanding wife, and for each of our five children. I thank God for His Word, and also for placing special people and experiences in my life these past few years, which continue to help me seek His Will.

The preceding letter that the elder Dobson wrote contains several spiritual truths. First, it's more difficult to teach proper values today than in years past because our culture has rejected Christian principles. Second, it dealt with parental complacency. That letter helped James Dobson realize it is possible for mothers and fathers to love and revere God while systematically lose their kids. You can go to church three times a week, serve on the governing board, attend the annual

"I've also had that hammer hit me very hard. I can never get back what I missed when my children were young, yet I thank God for helping me deal with those things."

picnic, attend the annual church conference, pay your tithes, be a good person, and yet the next generation does not catch the real meaning of Christianity.

As parents, our mission is to introduce our children to the Christian faith and to pass it on like in a relay race when you pass your baton to the next runner. The gospel has to be safely placed into the hands of our children. Our number one responsibility is not our career, not our professional advancement, not our wealth, not building a secure retirement. Our number one responsibility is to evangelize our own children! Everything else pales.

If American families are to survive the incredible stresses and dangers they now face, it will be because husbands and fathers provide loving leadership in their homes, placing their wives and children at the highest level on the system of priorities.

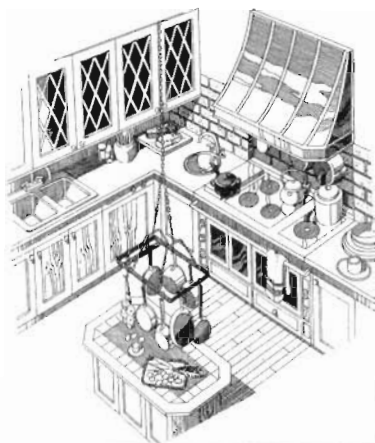
**Are you a man of God?  
Husbands, fathers, we really need you. Your wife needs you. Your child needs you. The church needs you. This country needs you.**

**May you do your part to be a man of integrity —  
a godly husband, father,  
grandfather,  
business person,  
community leader.**

**Gentlemen, rise up and be men of God!**



## Mothering and evangelism



*Expect great things from God.  
Attempt great things for God.  
If not you, who?  
If not now, when?  
Come, Live, Die....*

**T**he slogans of evangelism ring. First they applied to the world. Now they apply to my own family. It seemed so noble and grand to go on a missionary journey and evangelistic endeavors but so second best and even wrong to stay home. Once motivating, these statements often now produce guilt. How can a woman fully employed in the unrelenting demands of daily life fulfill the Great Commission? How do we encourage one another when we share a deep concern for souls who do not know Jesus, yet so little time and energy is available?

First of all, we need to realistically assess our daily circumstances. Often I fall into the trap of comparing myself to a non-normative example like Amy Carmichael or even Jesus Himself. This can lead to a sense of failure or insignificance which immobilizes, not moti-

— Ruth Wagley  
New Vision Free Lutheran  
Spokane, Washington

vates. Closer examination of even these very committed evangelists reveal they also committed themselves to a similar structure of family with all its demands. Many single woman missionaries founded and worked in orphanages, schools and the like. Jesus organized a band of men to travel with who became His disciples and learned ministry by direct involvement with Him in ministry. The constant daily meeting of people's needs whether newborn or the elderly, is life.

Jesus is aware of the demands the blessings He has given us require. The daily tasks required are real and vital. Understanding this can help free us to use special opportunities God provides to focus on leading others to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

We often use the verse in Matthew 18:15, "And whoever receives one such child in my name receives Me," and apply it to other people's children and ministries. This is true, but

## Her business

*In the little northern Minnesota community of Northome, people expect to see Harriet Griffeth, 88, dressed up as if she were going to the office, and out and about town before many have even cleaned up their breakfast dishes. Widowed twice, this Hope Lutheran Church evangelist has a business: it's people. Her mission: to point people to the Lord. Her former pastor, Lloyd Quanbeck said, "Her life is a bold statement of her faith in Christ. Every day she is out visiting and encouraging others." She wrote this testimony with the help of her pastor, Tom Schierkolk. Shortly after Harriet suffered a mild stroke. She is receiving speech therapy and progressing fairly well.*

**I** have never thought of myself as an evangelist. I always thought that was for people more knowledgeable than I am. Through the years as I helped with Sunday school, Luther league, and release time school, I prayed that my life made a difference in the lives of those young people. From time to time, I have been given the assurance that it did indeed, when years later I would get a note or meet one of the young people that I taught.



## **"To love yet another is something scary. Let Jesus provide His love for this."**

it also applies to the ones in our own homes. Probably one of the only times the unsaved will actually come to us is in birth. We need to give them our priority. This simply takes a lot of well-planned time! When I come to terms with my priorities and the responsibilities that result, I feel new energy for the extras God may bring.

As my family has grown a burden for those who do not know Jesus beyond our family, Jesus has drawn us closer to Him. Family and evangelism are not in conflict. Both efforts are true evangelism. As the seasons of our lives unfold, time for each presents itself. Reconciling our burden for the lost and our family responsibilities is an adventure with Jesus, not just another job.

Begin by letting God worry about who and how, while we are available. Through prayer,

## **is people**

I feel I am led by the Lord to people. I love people. It is a God-given gift to me. I enjoy all ages — the elderly, of which I am one, and the young people who have so much to give to all of us if we as Christians encourage them to love Jesus.

At times of illness or death in our community, I want to go to those homes with a gift of food and let them know I am concerned about their well-being. I am never happier than when I can share something I have made with someone else. I want to be a good steward and an example of a God-fearing person to my family and friends. I know the Lord helps me in that. I try to remember those who cannot get to church for some reason by sending them a church bulletin and a note of encouragement. I have friends at the local Health Care Center and I spend half a day each week there visiting and writing letters for them.

What is evangelism? To me it is remembering others, making your presence known to your fellow men in ways that make a difference in their daily lives to the glory of Jesus Christ.



Jesus can show us the way to those who we can reach out to with the gospel. This is not to be stated lightly, as often our giving is already maximized. We daily outpour our love. To love yet another is sometimes scary. Let Jesus provide His love for this.

Combining our dual responsibilities is often the most practical approach to reaching beyond our homes. We can focus on the friends of our children who come into our homes. New people are met through school activities and other community involvement. Loving our children's friends and helping them share Jesus effectively is a profound way to demonstrate the principles of evangelism to our children.

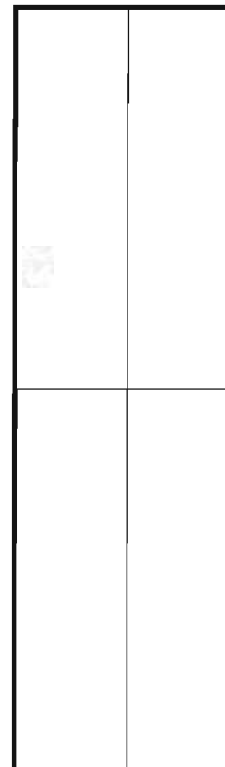
Another simple way to reach out is to use existing ministries around us that are evangelistic, such as our Sunday schools, and children's and youth activities. Trust God to help you focus on those who do not know Jesus. Spend a little extra time before or after a church service with someone. Those of us who are anxious to enjoy adult-talk may miss that special opportunity to touch the life of a child.

Ask about evangelistic training ministries in your church, even if you cannot participate weekly. Participate in Bible studies and hospitality outreaches designed to reach unbelievers. Look for openings through natural contacts at the store and neighborhood. A Bible study with other women can work perfectly during a lunch break at work or during a play group session with the neighbors. Befriend another woman and find doors open to share your faith.

Another option I am currently trying to implement is to arrange one afternoon a month to minister to people in my life whom I would like to share the gospel with. This time can be used for visiting, phone calling, Bible study or prayer with the specific intention of reaching out to unbelievers.

These ideas can be applied in various ways, depending on our situation. Whatever our activities, evangelistic prayer both for family and others is essential. Praying five to ten minutes daily for specific individuals is an important evangelistic ministry. If the Lord has you physically inactive, the opportunity exists to spend significant time in intercessory prayer.

The slogans of evangelism need not frustrate or paralyze us with guilt. Once again they can become motivators as we embrace our dual roles as evangelists at home and in the world around us.



# Seeing God's blessing



## Minnesota congregation gets serious about the Great Commission

**N**ever has Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church seen so much going on! God is at work. The congregation is focusing on their priorities: 1) caring for one another within the congregation, and 2) aggressively involved in an outreach evangelism program called Miracle Mile. Deacon Dan Larson said: "We're being obedient and praying. Now God is blessing us. There's a significant amount of new families coming to church. It seems we as a congregation want to invite people — it's on our minds. And now we're seeing families bringing their extended family members to church."

So what is going on in this fifteen-year-old congregation in the southern Minneapolis suburb of Lakeville?

Last spring, Lay Pastor Wayne Hanson, a member of the congregation, and Pastor Al Monson tested a possible survey-questionnaire that the congregation's members could use in community outreach. Computer technology provides names and addresses of anywhere in the nation, so they targeted the community within a mile surrounding Minnesota Valley. With the print-out in hand, they began the Miracle Mile evangelism program in the congregation.

Dedicated members commit themselves to prayer for specific names before a team of two visit those homes. Three or four teams go out one or two nights each week. They are armed with the assurance that the people they will contact have been prayed for by name days ahead of that evening's visit. The survey starts with a broad question and works into more personal ones. Most people are willing to answer the questions and will give their name and phone number at the end when asked if someone from the church can call them at a later time. A cassette tape explaining the questionnaire is given with the request

that they listen to it. One team member said, "When you go out, it's fun. There's usually one or two good visits per night." When the team returns to church, they compile their report and another team will later return calls to the ones requested.

It's early in the program as the congregation didn't get fully into it until last fall. There are some direct results of Miracle Mile visits, but the greatest change is seen within the congregation itself. People are excited to see what God is going to do next. According to one member, "It's almost like we are being shown it is not of our works. God just wants us to be an obedient and praying people, then He'll build the temple."

Pastor Wayne Hanson is thrilled to see how the Lord is moving in his home church. He has shared the Miracle Mile program with AFLC congregations in Wichita Falls, Texas; Duluth, Eden Prairie, and St. Cloud, Minnesota; and there has been interest shown internationally. He is eager to share the materials and is prayerfully wondering if God would have up to 120 congregations using it some day.

*For more information regarding the Miracle Mile program call Minnesota Valley Lutheran at 612-432-7197 or AFLC Home Missions office at 612-545-5631.*



## Evangelism rally announced for next May at Medicine Lake

The Commission of Evangelism is sponsoring a churchwide evangelism rally next May 1-2, 1998, at Medicine Lake Lutheran Church in Plymouth, Minnesota. The rally will begin at 3 p.m. on Friday and continue through 3 p.m. Saturday. Plan now to come together for praise and worship times, evangelism workshops, and discussion of the future of evangelism in the AFLC. Pastors and wives are invited to a

special dinner on Friday evening.

The Commission on Evangelism is actively seeking to call an AFLC evangelist. Join with us in prayer that God will raise up His servant for this position. And join us in May for fellowship and prayer around a common desire to see souls won for Christ throughout the world and in the communities of our AFLC congregations.

— AFLC Commission on Evangelism



**Get your church  
supplies from the  
Parish Ed office**

**Attention Pastors:** Certificates for marriage, confirmation, and baptism, as well as baptismal cloths and sponsor momentos are now available through the Parish Education office.

**New videos** were recently donated to Parish Education and are available for rental.

1. *The Trial and Testimony of the Early Church* — a six-lesson study series.

2. *Children's Heroes from Christian History* — a children's series with seven to ten minute segments and study guide. Also *How the Bible Came to Be*; *John Wycliffe* and others. Call for an updated listing at 612-545-5631.

## Celebrate Jesus 2000

### — a national initiative of Mission America

The AFLC Commission on Evangelism voted to request time during the January Pastors' Conference to consider recommending the "Celebrate Jesus 2000" program for use in the AFLC. *Mission America* has as its goal to pray for and to introduce Christ to every person in our nation by year-end 2000.

Billy Graham said, "As we approach the dawn of a new millennium, our country stands in great need of a genuine spiritual awakening. I strongly support the goals of Mission America, and pray that God will use it to bring a new wave of evangelism and spiritual renewal to our nation and our world."

Mission America encourages cooperation across the body of Christ on an individual, churchwide, communitywide, and citywide basis; to pray for and to sensitively share Christ with every person in America through a sequence of phases under a local general committee, emphasizing partnerships, prayer, personal witness, proclamation and preservation.



*I am sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light.*

— Acts 26:17-18

## Teaching missions to children

As children become involved in learning about missions, they will begin to understand what the people are like and what their needs are. Students will take a greater personal interest in their daily missionary activities and in praying for them. They will also be encouraged to be daily missionaries themselves at home and at school.

### • Mission Club

Meet once a month after school to teach about missions. Include mission stories and letters from missionaries, do handcrafts and service projects. Talk about how students can be missionaries every day right where they are.

### • Bulletin Board Map

Cover a bulletin board with a large map of the world. Mount photos of missionaries around the edges of the map. Run yarn from the pictures to the countries where the missionaries serve.

### • Greeting Cards

Send birthday, Christmas, and other special day cards to missionaries. Encourage children to send cards to missionary children their own age.

### • Exchange Tape Recordings

Tape favorite hymns, recited memory verses, or tell about what you are studying in Sunday school. Send the tapes to a missionary and ask questions about their Sunday school.

### • Support a Missionary

Select a specific missionary to be "your" missionary. Take an offering each Sunday for this missionary. Keep students regularly informed about the mission work.

### • Book Reports

Have each student read a book about a missionary. Then ask them to give an oral report to the rest of the class.

### • Drama

Dramatize a scene from the life of a missionary from one of the books students have read.

### • Missionary Conference

Invite missionaries to tell of their work and show videos or slides. Help each class plan a different part of the conference such as Scripture readings, prayer sessions, music, food and displays.

### • Prayer Wheel

Cut a large circle out of colored paper. Draw lines dividing it into equal sections. Label each section with a missionary and a missions Bible verse. Cut another circle the same size with a wedge-shaped window and fasten over the top of the first circle. Turn the wheel to one section each week. Encourage children to use their Missionary Prayer Wheel for personal prayer and memorization.

### • Mission Field Study

Have students compile a "scrapbook" on a specific mission field. Collect materials, facts and news articles on that nation. Store in a file or book and share with another class.

### • Teach Mission Stories

Teach about evangelism during class time and in opening chapel time, or in your own home. AFLC Parish Education has a lending library of many mission stories and resource books available upon request. Or you may purchase visualized lessons on *William Carey*, *Hudson Taylor*, *John and Betty Stam*, *The Walking Umbrella*, *A Miracle for Samuelito*, *Amy Carmichael*, and *The Wordless Book Visualized*.

T

Two years ago this winter, we were flushed with anticipation as we prepared for our arrival to our first mission assignment in

Aguascalientes, Mexico.

Over the past months, we have experienced many changes: a new country, culture and language. We enjoy the warmth and love of our dear Mexican brothers and sisters in Christ. Mexicans in general are a wonderfully gracious and polite people who challenge us to greater kindness. Because of the politics of our shared border, Mexicans who legally enter the U.S. don't exactly get the red carpet rolled out for them. That fact has helped us understand our own border crossing — a crossing we would not forget.

February 29, 1996 was the day to move our family across the border and begin our missionary service. We were tired and nervous, yet excited. Steve, Toby and Jimmy had arrived the day before from Faith Lutheran in El Campo, Texas with their pickup to help us with the move.

The sun was just beginning to shine as we gathered together to pray that Thursday. My family climbed into our white Ford LTD and the men got into their pickup with our rusty, gold trailer hooked up behind them. With God's blessing, we began the ten-mile trip to the border.

As the bridge at the crossing came into view my heart started pounding and I began to pray. We paid our toll and drove onto the bridge over the Rio Grande River. Before I knew it, I was rolling down my window to speak to the Mexican border guard in my best "fresh-out-of-language-school" Spanish.

He asked where we were going and what we were carrying. I showed him the baggage list I had carefully prepared and he motioned me forward to the stoplight which "randomly" selects who will be inspected and who may freely pass. It flashed red.

The rest of that morning, while everyone else waited by the vehicles, I waited at six different offices and

talked to seven different people who all explained to me why I couldn't enter Mexico. To the best of our knowledge, we had all the right papers, talked to many missionaries and read the Mexican regulations, but to no avail.

The morning ended at the Mexican consulate back on the U.S. side where we were told they could do nothing for us. Discouraged, we returned to the retreat center we had left that morning, not knowing what to do next.

Steve called back to El Campo to let the church know we needed them to pray hard. I called Missionary Dan Giles in Mexico who encouraged us with his wise voice of experience and listened to some strategic counsel from those at the retreat center.

The next morning brought with it a new sense of hope and excitement. We arrived again at the border. During the three-hour wait for the officials to inspect the truck and trailer, we contemplated offering the half-pound bag of M&Ms in our pos-

session to speed the process but we decided to eat them ourselves. After numerous discussions with different officials, I was finally taken into an office to tabulate the import tax we would have to pay on the goods we were bringing with us.

It was there I met "the administrator." Surprisingly young and casually dressed, I noted the Michigan Wolverines cap he was wearing and asked if he was a basketball fan.

"Somewhat," he replied. As he made the final calculations we chatted about different things and it seemed I had struck a chord with him. He handed me the bill listing the taxed items and told me that when we got to the next checkpoint, the officials there would likely ask questions about it.

Then he said, "Tell them the administrator at the border checked you out and calculated your taxes. My name is Caesar."

As we pulled away from the border crossing, we thanked God for opening a path for us and for all the people back home who had been

# Border



# crossings

— Missionary Todd Schierkolk  
Aguascalientes, Mexico

praying for us. Now it was just one more checkpoint about 20 minutes down the road.

Kilometer 30, as it's called, is a safety net of sorts. The guard at the stoplight didn't even bother asking us the "who are you and where are you going" questions. He simply waved us over to a parking area with some tables beside it. My stomach churned as I gave him all of our papers and said, "The administrator at the border said to tell you he had checked us out and calculated our taxes himself." The officer looked at the papers as if he didn't even hear me. Then he looked up and said, "Unload everything!" My heart sank.

I'm not sure if he was having a bad day or if I somehow had made him angry, but it soon became obvious this stop was going to be hard. As we unloaded the boxes and barrels, he took the baggage list I had given him and began to check it. He pulled a Swiss army knife out and began to cut the tape on each box to examine whether or not the contents were as listed. The fact that all 85 boxes were taped shut irritated him and he let me know it. He challenged me on the value of our items, going so far as to question the price I had written down for the diapers we had purchased for the trip. The implication was that I would try to sell them for a profit in spite of the fact that our two girls in the car were of obvious diaper-wearing age. The crowning humiliation came when, in the process of opening Barb's suitcase, everything fell out onto the ground.

Humiliated and defeated, I joined Steve, Toby and Jimmy in repacking the trailer and the truck. The help of those three men was invaluable; not only for the huge help physically, but also for the way they silently encouraged me to hang in there.

When we finished I slowly

walked over to the office where the guard who had checked us was speaking to his supervising officer in frustrated and tense tones. The supervisor looked at me scornfully and told me to go stand on the other side of the driveway. When they finished he went into his office and waved me in. As he sat at his desk, looking at our papers, I told him I was willing to pay more taxes if that was needed.

I can't remember all he said to me in that office, but it suddenly became clear this whole incident had nothing to do with what we had in the truck; nothing to do with paying more taxes; it was about the power he had to tell me what to do. It was about his power to turn me around and send me home.

He was asking me something about the audacity I had to come down with all this stuff to which I responded for about the seventh time, "The administrator at the border told me to tell you he had checked us out himself and he had personally calculated all of the taxes."

At this point I was almost pleading. He looked at me and sarcastically exclaimed, "The administrator! The administrator! Who is this administrator? Do you know him personally?"

"You mean, his name?" I asked. "You mean, Caesar, the basketball fan who wears a cap that says Michigan Wolverines?"

He stared at me dumbfounded. The other two guards looked at their shoes and started shuffling their feet. One got on the office radio and called back to the first crossing to verify my story. When he finished, he looked at his supervisor and lifted his hand in the air and let it drop in a symbolic stamp of approval. Caesar had told them to let us pass and in two minutes it was all over.

I returned to the car still shaking but with the good news we could

go on. I glanced back half expecting someone would come out of the office and tell me it was all a joke. To confirm my dread, the official who had gone through all our belongings came out of the office and, as if nothing had just happened, casually asked to borrow a pipe wrench.

It took several months to recover from that experience. We learned the importance of knowing someone's name and we had seen God's mighty hand at work on our behalf. But it wasn't until seven months later that we learned perhaps our most important lesson.

In relating this story to missionary friends, one of whom had grown up with her parents on the mission field in Mexico, they looked at us in amazement and said they had never heard of anyone being able to cross the border with a truck and trailer loaded with personal belongings. At that news my heart was flooded with gratefulness for all of our friends back home who had been faithfully upholding us in prayer, especially in those days when we were just arriving. I realized in a new way just how important and powerful is the work they do on their knees in prayer. I was filled with thanksgiving to God who had called us and has chosen to accomplish His will through the prayers of His people.

Philippians 1:18-19 says, "What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed: and in this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice. For I know that this shall turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."

When all is said and done it will be at the name of Jesus that every knee will bow and it will be the powerful name of Jesus that will allow us to pass the most thorough "checkpoint" into our eternal home.





# They practiced ... AFLBS parents came ...



Brooke Schrage, Wheatland, Iowa, AFLBS senior.



Loren and Sharon Tungseth, Fergus Falls, Minnesota, and son Trevor, AFLBS senior. The Tungseths were among the many parents enjoying Parents' Day on December 6.



Gary Haug, the new Choral Club director.



Dan Kernanen, AFLBS junior.



Dave Holmquist, Maple Grove, Minnesota, AFLBS junior.

Erin Kuster, Wheatland, Iowa, AFLBS senior.



Ben Floan, Fertile, Minnesota, AFLBS senior.

# to the performances at 4 and 7 p.m. December 7



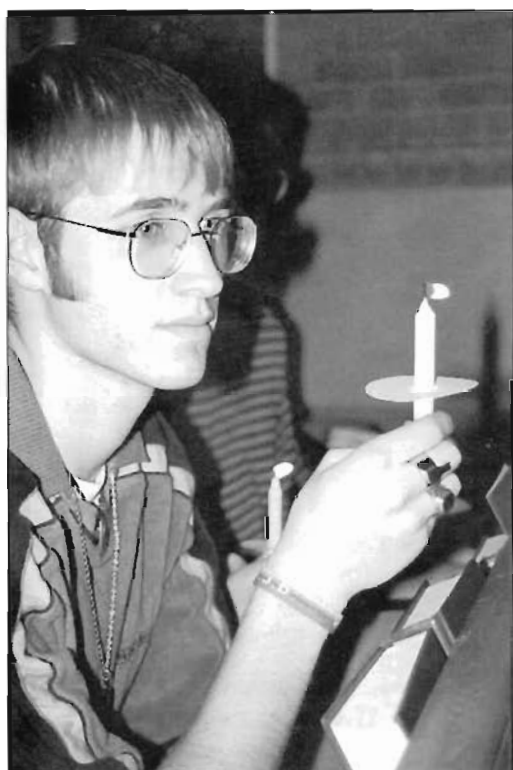
AFLBS Choral Club.



MaryBeth Enderlein, Plymouth, Minnesota, AFLBS alumnus.



Pastor James L. Johnson, AFLBS dean.



The candle lighting ceremony highlighted the concerts.



The Seminary Chorus under the direction of Jerry Nelson.

## Second Annual Youth Workers' Retreat January 16-18

The AFLC Youth Ministries Department is sponsoring the second Youth Workers' Retreat at the ARC, near Osceola, Wisconsin. After last year's retreat, Pastor Jonathan Unverzagt, DeKalb, Illinois said, "I feel refreshed and ready to dig into ministry." This year's program is designed to encourage youth workers in how to best use the resources available. Speakers include: Pastor Kevin Olson — "The Battle is the Lord's;" Pastor Brian Pearson — "Reaching the Unchurched;" Wilton Bergstrand — "Generational Youth Ministry;" and youth workers, Phil Burton, Cloquet, Minnesota and Brenda Stilley, Bethel Park, Pennsylvania.

For more information call the youth office at 612-545-5631.

## Mission Possible

**AFLC Youth Ministries is encouraging and challenging youth to participate in a mission trip. Future trips include:**

**Russia** — This third English Language Bible Camp will be in Petrasavodsk, Russia. Coordinated through East European Missions Network and Pastor Don Richman. Depart the last week in May and return the end of June. (Ten people).

**Mexico** — Join the Partners in Mission Outreach bus trip to Central Mexico. Coordinated through Pastor Tony Stockman and Al Brazier. Bus capacity is 25.

**Tanzania, Africa** — The youth office and the Bible school are preparing to send a team of five people to Africa for six weeks during June and July to serve with Dr. Norvold Yri and Pastor Zacharia.

## Vision 2004 Update — *Continue in prayer*

To the members of our *Ground Crew* —

Remember our request for you to be a partner in prayer for the building project at the AFLC Schools? We need prayer from the *ground up*, from the beginning and throughout the project. **Thank you for your prayers!** The students are being grounded in the Word, and the ground (property) is being scrutinized for possibilities.

Specific answers to your prayers include:

A good working relationship with the City of Plymouth.

The selection of an architectural firm by the School Board on November 3. The Welsh companies will work with us in developing Vision 2004.

The School Board has made a financial decision that 75% of the funds needed for Phase I must be received in a combination of pledges and cash before construction may begin.

A congregation in Pennsylvania made a recent budget decision to pledge over \$100,000 to Vision 2004 during the next four years.

Other individuals and churches are already sending in money for Vision 2004.

It's exciting to see the preliminary timeline of work that needs to be done on a month by month basis as projected by the Welsh Companies. It's even more exciting to know that Almighty God is in control of it all, because we want only God's will to be done.

Please continue to pray for the work of Vision 2004. *These all continued in one accord in prayer and supplication.* — Acts 1:14

## Prayer concerns

Re-zoning meetings with the City of Plymouth.

Master planning of property for the City of Plymouth.

Layout and design of building: space, what it should include to meet our real needs.

The survey of AFLC youth concerning projected attendance at AFLBS.

The faculty survey for input on design of the building.

The existing student body survey regarding reasons for coming to AFLBS.

Finances for this building project.

The nature of your commitment to this vision — prayerfully and financially.

Me, as Project Director.

I welcome ideas and concerns. Call 612-544-1194.

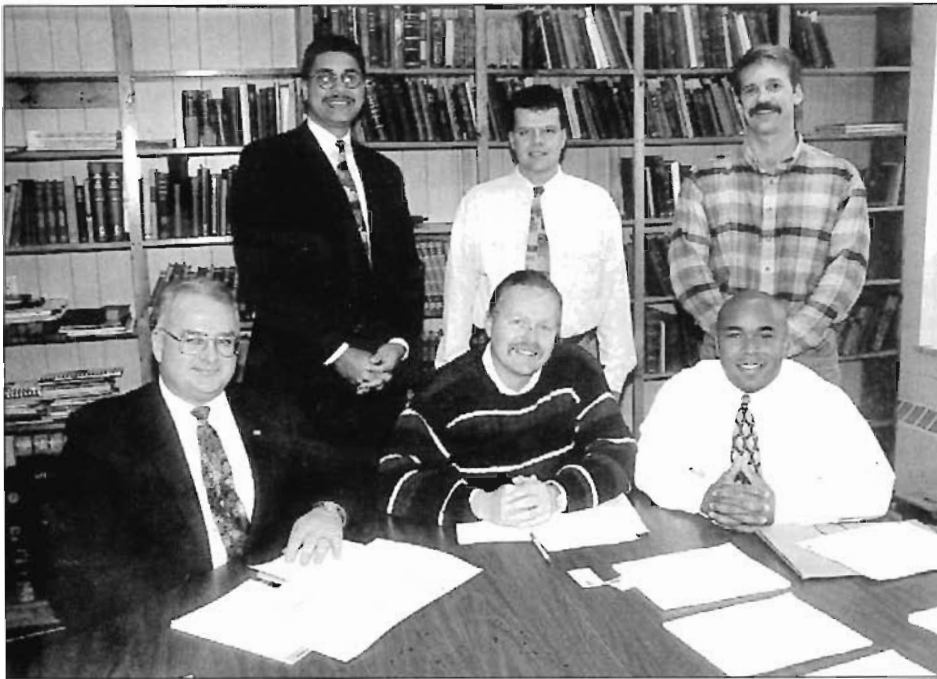
— Pastor Tonnes Pollestad

**Brazil** — The churches of Brazil have requested another team of youth for this summer. It will be a six-week trip during June and July. (About five people).

**India** — Presently planned for January 1999. This is a challenging but rewarding experience coordinated by AFLC World Missions and Youth Ministries. Previous mission experience required.

**VBS Team** — A possible new team of youth and Bible School students to assist U.S. congregations with VBS and other summer outreaches.

**Call the youth office for more information: 612-545-5631 or e-mail: [hqmail@afcl.org](mailto:hqmail@afcl.org)**



The Vision 2004 Planning Team (L. to R., seated): Pastor Tonnes Pollestad, Vision 2004 Project Director; David Borg, Chairman of the AFLC Board of Trustees, Cokato, Minnesota; Maurice Gavin, Research and Planning, Welsh Companies. (Standing): Ken Piper and Scott Roberts, architects with Welsh Companies of Bloomington, Minnesota; and Michael Schraad, Contractor and Project Building Manager with Welsch Companies.

## Mark your calendar for June 17-21



Join with the AFLC family and friends at the 36th Annual Conference in the beautiful Mississippi River town of Red Wing, Minnesota. Sessions will be at the new Red Wing High School. Note the change from the originally scheduled location at Northfield, Minnesota.

## Seminary annual interterm scheduled

For three weeks each January, the Association Free Lutheran Seminary hosts its annual interterm for pastors and laypeople. This year the dates are January 5-16, and 26-30. The third week of January traditionally is left open for the AFLC Pastors' Conference held at the Association Retreat Center near Osceola, Wisconsin. This year's course offerings are as follows:

### Youth Ministry —

#### January 5-9

Instructor is Pastor Kevin Olson, AFLC Youth Director

### Christian Education —

#### January 12-16

Instructor is Pastor Phil Haugen, Chairman of the Parish Education Board and pastor in Culbertson, Montana.

### Biblical Dynamics of

#### Worship — January 26-30

Instructor is Pastor Rodger Olson, member of the Board of Trustees of AFLC Schools and pastor in Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

### History and Aims of the

#### AFLC — January 26-30

Instructor is Pastor Robert Lee, AFLC President.

## AAL grant to assist seminary

AFLTS has been awarded \$4,400 in grants from Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL). The grants were awarded through its Church Vocations Enrichment Program which gives financial support to 17 Lutheran seminaries in the United States. The program's goal is to provide educational growth and leadership opportunities to those who are or will be ministering to the Lutheran community. The seminary will use the funds for student assistance and faculty development and continuing education opportunities.



The 1998 WMF Bible Study is "Joy for the Journey." The lesson one theme is taken from Hebrews 2:1, "Pay Attention to Instruction." Lesson two encourages us to focus on Jesus as we face the future.

To order a copy of the 1998 WMF studies, write to Karen Knudsvig, RR 2, Box 11, Buxton, North Dakota 58218.

# Whose plan?

— Helen Knapp  
Maranatha Free Lutheran  
Willmar, Minnesota

**A**re you planning to do some baking today? First you look up the recipe, then you check to see if you have the needed ingredients. If you don't have them you substitute, but if you substitute too many items than you take out of the oven something original! I had this experience more than once while living in Brazil. We didn't live near a corner store where it was handy to purchase an item. Baking day meant planning ahead.

Perhaps you are planning for a trip? You'll need to take out the road atlas if you're traveling by car. According to your desires, you seek the most direct route or the scenic roads. However you plan to travel, planning is required.

How about your daily life plan? Can we plan a life's span? James 4:14 reminds us, "You do not know about tomorrow! For what is your life? You are a mist which is seen for a little while, then vanishes."

Next month in our Women's Missionary Federation lesson we will see that **God has a plan**, a very personalized plan with a blessing for you.

God's marvelous plan for my life keeps me from stumbling around here on earth, hoping to fall into a life of purpose. Psalm 139 plainly states He has a purpose for each of us. It's a divine purpose, therefore it is a wonderful plan. We must thank God for this marvelous provision for our lives.

We have been studying the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph in our Sunday school class

lately. Just think of the long-range plan God had for Abraham. He was raised in a godless surrounding, yet believed in a sovereign God. He left this situation, heard God's call to move on to a promised land and set out on a journey not without perils. And God was with him.

Abraham's son Isaac thought he was going to be a burnt sacrifice but God was faithful in His plan and furnished a lamb. Jacob had his problems, not all of his own making. Woven through the many incidences, God's plan was being carried out in Jacob's life. He had an encounter with God one night, repented of his sins and asked for and received a blessing.

Joseph survived the hatred of his siblings. This must have been heartbreaking. Then he was sold and taken to a foreign, godless country. How good it is to see God's plan being revealed as this fascinating story unfolds. What a blessing and encouragement it is to see my life and how God has a plan for His own.

Joseph suffered through trying situations. His heart ached because of the hatred of his brothers. Undoubtedly he heard of the famine in his home country also. He may have fully expected some family member to show up for grain sooner or later. His heart must have leaped for joy at the sight of them. What if he had briefly flashed the coat of many colors?

All is well that ends well, as the saying goes. But you and I know it isn't by happenstance. It is by the will of our Father who plans all things well.

Psalm 139:16 astounds me. "He saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe." All of this because of His mercy and grace for each of us.

I can follow His plans by reading His Word and daily seeking to carry out His will for my life. He desires pure thoughts for me. He wants to see the fruits of the Spirit in my life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. If we practice these in our lives we surely are in God's plan. He will help us through his Son to carry out these attributes and our lives will be blessed with the goal of heaven before us. "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).



**Santa Felicidade, Brazil**  
— Heidi Quam, recent AFLBS graduate from McIntosh, Minnesota, plans to continue to work with the Paul Abel family until May. Pray for Missionaries Paul and Becky Abel as they minister at the ARCA and area congregations. They recently wrote: "Each day people appear at our door with problems that seem insurmountable — people who have never experienced real love, who have made a world of wrong decisions and are living the consequences of a life without divine orientation. Through human eyes solutions seem next to impossible, but we believe in the True God who glories in doing the impossible. We trust that as we lead people to believe in the One True God, He will transform their lives and give them new hope."

(The national WMF is assisting in the support of Heidi Quam.)





**Ottawa, Illinois** – Faith Lutheran Sunday School recently collected over 70 new and used blanket sleepers as a mission project. They shipped them to the Miiriam Infant Home in Brazil.

**Aguascalientes, Mexico** – Missionary Todd Schierkolk attended a prayer retreat for Lutheran pastors in Mexico sponsored by World Mission Prayer League with a Bible school student, Fernando Herrera. Pastor Schierkolk requests prayer for the Springs of Living Water congregation in Aguascalientes as they consider whether or not to buy land in a nearby suburb of Palomino. The property would be used to build a church for the young congregation in Palomino.

**Rancho San Diego, California** – The new congregation, Rancho San Diego Lutheran went over 80 in attendance last November after just four months in existence. The congregation is busy with an active Sunday school, youth group, and midweek Bible study. Lay Pastor John Kent is serving the group along with his part-time ministry with the youth group at Community Lutheran in Oceanside, which is the sponsoring church.



**Sundburg, Minnesota** – Sundburg Free Lutheran WMF recently honored ladies for faithful service. The national WMF has Honorary Membership pins available if your womens' group would like to order them. For more information contact Jeannette Benson, Box 220, Upsala, Minnesota 56384.

### Thank you

We wish to thank those who have served as column writers for our magazine during the past year. Pastor Steve Mundfrom has opened up God's Word for us, particularly Romans 1:16, 17, in *An Encouraging Word* column. Loiell Dyrud has shared with us regarding the heritage of our church body in the *Building the Base* column and Pastor Richard Long has taught us regarding being witnesses for Jesus in the *Something to Share* column. Thank you for being used by God in this way!

—The Editors

**Deshler, Nebraska** – Abiding Word Lutheran is looking for pews. They need 20 pews at 12 and 1/2 feet long. For more information call Pastor Joe Schultz at 402-363-4263.

Looking  
for ideas  
to celebrate  
Sanctity  
of Life  
Sunday?

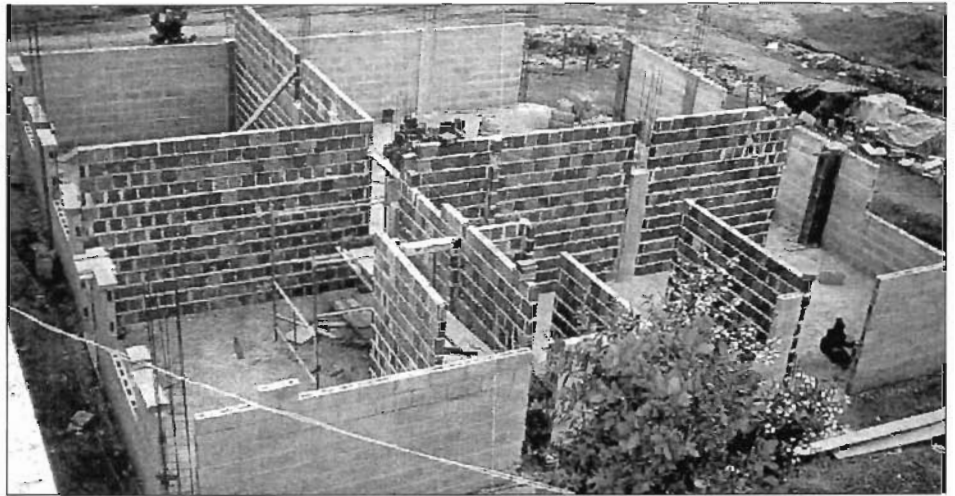
**Contact:**  
**National Lutherans For**  
**Life**  
1229 S. G Ave.  
Bldg. B Suite 100  
Nevada, IA 50201

**Call (515) 382-2077**

**Ask for their children's  
study and other teaching  
tools available.**

## PEOPLE AND PLACES

**Campo Grande, Brazil —** Pictured is the construction underway for the new church in Campo Grande where Missionaries Jonathan and Tamba Abel are serving. The project will hopefully be completed by the end of the year for a total of about \$20,000. The first phase, the completion of the first floor, will allow the congregation to have its first worship home. The monsoon season has arrived and is slowing the work. Pray for the Abels as they continue to minister and prepare for special meetings in March with Pastor John Abel, retired missionary, serving as an interim pastor at Calvary Lutheran in Bismarck, North Dakota.



New construction in Campo Grande.



**Luiz Carlos da Silva and Irene dos Santos Silva**, brother and sister, children from the Miriam Infant Home in Campo Mourão have been released for international adoption. Luiz 12, and Irene 10 have been at the home since October 1993, and desire a place to call home.

If you are interested, or know of someone who is, please contact Sonja Dahl at CP 44, Campo Mourão PR 87300-970 Brazil. #011-55-44-822-2525 or s.dahl@start.com.br.

Please pray for Luiz, Irene and the others placed in our care that the Lord would place on the hearts of Christians a desire to have them as a part of their family.

For those interested in adopting a child from Brazil, contact the Seeleys, who adopted Grace from the Miriam Infant Home.

Their address is: Marc and Marcia Seeley, 1695 Willowside Road, Santa Rosa, California 95401, (707) 571-8284.



The church in Campo Grande.

### Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

#### AFLC Benevolences — January 1 - November 30, 1997

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN NOVEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund . . . . .	\$279,330.00	\$13,176.73	179,294.89	64
Seminary . . . . .	113,300.00	12,380.25	86,129.76	76
Bible School . . . . .	142,509.00	24,290.25	109,929.53	77
Home Missions. . . . .	257,432.00	25,699.07	179,853.07	70
World Missions. . . . .	341,000.00	32,235.41	313,104.37	92
Capital Investment . . . . .	19,000.00	824.13	12,110.02	64
Parish Education . . . . .	56,517.00	3,728.07	45,385.06	80
Church Extension . . . . .	14,813.00	1,361.05	15,083.79	1.02
<b>TOTALS . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,223,901.00</b>	<b>113,694.96</b>	<b>940,890.49</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>TOTALS 1996 . . . . .</b>	<b>1,232,267.00</b>	<b>109,202.08</b>	<b>977,233.80</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Goal 92%</b>				

## Windom, Minnesota church joins AFLC

Living Word Lutheran has been accepted into the AFLC along with their pastor, Rev. Richard Frederick, who is on the Fellowship Clergy Roster. Both the pastor and congregation were former members of the AALC. Windom is located in south central Minnesota near the Iowa border.

**Carol Nels James**, 81, New Hope, Minnesota, passed away on December 1, 1997. He was a founding member of Medicine Lake Lutheran Church in Plymouth, Minnesota. He is survived by his wife, Faye; daughters Arlene, Gloria, and Gwenda; eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Gloria is the wife of AFLC President Robert Lee.

**Ishpeming, Michigan** — Hope Free Evangelical Lutheran Church hosted special meetings last fall with Pastor Jim Haga, Cambridge, Minnesota, as the guest speaker. The Sunday night overflow crowd heard Pastor Haga speak on the occult and rock music. The Monday through Wednesday night services and morning Bible studies were on the theme, "The Attributes of God."



**Freeman, South Dakota** — Salem Free Lutheran Church of rural Freeman celebrated their 120th Anniversary on November 2, 1997. At the special Thanksgiving Worship Service, former Pastor Virgil O. Johnson, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Pastor Alvin Brucklacher, Philip, South Dakota, son of the congregation, were present and letters were read from other former pastors. Salem joined the AFLC in 1988 and is part of a parish with Immanuel Lutheran Church of Centerville. They are served by Pastor Mike Klenner.

Salem Lutheran Church, Freeman, South Dakota.

**Missionaries Connely and Carolyn Dyrud** are returning to Brazil after a year of furlough. Their address is:

Caixa Postal 44  
87300-970 Campo Mourao, PR  
Brazil  
011-55-44-822-2525



**Pastor Todd Klemme** — The new address for the Klemmes is 4624 Pinewood Lane, Metropolis, IL 62960. Phone: 618-524-1174 (h) and 524-4243 (o) and e-mail: toddklem@juno.com. Pastor Klemme serves the one-year-old Faith Lutheran Church. The congregation rents its worship facility and hopes to build later this year.



**Bethel Park, Pennsylvania** — Ruthfred Lutheran Health ministries and Pittsburgh's St. Clair Hospital co-sponsored a free flu clinic at the church last fall. The vaccine was administered to 630 members of the congregation and community who were 55 years old and over. Pictured is Ruthfred's senior pastor, John Dennis receiving his shot at the first annual event.

**Pastor Edward Strom,** Kenyon, Minnesota, was installed as the pastor of Hauge and Emmanuel Lutheran parish on November 9. AFLC President Robert Lee officiated.

## There's nothing better

It started with an invitation to an ice cream social. At least that's when our congregation's involvement began. God, of course, had already been at work in Will's life for quite some time; before Will even realized it.

Will and his family had recently moved from California to Oregon. They bought a house just down the road from Spencer Creek Lutheran Church. They received an invitation to an ice cream social being held at the church one summer evening.

The church building at the time was in the process of being reroofed. Will had been a roofer and so had an interest in what was going on. The ones who were going to do the job were not interested at all in doing the top part of the steeple. Will said if we would buy the materials, he would do the work. He did great work on the steeple and God did great work in his heart. But it took some time.

"They have something I don't have," was Will's comment regarding some people he knew who claimed to be Christians. They had a peace and purpose to life he lacked and wanted. But he admitted honestly some of the difficulties he had with parts of the Bible. He wanted to know the truth. We shared with him Jesus' promise, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7, NIV). "If you keep at it, if you keep seeking the truth, you'll find it."

Will kept seeking. He would come to small group Bible study and ask great questions. He would get together for one-to-one times, looking at the Scriptures. He would read and study on his own.

Times of discouragement came. He wondered when his questions would be answered and peace and assurance would come. Many of us in the congregation also wondered when he would come to faith and put his trust in the Lord.

Then I got the phone call. "I'm ready. I want to receive Christ. Can I come over?" "You come right now," was my response to Will's call. Whatever I had to do that afternoon could most definitely wait. We read from the Word and prayed. Will repented of his sin and asked Jesus to be his Lord and Savior. Three of us in the church building and untold numbers in heaven rejoiced as a new soul entered the kingdom of God.

"What should I do now? Shouldn't I be bap-

tized?" asked Will. I was looking around for a chariot and some water. It was just like the story in Acts 8 of Philip and the Ethiopian.

That Sunday water went on Will's head and flowed from some people's eyes as tears of joy were shared in our congregation. The moment many of us had prayed and hoped for had come.

Other kinds of tears were shed about four months later. Will had been having some strange trouble getting out the words that were in his head. He got a physical to see what was going on. Something was going on. A brain tumor was the cause of the problem. It was cancerous and the doctors offered very little hope that anything could be done.

Will's body grew weaker but his spirit grew stronger. God kept him and his family in his care. About five months later, a couple days after Easter, God took him home. Because of the resurrection of Jesus "the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, ... Death has been swallowed up in victory" (I Corinthians 15:54, NIV).

He was only 40 years old with a wife and two kids. He was growing so in the Lord, it was fun to dream about how God was going to use him. But God had other plans, and God did use him.

We had a time of sharing at Will's memorial service. Some who knew the Lord shared about the encouragement Will had been to them and how great it was what God did in Will's life. Some

who weren't too sure where they stood with Jesus talked about how Will had always been a good man, but something did seem to happen to him the last few months, and they didn't really understand it fully, but it sure did seem to bring Will some peace ... I prayed that those who were wondering what had happened to Will would embark on the same kind of journey after truth that he did, and find the Savior who found Will.

Spencer Creek Lutheran Church, and maybe your church as well, isn't involved in a ministry that is getting national press attention. But it is, and can be, doing that which is most important. No work is more significant than pointing lost sinners to the way home. No sight is more beautiful than seeing a straying child led into the kingdom by His heavenly Father. No joy is sweeter than celebrating new life found in Jesus. There's nothing better!

— Pastor Craig Johnson

**"Will's body  
grew weaker  
but his spirit  
grew  
stronger."**



## “Glued to God” is theme for 1998 ARC schedule

*Can anything separate us from the love Christ has for us? ... nothing above us, nothing below us, nor anything else in the whole world will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*  
— Romans 8:35a,39 (NCV)

### 1998 schedule

Jan 16-18 — Youth Workers  
Retreat — Contact Youth  
Ministries.

Jan 19-20 — Home Mission Pastors  
Retreat — Contact Home  
Missions.

Jan 20-22 — Pastor's Conference —  
Contact AFLC Headquarters.

Jan 30-Feb 1 — Side by Side Youth  
Retreat.

Feb 20-22 — Junior Sno Daze,  
Grades 4-7 —

Contact Pastor Jon Benson.

Mar 13-14 — Men's Retreat

Contact Pastor Al Monson.

Mar 27-29 — Couple's Retreat —

Contact Pastor Richard and  
Audrey Gilmore. (Note date  
change)

May 1-3 — Women's Retreat —  
to be announced.

June 14-20 — Youth Camp —  
Grades 4-7 — to be announced

July 13-19 — Lutherans for  
Evangelism Family Camp

July 20-25 — Youth Leadership  
Conference — Contact Youth  
Ministries

July 26-Aug 1 — Family Camp  
Speaker — Pastor Jeff Swanson

Bible Study — Pastor Phil  
Haugen

Youth — Pastor Jerry Moan

Sept 18-20 — Single's Retreat —  
Contact Keith Quanbeck

Oct 2-4 — Classic's Retreat —  
Contact Pastor Walter Johnson

Oct 23-25 — Family Retreat  
Adult — Pastor Jerry Holmaas  
Youth — Pastor Kevin Olson

Children — Les Landgren family

The ARC continues to keep its rates low enough to enable groups to plan affordable retreats for their people. With our increased bookings we are finding ourselves in need of more space so that each group may enjoy a private area for their activities. We have undertaken several remodeling projects in the past few months and will be able to provide our guests with two more small meeting areas, a guest service center (camp store, nurse's station, and registration area) and a new youth dorm.

We gratefully acknowledge the importance of our ARC Supporters during this time of growth. Plans are now in the works for a large activity center which will provide both a full-size gymnasium and/or a large auditorium, seating 1200 people. We rely upon the prayers and generosity of our AFLC family. Please prayerfully consider a gift of time, materials or financial support toward this ministry.

