

The Lutheran **AMBASSADOR**

January 9, 1996



**Loving
people
into
the Kingdom**

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

Divine appointment

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me." — John 14:6

The visibility was poor and the weather rapidly deteriorating as we sought to find our way through the North Dakota snow storm! In a few minutes we would have to make a decision — which of the two possible routes that lie ahead would provide us with the best traveling conditions? We realized there was more than one "way," but which was best?

In John 14:6 Jesus speaks of Himself as the way to the Father. His claim is in response to a question by Thomas, "How do we know the way?"

Multitudes of people throughout the course of history have asked that same question. Man through his sin forfeited the fellowship with the Father that he had been created for. For countless generations many have been seeking to find a way back to their Creator.

It was a serious matter for us to find the right way that December night in the blinding blizzard. It is an even more serious matter for man to find the right way to the Father because his eternal soul is at stake! That blinding snowstorm was nothing in comparison to that which blinds peoples hearts today. Sin and unbelief creates a condition in the human heart that makes it impossible for anyone to find the way back to the Father on their own!

Jesus says, "I am the way!" He does not merely say that He shows us the way, or that He constructs for us a way — but that He is the way.

It would have been a great comfort for us fearful travelers that night if someone could have shown us the best way to avoid the treacherous conditions. We did find some comfort in the fact that a snowplow had cleared the way we had chosen; but I think the greatest comfort would have been if someone could have picked us up and brought us to our destination. Jesus does just that! He is the way!

His being the way is based upon the fact that He is also the truth. Every other so-called way is based on falsehood and deception. Proverbs 14:12 states, "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." Man-made religions seem right to many — but they end in death.

Jesus is the way that leads to life because He is the life. Only the Author of life could restore the life lost in the Garden of Eden when man sinned. Through His finished work on Calvary, He has provided the way of salvation; through His Word and by His Spirit He today shows us the way of salvation. He becomes the way of salvation for us personally as we receive Him by faith.

Be sure today that you trust His life-giving promises which are based on His absolute truth. All hope of God and heaven outside of Him are vanity and worse. "Except through Me" is absolute and final.

— Rev. Les Johnson
Faith Lutheran
Lake Alma, Saskatchewan

His command: *He (Jesus) said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15).*

His desire: *This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:3-4).*

EVANGELISM

as old as time yet always new

Evangelism is as old as time itself, and as new as today's sunrise. The sun has been in space since God called it into being, but no two sunrises are ever the same. They are always new. So it is with evangelism: it is always new.

The message of God's love manifested through his Son and the command to share it never changes, but the opportunities to do so are new every morning. Every time we encounter a friend or a stranger, God provides us the opportunity to share the good news of forgiveness of sin and the gift of eternal life through the shed blood of Christ. Remember, in truthfulness, this is not a choice. He commanded us to "preach the good news to all creation."

It is important that you understand that I am using the term evangelism in the broad sense. That is simply: "Sharing the good news of the gospel." Some would think of evangelism as referring only as being directed at the unsaved. In my opinion that limits both the message and its effectiveness. Let me explain.

Sharing Who We Are

Someone once said that evangelism is not what we do, but who we are. This being true, every encounter that we have with another individual is an opportunity for evangelism. It is not necessary for us to know if that person is a believer or not. If we share our faith and what God has done in our life, it can be an encouragement to a fellow believer, or a tool which can be used by the Holy Spirit to touch the heart of the unbeliever. In either case, it is sharing who we are and what we believe with another person.

When we examine the Scriptures, we soon become aware that Jesus and His disciples used both mass and personal evangelism in their ministry. Today some say mass evangelism is a thing of the past. But what constitutes a mass? Jesus said, "For where two or three have gath-

ered together in My name, there I am in their midst" (Matthew 18:20). I understand this to include the pastor or evangelist preaching to a large group of people, or the sharing of your faith with a gathering of any size. In that type of situation mass and personal evangelism overlap.

Using Various Means

In view of the fact that it is Christ's desire that all men be saved, we must also be aware of every opportunity and every tool that God provides for evangelism. We can share ourselves directly in everyday encounters. But God has also provided us with ever-changing technology which can be used to share His Word; such as fax, internet and voice mail. The very message you leave on your answering machine can be used to touch someone's heart. The tools and the opportunities may change, but the message never changes.

Every believer is called to be an evangelist. It is our responsibility to share the good news of salvation at every opportunity, even when it isn't convenient. To paraphrase an old saying; "Try new methods, but keep the old, one is silver and the other gold." Just because we think something doesn't work anymore doesn't make it any less effective when used by the Holy Spirit to touch the heart and mind of the hearer. We are only called to be faithful in what we say and do. God has promised to accept our meager efforts and multiply them to accomplish what He has planned.

Don't be fearful about sharing who you are, a child of God, or what God has done in your life. Share it both with unbelievers and believers. It can spare someone the agony of hell or give encouragement in the day of trouble. Remember the words of the Apostle Paul to young Timothy: "But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (II Timothy 4:5).



~ Rev. Raymond Klug
Blackduck, Minnesota

EVANGELISM

burden or privilege?

What is evangelism? *It is sharing the good news of the gospel.*

— Evangelist Olaf Friggstad
Mesa, Arizona

Not all are called to be pastors, teachers, missionaries or evangelists, but all are called to be witnesses. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

The very thought of witnessing strikes fear in the hearts of many and a sense of confusion and guilt overwhelms them and deprives them of the joy and peace that Jesus wants them to have. The Christian life becomes burdensome. They do not have the freedom of which Jesus speaks in John 8:36: “If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

If evangelism, witnessing for Jesus, becomes a burden, there may be something wrong with our relationship with Jesus or with our understanding of His grace.

It is so good to turn to the Scriptures for guidance in all areas of faith and life. In Acts 3, we have the account of Peter and John used of God to bring healing to a man crippled from birth. Peter said, “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, ‘walk.’” Peter took him by the hand and helped him up and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong.

This astonishing miracle caused quite a stir among the rulers, elders and teachers of the law. They were not sure how to handle the situation, so they put Peter and John in jail overnight. The next day they questioned them, “By what power or by what name did you do this?” Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, witnessed to them about the crucified and resurrected Jesus and declared, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” This is the privilege of evangelism! Sharing the good news of Jesus, crucified for the sins of the whole world — a resurrected living Savior who is coming again!

In Acts 4:13 the rulers and authorities were astonished and “took note that these men had been with Jesus.” Here is the key! We must spend time with Jesus.

We are living in difficult times. The world around us is squeezing us into its own mold. We are pressured on every hand. Our time is so taken with the cares of this life, that our time with Jesus, in His Word and in prayer gets placed on the back burner. Our church is in desperate need of revival. We Christians need renewal and that will come in no other way than spending time with Jesus in His Word, asking Him to cleanse us from all that hinders our walk with him, allowing the Holy Spirit to fill us to overflowing, so

that we might say with Peter and John, "We cannot help speaking about what we have heard and seen." That's when evangelism becomes a privilege!

As I study the life and ministry of Paul, I am amazed at the dedication and effectiveness of his ministry. He makes some statements that most of us could never make. "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Philippians 4:13).

In other words, the purpose and meaning to his whole life was wrapped up in Jesus Christ and when this life was over he had all to gain. Not only does Paul make those statements, but he backed them up with a consistent life.

What did Paul have that motivated him in this way? He had a clear understanding of the law and the gospel, of sin and grace. While he acknowledges that he is a chief of sinners, he declares at every opportunity that Jesus Christ came into

the world to save sinners. That is the good news of the Bible that the world needs to know. Evangelism is a privilege. Let us be faithful in carrying out the Great Commission.

As a teenager, I came into a personal relationship with Jesus. I have had a very full life as a farmer and business man. Thirty-five years ago I sensed God's call, as a layman of the church, to use some of my time in evangelism. I made a commitment to Jesus to use every opportunity given me to share the gospel if it were physically possible. There have been hundreds of opportunities. I consider each one a distinct privilege because there isn't anything in this world that compares to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.



The author is the AFLC Canadian Evangelist and lives in Frontier, Saskatchewan, during the months of April-October.



Minister in the mirror

— Bob Hutchinson
First Lutheran
Camarillo, California

I awoke the other day,
Preparing for life in the usual way.
Splashed water on my face, then looked and — hey!
I saw a minister in the mirror.
I rubbed my eyes — this cannot be —
A servant of God staring back at me?
(Now, wouldn't it trouble you to see
A minister in the mirror?)
The face was familiar, but beneath that brow
The eyes were gentle, softer somehow ...
Oh, look at the time, I must go now!
I, and that man in the mirror.
But Him, He wasn't ready yet.
On His face an attitude of prayer was set.
I prayed, too, sensing I might regret
Being stuck with this guy in the mirror.
Met up with a friend along the way
Who seemed troubled — I didn't know what to say —
I heard, "I've got time, let's talk and pray."
Yep, it came from his friend in the mirror.
Saw the burden easing as we spoke,
Felt the weight of it shifting to my yoke.
"See, this way no one person's spirit gets broke!"
Softly whispered a voice from the mirror.

Jesus says, "Here's a myst'ry of my kingdom;
Where I enter in is made more than the sum.
If you're willing, just open and watch me become
The minister in the mirror!"

PRAYER and EVANGELISM: an inseparable link

While Jonah was in the belly of the fish he came to a very important conclusion about salvation. In his prayer he confessed that "Salvation comes from the Lord" (Jonah 2:9). Jonah realized that if he was ever going to be saved from his desperate situation, God would have to do it.

The longer I serve as a pastor the more I realize that this is true today as well. Because of our sin we are in a desperate situation, and only God can get us out of it. We too must confess that *salvation comes from the Lord*. And we must pray for those who are yet lost. Because salvation is a work of the Holy Spirit there is an inseparable link between prayer and evangelism.

In studying what the Bible has to say about prayer and evangelism, I have come to three important conclusions about how we need to pray for the ministry of evangelism.

Prayer for the sending of workers

First of all, we must pray for the **sending of workers** because the **need** for evangelism is great. In Matthew 9:35-38 we get a beautiful picture of how much Jesus cares for people. Matthew tells us that Jesus had compassion on people because they were like *sheep without a shepherd*. Then He asked the disciples to pray for the sending of workers. He said, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:37-38).

During one summer of my seminary internship we stayed in a parsonage that had both strawberry and raspberry plants in the back yard. As the strawberries and raspberries began to ripen we couldn't keep up with the bountiful crop. We had to ask others to come and pick berries because we didn't want them to go to waste. The harvest was plentiful, but the workers were few.

The same is true today in the area of evangelism. There are many souls who need to be harvested for Jesus, but where are the workers? There are many who are being called into the harvest field, but have not yet responded. Workers need to be sent. They need to be aroused by the Spirit of God. And this happens as we pray.

My new

Prior to coming to Chicago, I never had the opportunity to make any Muslim friends — simply because I did not know any. Therefore I was delighted when one of my shut-ins introduced me to a therapist who was from Egypt.

As we visited with each other, I was able to present the way of salvation and answer some questions that he had about Christianity. He invited me to join him for a meal at a local Egyptian restaurant. Afterwards we visited a large mosque nearby where I observed their worship. I thought this was an exciting opportunity.

The "service" was short — about six minutes. Muslims have ritual prayer five times daily either in the mosque or at home facing Mecca. As I sat there, I was literally overwhelmed at the tremendous need of millions of Muslims to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior. I almost felt like I had been instantly transported to the Middle East as I sat listening to the imam calling the people to pray. A portion of the Koran was recited in Arabic and then the service was over. I began praying that God would use me to reach even a few of them with the gospel.

I went with my host to a

Prayer for the salvation of souls

Second, we must pray for the **salvation of souls** because the **opposition** to evangelism is great.

Perhaps the greatest example in Scripture of one who prayed for the salvation of souls is the apostle Paul. His concern was so great for the people of Israel that he said, "For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers." Paul's burden for souls was again expressed in Romans

10:1, "Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved."

Paul knew that he needed to pray for the salvation of the people of Israel because there is always opposition to evangelism. One of the greatest sources of opposition is the sinful nature of man. Paul saw this with the people who opposed the truth of justification by faith. According to Romans 10:3 they sought to establish their own righteousness because they refused to submit to the righteousness of God, which is righteousness by faith. It takes the work of God to bring sinful man to the point of salvation. The sinful flesh must be put to death. And that is why we must pray. It takes spiritual weapons to fight spiritual battles.

Prayer for the success of the Word

Third, we must pray for the **success of the Word** because the **opportunities** for evangelism are great.

Look at Paul's epistles where he asks for prayer and you will notice a common theme. Over and over again he asks people to pray that God will bless His Word.

In Colossians 4:3 he says, "And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains." In Ephesians 6:19-20 he asks, "Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains." And in II Thessalonians 3:1 Paul makes this request: "Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you."

Paul realized that he had great opportunities to proclaim the Word of God, and he wanted people to pray that God would bless His Word.

As you pray for the furtherance of evangelism in our AFLC, would you pray for these three things?

There is an inseparable link between prayer and evangelism. Evangelism is a spiritual battle for the souls of men. We must fight this battle with the spiritual weapon of prayer.



Muslim friends

friend's apartment where we were each able to share our faith. I pointed out that I had already read and studied the Koran and asked them if they had ever read the Bible. Neither had but said they already "believed in" Jesus and the Bible, so what was the necessity of reading it?

I gently pointed out a few things they didn't accept: namely the divinity of Jesus Christ and salvation by faith in His finished work on the cross.

At our next visit, a third friend came along. All three of them have recently accepted an Arabic Bible as a gift and promised that they would read them. One expressed a desire to visit our church.

I have been told that Muslims are very resistant to the gospel, but that should not deter our prayerful efforts! "Is not My word like a fire?" says the Lord, "and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:29).

My prayer for my Muslim friends is that they will indeed read their Arabic Bibles and that the Holy Spirit will convict them and show them their need for the Savior.



— Rev. Tom Baker
Ebenezer Lutheran
Evergreen Park, Illinois



— Rev. Peter Franz
St. Paul's Lutheran
Cloquet, Minnesota
Member AFLC
Commission on
Evangelism

Facing the fear



— Wilmar Olson
Our Redeemer
Lutheran
Kirkland,
Washington

Many Christians are reluctant to witness to the unsaved because of fear of failing, offending, lack of knowledge or of making some other blunder. These are real concerns, and I have had all these feelings in my own experience. But to what extent are these misgivings the result of an inadequate view of personal evangelism?

Reaching and converting the unsaved person is really the work of the Holy Spirit. The individual Christian is a **tool** He may use in the process. A true understanding of our role in personal evangelism can help us do our part in reaching the world for Christ.

A cleansed tool

Because sanctification is never perfect in this life, and sin clings to a person as long as he lives, a saved person needs forgiveness every day. Thanks be to God that, "If we confess our sins He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). To be blessed in our service, we need to repent daily of our sins.

A sharpened tool

Romans 10:17 states that, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The Scriptures are the chief means by which God's grace is given to mankind, and the Holy Spirit uses the law to show us our sinful state, and the gospel to invite us to Christ.

The person who would be used of God will learn to use the Bible to explain clearly and simply the way of salvation. For example, this series of verses from Romans:

3:10 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one.*

6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

5:8 *But God demonstrates His own love for us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

10:13 *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

An available tool

Jesus said, "If you love Me you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15). If we love Christ, we want to obey Him. This love motivates our witness. The prospect of sharing one's faith doesn't seem as daunting when love for Christ controls the mind, will, and emotions.

To witness does not always mean pressing for a decision. It does not mean winning an argument with the unsaved person. It does not require knowing all the answers. It can be as little as inviting a person to church, or as much as leading a repentant soul into the presence of Christ. We need not be super Christians to be used by the Lord, but we must be available to Him.

A cooperative tool

All the above will be for naught if the Holy Spirit has not gone before to prepare the soul to receive the gospel. The unsaved person is dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1), and unless the Spirit has awakened him or her to receive spiritual truth, we may as well talk to a park bench or a Jersey cow. Since the Spirit alone can give the new birth required for salvation, our part is to pray for our family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers that God will awaken their spiritual hunger and thirst and that we will recognize opportunity when it is given. It has been said many times, and it is most certainly true: we should speak to God about men before we speak to men about God.

Our walk with Christ becomes an exciting adventure when we live expectantly, asking Him each day to use us according to His will. When He has gone before to

What is the deepest need of people everywhere, no matter their age, income, marital status, nationality or circumstances? It is to know Christ, to trust Him as Savior and Lord, and to grow to be like Him. This need is being addressed for the women in the South Hills area of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania through the Journey Through the Word Bible Study at Ruthfred Lutheran Church.

What began as a prayer in the heart of one of Ruthfred's women, God has brought into being something no one even imagined. Journey Through the Word is a weekly Bible study involving over 110 women and 40 children. Since September, we have been using the AFLC study on the book of Philippians. Each week these women complete one of the lessons covering a section of Scripture at home, allowing the Holy Spirit to be their teacher. Then we gather each Wednesday morning for a short worship time to allow the Lord to quiet our minds and to invite Him in.

After the worship, we break into small groups and for an hour discuss the lesson we've completed at home with the others in our group. We take time in these groups to share prayer concerns and to pray with each other. The discussion leaders not only guide the discussion and the prayer time, but they lovingly care for each of the women in their groups and try to keep in contact with them throughout

A "journey" with God's Word

the week. At the end of our group time we gather again for a lecture over that same section of Scripture. This way we are studying each lesson three times, in three different ways. It is a wonderful way to learn.

Another very important part of our study is our children's ministry. At present, 40 children participate in three classes. The two older classes enjoy Bible stories, Scripture memory, songs, crafts, snacks and play. The teachers and mothers alike have been delighted with how open these little minds and hearts are to God's truth.


These dedicated children's teachers also participate in the Bible study. Each Monday, all of the discussion group leaders, children's teachers, teaching directors and administrative directors meet to go over the lesson and prepare for the Wednesday session. In this way they can benefit from all three parts of the study as well as share their gifts with the children each week.

The vision for Journey Through the Word was truly a community Bible study. In our first session this fall, we were excited to have 30 women attend who were not members of Ruthfred. Many are friends and neighbors of members who attend. Others came in response to advertising that was placed on local cable stations, newspapers, and on library and supermarket bulletin boards. The study has provided an excellent

place for our women to invite their unchurched friends and neighbors.

One woman came after a friend mentioned it to her. She was wounded with grief after the death of her mother. She was soon to move to another part of the country, but she was reaching out for some answers and comfort in her suffering. God met her needs so beautifully in those few weeks through women who loved her, prayed with her, and sent her notes of love and encouragement as well as through His Word in Philippians in which we're all learning how to have joy no matter what our circumstances.

All of the women involved in the planning of this study have been in awe of how God has worked. At times we felt like we were running to catch up with God as His plans were bigger than ours. It is wonderful to see God work in all of the women's hearts as He teaches new truths and heals old hurts, strengthens faith and brings new birth.

God promises that His Word will not return void but will accomplish the work that He intends for it to do (Isaiah 55:11). It is exciting for us to watch as God accomplishes His work in our church and community as we reach out with His Word. 


— The Journey staff
Ruthfred Lutheran
Bethel Park, Pennsylvania

prepare the way, the sharing of our faith is not a fearful chore to be avoided, but a joyful opportunity to be experienced.

A prayer in closing

Writing this article has reminded me that my witness is not all that it could be, and if you feel that yours, too, could be improved, let's pray together: *May God grant us the privilege of being His tool —*

cleansed, sharpened, available, and cooperative to be used by the Holy Spirit in personal evangelism.

"Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen" (Ephesians 3:20,21). 

We tried something new

Following a riot caused by his preaching in Thessalonica, Paul went to Athens where he observed the culture, customs and traditions of the people. He began to preach Jesus in a way they could understand. It was different from the way he preached in Jerusalem, Damascus or Ephesus, but souls were saved. Paul adapted the pure truth of the gospel to the cultural background of his listeners.

It is worth noting that Paul had been challenged earlier by the church fathers for his unconventional evangelism methods. We should not be too surprised. Each of us, whose life has been transformed by the gospel, has a strong tendency to make our experience normative for all believers. Others who come face to face with Jesus Christ in a different way are viewed with suspicion. Our faith and culture become so intertwined, that attempts to distinguish between them is painful and often labeled heresy. Jesus, the disciples, Paul, Martin Luther and hundreds of others have experienced the difficulty of proclaiming the pure Word of God to another culture.

We are given the great commission and, in theory, we embrace it. So why has it become the great omission for most of us? Why are words like evangelism, outreach and church growth so unsettling to us?

I believe we are more afraid of success than we are of failure. Surprises come with success. Our traditions may change, customs may be added or deleted, and our cultural unity may become diluted. We do not homogenize easily. Traditions are precious, but if they prevent us from sharing the saving truth of the gospel, they become stumbling blocks to us.

Recently, two congregations

“Our members began to develop relationships with unbelievers in order to love them to life in Jesus.”

(Faith and Stillwater in Kalispell, Montana) decided to step outside their comfort zones to minister to the unchurched in our community. Our assumptions included:

That America's culture is not the same as it was in 1950, but we continue to do church much the same way.

That some of our neighbors are lost souls.

That our most recent evangelism events have done a poor job of reaching the unchurched and we end up “preaching to the choir.”

That all creatures on the face of the earth have an innate desire to worship, but many turn their adoration to the wrong thing,

That God created everything holy even though much has been used for evil.

We started to pray, and that's

when things began to happen. God placed a burden on our hearts for lost souls, name by name. We began to get the church out of the pews and back into the community. Our members began to develop relationships with unbelievers in order to love them to life in Jesus.

Following the Apostle Paul's lead, we explored the world right around us to see how we could best provide events to share the gospel message. Our neighbors felt “church” was generally irrelevant. The building was unfamiliar and scary to first-time visitors. Sermons were dry and technical. Church music was, well ... let's face it, not many listen to 400-year-old music on a regular basis.

We decided on a series of four events held in local gyms and addressed issues that people are struggling with. We featured a band of the best local talent we could find with guitars, keyboard, drums, and vocalists. We included a blend of country hits that addressed the issue at hand. When the band finished, a five to ten minute drama was presented that further highlighted the issue of the evening, leading to a brief message where Jesus was presented as the only answer to the pain and heartache we experience. The band struck up a final

HOME MISSIONS

Rev. Christian Andrews was installed as pastor of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church of Palmdale, California on December 3, 1995. Home Missions Director, Paul Nash officiated at the installation service. Pastor Andrews had been serving the Living Faith and Middle Grove Parish in Larimore, North Dakota. Pastor Henry Mohagen, secretary of the AFLC Home Missions Board, drove a rental truck filled with the Andrews' furniture out

to California and participated in the service. Mrs. Linda Mohagen also ministered to the congregation with her puppets.

Oceanside, California — Pastors Paul Nash and Henry Mohagen along with Mrs. Linda Mohagen attended an Advent Banquet on the evening of Sunday, December 3 at the Community Bible Church. The banquet was hosted by Pastor Orville and Mrs. Florence Hiepler, and the youth of the congregation served.

number and we dismissed, inviting anyone who wanted to talk to contact us after the program. Child care was provided so our neighbors could listen to the Word of God without interruptions or distractions. No offering was taken.

Results: More unchurched people were exposed to the Word of God at our programs on any given night than were present in a week of evangelistic services in our churches. We have not had a flood of new people streaming to church because we did this, but we did gain new credibility among the unchurched. Relationships continue to grow as people are loved toward the Kingdom of God.

Everyone on stage was a believer, and the events were bathed in prayer. Does a popular method mean you have to preach a popular gospel? Absolutely not! I think the Apostle Paul would have enjoyed what we did. We are still solid Bible-preaching, conservative congregations.

When you truly believe that people matter to God you may just find yourself in uncharted waters ... where there just happen to be a lot of drowning souls!

— by Pastor Tim Bartholomew
Stillwater Free Lutheran Church
Kalispell, MT

St. James, Minnesota — Hosanna Lutheran Church held special meetings November 26-28, 1995. Pastor Paul Nash preached on the theme, "Christian Growth — Plain and Simple." Pastor Tom Tuura is the new pastor at Hosanna, a mission congregation of the AFLC.

The annual **Home Missions retreat** will be January 15-16, 1996 at the Association Retreat Center, Osceola, Wisconsin. For information, contact the AFLC Home Missions office.

OUR PRESIDENT WRITES

One "F" is missing

An interesting church growth article recently came to my attention, discussing the reasons why people choose to join one congregation rather than another. The author offered the following series of four "F"s as a basis for our church choices:

Go where you (1) Fit in, are (2) Fed, find (3) Fellowship, and can be (4) Fruitful.

What do you think about this list? Does it seem complete to you? Look again, because one central "F" is missing:

Go where you share the (5) Faith.

The Word of God commands us to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). Notice that it read "the" faith — often faith refers to our personal trust in the Lord, but when the article is used, it suggests that this particular Scripture refers to the content of faith or the body of truths in which we believe.

The missing "F" is doctrine, a consideration that seems to be lacking in the church choices that many make today. The first four are not unimportant, but it is too easy for them to be translated totally in terms of emotion. How we feel about a church is minor in importance when compared to the faith that it professes and practices.

The AFLC is an evangelical Lutheran fellowship, sharing a common faith rooted in God's inerrant Word and reflected in our historic confessions. This faith finds its center in justification by grace through faith, provided for lost sinners through the means of grace, and proclaimed in a message of law and gospel. These distinctives separate us from other evangelicals, and, together with our emphasis on a personal relationship to Jesus Christ, sometimes even from other Lutherans.

Let us thank the Lord together for the privilege of participation in a church family — not a perfect one, by any means — where the fifth "F" is not missing! May the New Year reflect a re-commitment to the biblical Lutheran faith on which we continue to stand.

— Rev. Robert L. Lee



Mr. Larry Walker, the new administrative assistant in the AFLC Home Missions department.

FOR WOMEN

Women's Missionary Federation introduces new Bible study

The 1996 WMF Bible Study is Freedom's Holy Light. These eleven lessons with study guide are available in a bound booklet and will not be published in *The Lutheran Ambassador* this year.

The author of these studies is Mrs. Paul (Mary) Christenson. Mary and her husband and two sons, Matthew and Benjamin, live in Fergus Falls, Minnesota and are members of Calvary Free Lutheran.

Mary likes to spend time with her family and helps Paul in their electrical business. She also enjoys reading, needlework and genealogy. She is active in her church and volunteers for several community service projects.

Mary testifies, "Knowing God is always near and truly cares about me and my concerns is a great comfort to me. I rely on him for help and comfort in times of need. He is my joy and encouragement. He is the source of my life.



A favorite Scripture of mine is Isaiah 26:3-4: 'The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in Thee. Trust in the Lord forever, for in God the Lord, we have an everlasting Rock.'

The eleven studies are based on Psalm 78:1-4: "O my people, listen to my teaching. Open your ears to what I am saying, for I will show you lessons from our history, stories handed down to us from your former generations. I will reveal these truths to you so that you can describe these glorious deeds to your children, and tell them about the mighty mira-

cles that He did."

Mary weaves both historical lessons and spiritual truths into each lesson as she takes readers through the exploration and settling of our country through the period of the Civil War. She writes, "The desire and intent of America's forefathers was to establish a country which would honor and serve God. Faith and trust were evident in their lives and in the principles upon which they founded a new government. Dedicated men and women chronicled for us God's continual leading and His provision. And the evidence testifies that God has been and is Freedom's Holy Light."

Aaron Olson, art instructor in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area, designed the cover that carries out the colonial feeling implied by the title and the studies. Aaron is the son of Rev. and Mrs. Rodger Olson.

These studies are available through the WMF Executive Secretary, Karen Knudsvig, R.R. 2, Box 11, Buxton, North Dakota 58218, (701) 847-2643, for \$5, including postage.

There is no subject nearer and dearer to my heart than Christian nurture: training our children for Jesus Christ. What a privilege it was for me to put the hands of my little ones into my hands and pray and hear their little voices say "da, da, da." During those moments what a flood of joy comes into both mother and child.

Surely in order to live in peace, we need to know and love the Lord and make our home a Christian home daily feeding on the Word of God. Most every parent wishes the best for their children

The heart of a child

in health, education, opportunities, and companionship. Sad to say, so many forget the thing most needful, that of nurturing their children in the admonition of the Lord by daily providing them with the spiritual food their souls need.

I would like to encourage all mothers of children who have them yet at home to set up a family altar: the gathering together with your family in the reading of God's Word and in prayer. You

will be greatly rewarded.

The most valuable heritage children can have is to be reared in a Christian home by Christian parents. If we have been thus blessed, may we as mothers and fathers not be lax in the bringing up of our dear children. May we by prayer, precept and example lead and guide our children in the Lord. We cannot take our money, our land, our homes or any material wealth with us when we leave this life; but we can do our

Good servants of Jesus Christ



Rev. Dennis Gray and Mr. Bob Halvorson.

The Apostle Paul in writing to young Timothy urged him to preach, teach and live the Word of God. He instructed him to proclaim God as the creator of all things, Jesus Christ as our only Redeemer and Savior, and the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us in Christ. Then Paul says, "In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of faith

and of the sound doctrine which you have been following" (I Timothy 4:6).

The AFLC has been blessed with many good servants of Jesus Christ both among pastors and laity who have a love and concern for souls to be saved and strengthened in the faith in Christ. It was a privilege for me to serve the Lord on the Youth Board the past 10 years and to work with other servants on a

common goal to see youth saved, grounded in God's Word and equipped to reach their peers with the gospel of Christ.

It is fitting for us to acknowledge the faithful service of Rev. Dennis Gray and Mr. Bob Halvorson who have served the AFLC as 1/4 time Youth Resource Directors the past eight and a half and three years respectively. In that time Pastor Gray has responded to many phone calls and letters regarding youth and youth ministry, assisted congregations in the placement and training of youth workers, spoke at district leadership training seminars and youth events as well as sending quarterly Contact mailings to pastors and youth workers. Among other things, some of the valuable resources that Pastor Gray edited and published for AFLC youth ministry are: Good Counsel For Counselors, Leadership Helps For Youth Groups, Youth's Favorite Songs, Luther League Officer Handbook, Bible Camp Handbook, and a number of Bible study booklets on many themes.

Bob Halvorson, too, has responded to many similar calls and letters and has assisted in the placement and training of youth workers and the recruitment and training of the Cornerstone Youth Ministry Team with Pastor Gray. Bob and Pastor Gray have taught youth ministry courses at the AFLC schools. Bob, the past couple of years, has published the Youth Connection, a quarterly devotional newsletter sent directly to youth to encourage them in the Lord. Bob has also edited a quarterly bulletin insert on pertinent youth issues, needs and opportunities. Another of Bob's major contributions to youth ministry continues to be

(continued on next page)

utmost to have the assurance that by the grace of God we can have our greatest earthly treasures, our children, with us in eternity.

Remember, "Whatever you write on the heart of a child, no waters can wash it away. The sands may be shifted when billows are wild and the efforts of time may decay. Some stories may perish, some songs be forgot, but this engraven record time changes it not. Whatever you write on the heart of a child, no waters can wash it away."

Let us then resolve to "live in peace and have the God of love and peace with us" (II Corinthians 13:11). Then we will be truly happy in this life and the next.

*Oh that wisdom may we know
Which yields a life of peace
below,
So in the world to follow this,
May each repeat in words of
bliss:
We're all - all here!*

— Eldrid Galland Welander
Zion Lutheran
Wadena, Minnesota

Mark
your
calendars

ARC Snow Daze Osceola, Wisconsin

Theme: "Complete in Christ
through His Word" — James
1:1-27

Registration 6-8p.m. Friday
through breakfast Sunday.

Senior High 8th-12th grades:
February 2-4, 1996

Junior High 4-7 grades:
February 16-18, 1996

Cost: \$48

Call the ARC: (715) 294-2877

One Incredible Night March 15-16

Kirk Militzer will be speak-
ing.

A 500-plus large youth event!

Contact Bob Halvorson at
Emmaus Lutheran, Bloomington,
Minnesota, 612-884-4751.

1996 FLY Leadership Conference

"Whatever It Takes"

July 15-19 at AFLBS

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Cost: \$175 if registered before
May 1, 1996.

For: Youth, grades 7-12

Call: (612) 545-5631

Ambassador (A) — Kevin, tell us a little about yourself.

Kevin (K) — I graduated from college in Electrical Engineering and was married to my wife, Pam, in 1984. I worked at three companies before starting seminary at AFLTS in 1991. We have three children: Nathan - six, Andrew - four, and Naomi - two. We have been with the AFLC at Faith Lutheran Church in Shakopee since 1985. My personal faith has been a growing one ever since baptism. There have been significant times through my life of decision and commitment that have given me a heart for evangelism. The times of greatest growth have often been when the Lord appeared silent and yet was active in an unexpected way.

A — Kevin, what is your background in youth min- istry?

K — I have been working with youth ministry since 1983 off and on. Most of my experience with churches has been part-time or volunteer. I have worked with the youth groups in five different churches. The work at Faith Lutheran in Shakopee and King of Glory in Eden Prairie during seminary has been the most recent.

A — What caused you to leave your occupation of Electrical Engineering and start seminary?

K — It began with a growing love for the youth work at Faith and a growing unrest with my job of computer programming and computer testing. The youth work would have eternal significance while the computer work would be out-dated within five years. At the Colorado Convention four and one half years ago, the importance of focusing on eternal rewards rather than temporal became essential in my heart. It was that following winter that I started at AFLTS.

SERVANTS

the Foundations Seminar which has been well received wherever it has been presented. While these men have resigned the 1/4 time calls and support the calling of Kevin Olson as full-time director, they continue to be available as servants in youth ministry.

Youth ministry in the AFLC has always been a team effort. The vast majority of youth ministry that is done in the AFLC or anywhere is done in the home. It is done by faithful Christian servant-parents who pray with and for their children and reveal by their life and speech that Jesus Christ is our life, hope and salvation. They have a ready heart and ear to hear the heart cries of their youth and respond with the hope of the Lord. This is reinforced by faithful servant-Sunday school teachers, youth leaders, and pastors who also call youth to personal repentance and faith in Christ.

This is foundational to youth ministry because 85% of people

who know the Lord as their Savior today came to know Him by the time they were 18. If youth are not reached with the gospel of Christ while they are still at home, most of them will never come to know Jesus as their Savior.

Youth themselves also are an important part of the youth ministry team. About 70% of youth in America do not or have not attended church or Sunday school on a regular basis. The percentages are even higher for those in high school. If these are going to hear of Jesus the only way for many of them are their peers in school. How this challenges us to make every effort to use the opportunities God gives us to encourage youth in Christ. Will you be a faithful servant of the Savior in the opportunities He gives you?



— Rev. Joel Rolf
Grace and Zion Lutheran Parish
Valley City, North Dakota

Meet Kevin Olson, the new youth director



A — How did the Lord guide you into youth ministry?

K — Youth ministry became important to me when I found out that 85-90% of all who come to a relationship with Christ do so before the age of 18. This has to be the greatest mission field in the United States by those statistics. Also, I wanted other youth to know of the exciting life that is available in knowing Jesus and this is a great way to share that vision.

A — What do you see as the purpose of this Youth Ministry Director position?

K — The number one purpose of this position is the same as that of the local church, and that must be discipleship. We must keep a focus on leading people to Christ, training them and equipping them to reach out to others

as local congregations and as an Association.

A — What specifically do you see as the areas that need to be addressed?

K — I see three goals that are needed in the beginning. First, we need to establish a prayer base for the youth ministry. Nothing of any lasting value will happen without God's work in this area. "I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father" (John 14:13). Call 612-545-5631 if you are interested in receiving a prayer request mailing. Second, I would like to talk to every pastor in the AFLC to find out what their specific needs are and how we can help from this office. Third, I would like to visit every district youth rally to meet people and to hear from the youth.

A — How are you going to be able to assist the local pastor and congregation?

K — I'll serve as a networker to unite the youth workers of the AFLC congregations together; as an informer to communicate national trends and events in youth ministry; as an encourager to share ideas, successes, struggles, and vision; as a trainer for future youth workers at AFLBS and the Leadership Conference; as a resource for materials, equipment, and people; and as a coordinator for youth mission trips and AFLBS youth outreach teams.

A — What do you see as the greatest needs of the youth in the AFLC?

K — Our youth need people who really care about them; people who are willing to make time to get to know them, find out what their personal struggles are, and encourage them in their daily walk. They need strong guidelines in a world that is so relative, and they need a great quantity of unconditional love. They need to be directed to Christ and called to repentance and faith.

A — What is your greatest need as you begin this position?

K — Pray for this new step in youth ministry. "We constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith" (II Thessalonians 1:11). We are all inadequate in ourselves and it is only by God's grace that we are able to carry out the ministry God has called us into. By His grace the youth ministry of the AFLC will build on what has been done in the past and grow to meet the needs of our youth in the future.



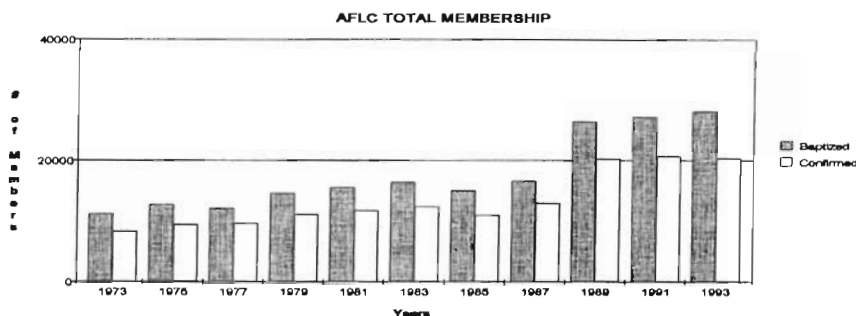
Growth trends in the AFLC

Last June the late Michael Hogan, a senior seminarian, and I completed a study on the growth of the AFLC. It was something I wanted to do for several years, but never seemed to have the time. When Michael became the intern at our church he had just the right skills and attitude for the job. This paper would never have happened without him. I dedicate it to his memory.

We looked at several areas. They were: total number of churches, baptized and confirmed membership, average church membership, attendance, giving to the AFLC and number of students graduating from our schools. The information came from AFLC annual reports and school records. Next issue I will report on our schools. This article focuses on our church body in general.

What we found is that while the AFLC is experiencing modest growth in total numbers, the individual congregations and support for AFLC work is shrinking. We found that this trend began about ten years ago.

Since 1963 the number of AFLC congregations has steadily increased. We doubled in size in our first 13 years. The last five years have seen growth rates of about 3%. If those rates stay constant the number of congregations will double again around 1998, approximately 23 years later. The graph AFLC Total Membership indicates that growth in total membership of our Association has paralleled growth in congregations. Confirmed membership rates have increased at a slightly greater rate than the baptized membership rate, indicating that, like many denominations, the AFLC is growing older. These figures also tell us that in total numbers the AFLC continues to grow, but



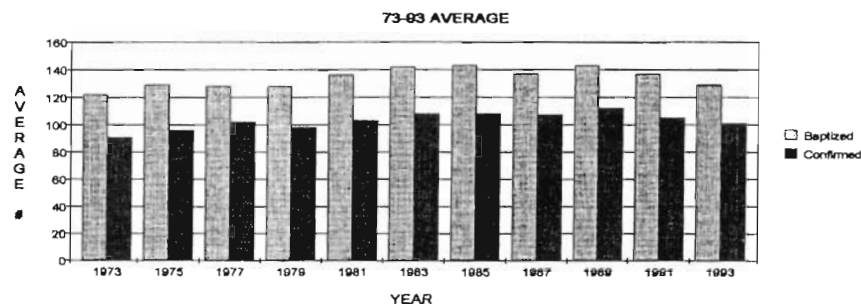
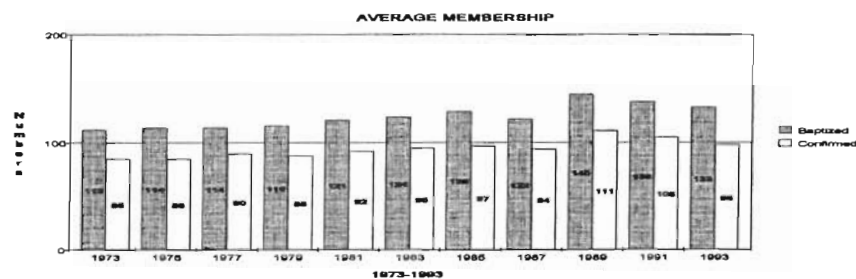
the growth rate is slowing.

The picture changes when you examine other aspects of our growth. Two studies of average membership were done. The Average Membership chart is the average membership of reporting AFLC congregations for the indicated years. There is a peak in 1985 followed by a jump in 1989. It was during this time that the AFLC had a large number of churches transfer from what would become the ELCA. Some of these were large churches. Their addition had the effect of raising the average membership of all congregations whether they were growing or not. So a second study was done of just those congregations who were part of the AFLC.

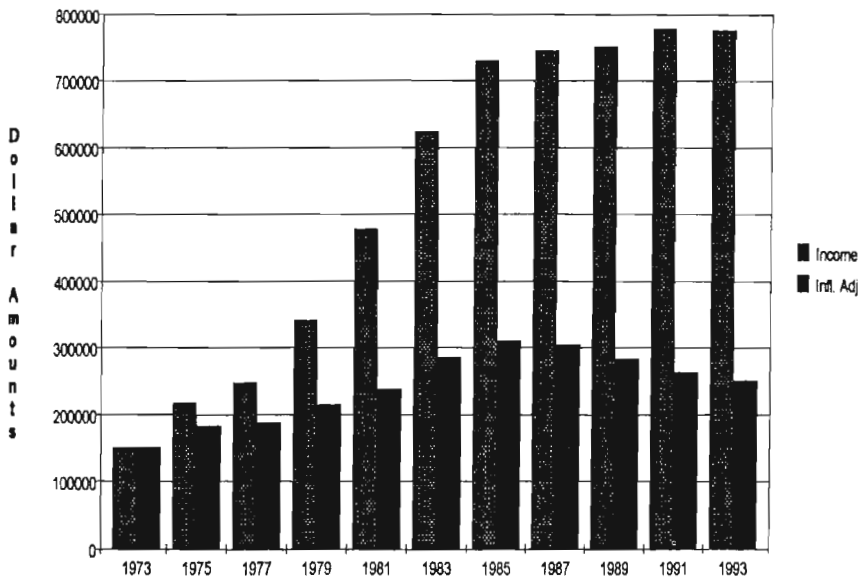
The information displayed on the 73-93 Average chart verifies that congregational membership has, on average, been in decline since about 1985.

Other indicators also support this finding. We did not have the individual budgets of these churches available to us, so we measured the giving from the congregations to the AFLC. The chart Congregational Giving measures both total dollars received from congregations and the value of those dollars after adjusting for inflation. The decline is especially evident when measuring dollars after inflation.

Though we can be encouraged by the growth in total membership and number of churches, I



Congregational Giving



believe the average church membership and giving records are a better indicator of the performance of our movement. Our conclusion is also supported by the graduation rates at our Bible school and seminary which indicate a decline beginning in the mid-1980's. Unless this trend is changed, we can expect to see the average size of our congregations continue to diminish as well as less and less support for our cooperative work. I find these statistics cause for concern.

The most important question we can ask ourselves about these results is why? Before you give an answer, a word of caution. A drop in numbers can be for many reasons, some obvious and some not. Mainline churches have been experiencing numerical decline for almost 30 years. Evangelical churches have been experiencing decline for about 10 years — similar declines, but not necessarily for similar reasons. We need to look for answers and not be satisfied with just our first hunch. The Barna Research Group has been looking for reasons for this decline among evangelical churches. These are some of the reasons they give for the decline among evangelicals:

"The church in America has shown little forward progress over the past decade." Based on five years of study during which he interviewed more than 100,000 Americans, Barna identified the "top illnesses" found in the church. They are summarized by Tom Winfield:

*Pastors are ill-equipped by seminaries: ministers are trained to preach, teach, and counsel and then are asked to run a (church) business.

*There's a lack of capable lay leaders to push the church forward. Few Christians feel adept at evangelism, and those who serve the church leave because they do not get the support they need.

*Churches spend five times as much money on buildings and maintenance as they do on promoting evangelism.

*Christians as a whole fail to hold each other accountable to Christian living.

*Christians haven't targeted special audiences with personalized messages (i.e., the homosexu-

al community or abortion supporters).

*Schisms between fundamentalists, evangelicals and charismatics: battles between mainliners and independents.

— from Leith Anderson, *Dying For Change*, (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1990) p. 159.

Again, a word of caution, what the Barna Research group found out about evangelicals in general is not necessarily true of the AFLC in particular. The only thing that can be said for sure is that if we want to have different results we will have to make some changes.

I think people in our church sense the need for change. It's encouraging to hear people calling for revival, but that call has been going on for a long time. In 1989 our president wrote this:

"We need a spiritual awakening over our land and among our people. The theme of our 25th Anniversary in the AFLC was 'A Year For Revival.' Many prayed earnestly for a renewal of God's Spirit among us. We need to continue that prayer. Do we here at this conference dare to pray that it might begin with us?"

I remember my father admitting to the conference that revival did not come. Why? Repentance is a necessary condition for revival. Repentance means to change direction. I think a lot of the prayers that were made for revival were simply, "Lord make us like we are, only more so." Repentance requires we be open and willing to change as the Lord directs. We must identify those things that we cannot and must not change, but be willing to put everything else on the table. Without that willingness, I don't believe we will be able to reverse this decline.



— Rev. Stephen Snipstead
Faith Lutheran
Kalispell, Montana

Why did He have to die?

The children in the Miriam Infant Home were really concerned about their pet sheep that were being slaughtered for a big promotional benefit dinner for them. The big question was why did any of them have to die? It took time and it was difficult to explain that there must be sacrifices made in order to provide for our needs: such as food, clothes, shoes, school, etc. Everything has a price to be paid and someone must pay for it.

We then told them that their little animal friends, the sheep, had to provide for them so they could stay at the children's home; much like Jesus, the friend of all little children, who was the Lamb of God. He too had to die, on the cross to save us all from our sins, so that we could stay in His home in heaven prepared for all who love Him.

They listened to the story with tears in their eyes, then Marcial asked, "Does Jesus have lambs that we can play with up in heaven?"

"Yes, of course," was the kind

reply. "Jesus who helped the Father create all animals wants you to play with them. But better yet, in heaven no animal, no bird, nobody will ever die again."

That was enough to dry their little eyes and bring a smile to all their dirty little faces, as they went back to play with the rest of the lambs that had been spared this time.

"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth." — Isaiah 53:6-7

— Missionaries Connely and Carolyn Dyrud
Campo Mourão, Brazil

(Note: For AFLC missionaries, Connely and Carolyn Dyrud and others to continue to share the good news of the Lamb of God your prayer and financial support is vital.)

Missionaries Dan and Debbie Giles of Aguascalientes, Mexico, have commemorated ten years of mission work in Mexico. They praise God for the forming of a small but strong Spring of Living Water Lutheran Church and its evangelism and church planting work in Palomino. They have seen five people from the congregation go on to a Lutheran Bible school and three men studying for seminary and pastoral ministry. They recently wrote, "Your partnership has made all the difference for us. After ten years we feel more hopeful than discouraged, more eager than tired." The Giles will soon be joined by Missionaries Todd and Barb Schierkolk.

The Paul Abel family is scheduled to return to the United States for a one year furlough to begin in mid-March. It is their wish to be located in the Twin Cities during their furlough. If you know of or could assist with housing or a vehicle to be used for deputation, preferably a small van or station wagon, please contact the World Missions office as soon as possible at (612) 545-6472.

Rev. David Abel, recently home from mission service in Brazil, has accepted the call to serve Abiding Savior Lutheran in North Royalton, Ohio. He expects to begin his new ministry February 1, 1996.

Mission Conference

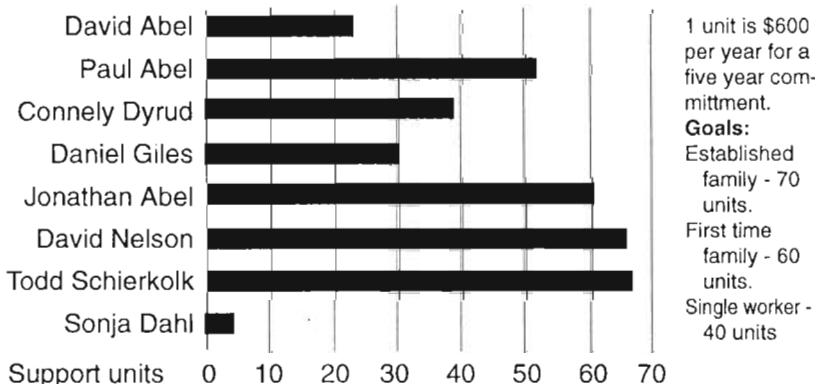
The annual mission conference for AFLC Schools will be held Sunday, February 11 through Wednesday, February 14 at the campus chapel, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis.

Pray for the conference and all who participate. May hearts be open to God's call to serve Him in the pastorate or on the mission field.

Plan now to attend!

1995 - Support Units

January 1 - November 3 (11 months)



We saw God at work in Latvia

At the Diaconal Institute in Jurmala, Latvia, eager young people are flocking to study. Last August 200 applicants desired entrance, but there was room for only 90. Among these 90, not all are committed to Christ and His Word. As in any Bible school in America, the students have varying interests. A handful resist the spiritual classes and prefer to take the courses related to arts and philosophy only. But the majority are hungering and thirsting for the truth of God's Word.

During last November, my wife and I had the joy of visiting the school. I taught courses on spiritual gifts and I Corinthians. The students were in their second and third year and I was amazed at their strong spiritual foundation. They asked deep, penetrating questions and responded with enthusiasm and joy as they gained new insights.

Among all the highlights of this mission trip, two stand out. The first was the response of the women to a message at a women's weekend retreat held the second weekend we were there. God moved in marvelous ways too numerous to mention. The second was after the class on spiritual gifts, when many of the students expressed their gratefulness with hugs and kisses and one of the students said, "This class came just at the right time for me!"

Do continue to pray for the spiritual life and vitality of the Christians there. Their's is not an easy life. Many of the students have, at most, only one meal a day. They wear the same clothing every day as that is all they have. Some work to try to meet expenses. But all are committed to studying the Word of God so they do not regard the lack of these material needs as "sacrifices."

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, January 21, 1996

Whereas, the 1977, 1978, 1980, 1987, and 1993 Annual Conferences affirmed the opposition of the AFLC to abortion, as well as our support for the sanctity of human life; and

Whereas, the destruction of unborn children by means of abortion, which was legalized by the 1973 Supreme Court decision, continues; therefore be it

Resolved, that the 1996 Annual Conference of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations reaffirms our biblical convictions that unborn children are persons in the sight of God from the time of conception and stand under the protection of God's command against murder; and be it further

Resolved, that the employment of every peaceful and legal avenue to enact laws restoring protection to unborn children be encouraged, while relying on the spiritual resources available to God's people for fighting the spiritual battle for the sanctity of human life; and be it further

Resolved, that the conference also expresses its opposition to the violent actions of some abortion opponents, convinced that the violence of abortion will not be overcome by further violence, and that Christians must not take the law into their own hands in opposing evil.

— Adopted May 1, 1995, by the
AFLC Coordinating Committee

They simply accept life as it is and go on trusting the Lord to provide their daily bread. When I asked the students if they have regular meals, many of them said, "If there is food we eat." There is plenty of food in the stores but the price is high. For several, their meal is an apple or a banana.

Their morning chapel service each day resounds with their singing and prayers. Obviously we could not understand their prayers, but we could sense the spirit of them.

Now back at our congregation in Grafton, North Dakota, we thank God for that mission experience and join them in spirit as we daily pray for the students at the Institute. We are filled with joy at seeing first hand the work of God and have gained a deeper appreciation for missionaries and the mission field. We thank God for the prayers and gifts on our behalf making this trip possible.

— Rev. Wayne Juntunen
Grafton, North Dakota

AFLC 1996 Annual Conference

Warm Beach
Conference Center
Stanwood, Washington

June 19-23

Plan now!

Rev. Don and Mavis Richman, Bloomington, Minnesota, attended the 13th National Convention of Lutherans For Life in Chicago, Illinois during November 3-5, 1995. They joined more than 500 Lutherans from 23 states. The delegates heard speakers and discussed topics ranging from end-of-life decisions to motherhood, adoption and public policy issues. Pastor Richman has been a member of the LFL National Board.

Rev. John Skeie, New Hope, Minnesota, has resigned as the pastor of Medicine Lake Lutheran where he has served since 1991. His future plans are indefinite.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Rev. James and Lorene Winter expect to leave shortly for mission work in Brazil from the AFLC-Canada. Until their departure, Pastor Winter is serving as interim pastor for Calvary Free Lutheran in Bismarck, North Dakota.

Rev. Walter Beaman, Argyle, Minnesota, continues to serve Alma and Our Savior's Lutheran churches while taking chaplaincy classes at Trinity Lutheran Hospital in Minot, North Dakota. He recently passed an Oral Board Exam which registers him in all 50 states.

Rev. Laurel Udden, New Hope, Minnesota, suffered a stroke on November 25, and is hospitalized at North Memorial in Minneapolis. Pastor Udden was serving Victory in Christ Lutheran in nearby St. Paul and teaching part-time at AFLBS. Pray for Pastor Udden, his wife Joan and family during this difficult time.

Pastor Mark Olson, Arlington, South Dakota, has completed his studies at AFLTS and will be ordained on January 21, at Calvary Lutheran. AFLC President Robert Lee will officiate at the 3 p.m. service.

Thank you and welcome

The *Ambassador* wishes to thank our three column writers who have recently completed their time of service. Rev. Joel Lohafer shared in the Encouraging Word column for the last six months while Rev. Jerry Moan and Rev. Don Vorhees alternated during the year sharing respectively in the Something to Share and Building the Base columns. We appreciate how each has opened up God's Word for us.

For the first half of this next year, Rev. Les Johnson will be the writer for the Encouraging Word column. During the year the back page will alternate between the Something to Share column written by Rev. Todd Klemme, the Building the Base column with Rev. Bruce Dalagar and, four times during the year, a feature on news from the Association Retreat Center (ARC). We look forward to what God will do.

Rev. Ron Knutson, Kerkoven, Minnesota, has been serving as pastor of Scandia Lutheran Church, rural Glenwood, since the first Sunday in December.



Pukwana, South Dakota — Pukwana Lutheran celebrated its 75th Anniversary on October 29, 1995. The theme was, "Stand Firm in the Faith" from I Corinthians 16:13. AFLC President Robert Lee spoke at the morning and afternoon services. St. Olaf Lutheran, a sister congregation, hosted the noon meal. Pictured are Mrs. Evelyn Cook and Mrs. Emma Baker who were honored as the oldest living members of the church. (Note: This is a correction to the information given in *The Lutheran Ambassador*, November 28, 1995, p. 20, where St. Olaf was credited with the 75th Anniversary celebration.)

The congregation was previously served by interim Pastor Craig Jennings, former AFLC Schools faculty member.

Barronett, Wisconsin — Timberland-Ringebu Lutheran began enjoying their new addition at Christmas. Built in 1909, the church added a kitchen, office, bathrooms, Sunday school rooms and a fellowship hall. Rev. Tom Olson serves the congregation which joined the AFLC in 1988.

Cumberland, Wisconsin — Hosanna Lutheran, currently renting worship facilities in a local bank, has approved a floor plan for their new church building. Construction is expected to begin in 1996.

Mesa, Arizona — The annual AFLC fellowship dinner will be held at the Kings Table Buffet, 1526 E. Main St., on Tuesday, February 13, 1996 at 11:30 a.m.

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences — January 1 - November 30, 1995

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	REC'D IN NOVEMBER	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$268,591.00	\$19,299.26	\$185,691.24	69
Seminary	163,200.00	8,151.38	95,269.85	58
Bible School	244,800.00	9,002.33	113,803.94	49
Home Missions.	335,040.00	19,723.79	212,321.19	63
World Missions.	359,927.00	45,868.33	297,096.16	83
Capital Investment	35,425.00	1,670.65	17,653.05	50
Parish Education	67,868.00	3,479.23	42,025.18	62
Church Extension	10,000.00	2,681.40	13,246.09	1.32
TOTALS	\$1,484,851.00	\$109,876.29	\$983,106.70	66
TOTALS 1994	1,422,890.00	100,009.00	974,912.06	69
Goal 92%				

AFLC MEMORIAL GIFTS

November 1995

In memory of	Given by	Department
Duane Kratachvil	Edna Hebry Inger Ohnsta Aadalen Ladies Aid Bette/Darrel Ford Ella Rekedal Family/Friends Dorothy Russum Rieda Hanson Pastor/Mrs. R. Stueland Joel Rogenes Gordon Gunderson Rev./Mrs. A. Dyrud Hazel Holland Rev./Mrs. Mark Molstre Kenneth Nash Percy/Judy Strand Mavis Tenneboe Richard/Rebecca Iverson Arnold/Lydia McCarlson Family	World Missions World Missions AFLTS AFLTS AFLBS
Vernie Johnson	Morris Moen Oliver Moen Debra Quanbeck	Home Missions Home Missions AFLBS World Missions AFLBS World Missions AFLBS, World and Home Missions AFLBS Home Missions AFLBS
Joyce Totske Henry Batten Mildred Nickelson Robert Broden	Leonard Christopherson	World Missions Home Missions
Mrs. Wooldridge Albert Olson	Family Inger, Edna, Helny Ohnstad Vernon/Dorothy Russum Dale/Leona Gemmill Albert/Ragnhild Windingland Mr./Mrs. Jim Heinz Rev. W.M./Janet Jackson Trinity Free, Minnewaukan, ND Rev. W.M./Janet Jackson Trinity Free, Minnewaukan, ND	Home Missions World Missions
Lavern Butts	Valborg Hedman Albin/Carol Haugen Rev. Ted/Delores Berkas Kenneth Nash Lois M. Oscarson Calvary Lutheran, Wallace, SD Rev. Ted/Delores Berkas Mavis Tenneboe	World Missions AFLBS AFLBS World Missions Home Missions World Missions AFLTS World Missions AFLTS
Danielle Casselton M. Olavson John Berkas Pauline Myhre		
Anna Laven		
Ray Liebscht		
Legacies received		
Gerald Broden	AFLC	
Bernice Klukun	AFLC	
Clara Erickson	World Missions	
Gustav Kveen	AFLC	

Rev. Kermitt C. Grundahl, 90, passed away on December 14, 1995 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He was born on October 7, 1905 near Perry, Wisconsin to Thored and Emelia Grundahl. He graduated from St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota in 1929 and from Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota in 1932.

In 1932, he married Bessie Iverson. She died six years later after the birth of their second son. In 1942, he married Alice Naas of McVile, North Dakota. God blessed them with two daughters.

He was ordained at Perry Lutheran Church on September 4, 1932, by the Central District President of the Norwegian Lutheran Church. He served two parishes in Robinson, Kansas, and Hatton, North Dakota, before moving to Camrose, Alberta, Canada, in 1947. There he served Camrose and Parkland Lutheran and taught part-time at Camrose Lutheran College. In 1951, he became president of Saskatchewan Lutheran Bible Institute in Outlook, Saskatchewan. From 1956-72, he taught at Minneapolis' Lutheran Bible Institute after which he served Trinity Lutheran of Minnehaha Falls, Minneapolis, as a visitation pastor until 1980. He and his wife have lived since then in Colorado Springs in retirement.

In 1966 he was called to join the newly formed faculty of the AFLC Schools, a call which he turned down. In 1987, he wrote to the AFLC president that he regretted turning down that call and had "always been much attracted to the AFLC." In requesting membership on the (continued on next page)



Eden Prairie, Minnesota — Pictured are the new members of King of Glory Lutheran who were installed last fall. The congregation's pastor, Rev. Les Galland, is second from the right.

Washington, D.C. — The Rev. Richard C. Halverson, who retired earlier this year after 14 years as chaplain of the U.S. Senate, died Nov. 28. He was 79. A North Dakota native, Halverson held degrees from Wheaton College and Princeton Theological Seminary. He was chairman of World Vision-U.S. from 1966 to 1983, and pastored Presbyterian churches in California, Maryland, and Missouri. Halverson's successor, the Rev. Lloyd Ogilvie, said Halverson "expressed deep care and encouragement to senators, their families and staffs, and Senate employees." Ogilvie added, "His eloquent prayers opening the Senate expressed his love for God and his patriotism for our nation. His preaching and writing made him a prophet to our nation." The Rev. Billy Graham called Halverson "the most loved and respected chaplain the United States has ever known," and added, "Only the computers of heaven will have a complete account of the lives he touched

PASTOR GRUNDAHL—

AFLC Clergy Roster, Pastor Grundahl stated that his conscience would not allow him to go with the merger and the newly formed ELCA.

With his passing, the AFLC loses a dear friend and prayer warrior. His articles in *The Lutheran Ambassador* will be sorely missed — see his most recent one: "An elderly man's reasons for thanksgiving" in the 11/28/95 issue.

He is survived by his wife, Alice and son Allan and daughters Patricia and Marcia. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Bessie and son, Gordon. Internment was at Perry Lutheran Church of Daleyville, Perry, Wisconsin.

Blessed be his memory.

NEWS OF INTEREST

through his preaching, personal contacts and many writings. His quiet, humble, effective ministry touched millions."

Fort Wayne, IN — Robert D. Preus, a conservative Lutheran theologian and retired president of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana, died November 4 of a heart attack. He

was 71. Preus developed Concordia into one of the most respected Lutheran seminaries in the U.S. Preus was expelled from the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod in 1989 by synod president Ralph Bohlmann and five vice presidents who charged him with a "pattern of untruthfulness." In 1992 the synod's highest body restored Preus to his job and ruled that Bohlmann's charges were without merit.

Norway celebrates 1,000 years of Christianity

In the year 997, on the island of Bomlo, Christianity had its beginning in Norway, with the establishment and the building of a church at the town of Mostra. Bomlo is a rather large island on the west coast of Norway with many hundreds of small islands around it.

In June of 1995, a celebration was held to mark 1000 years of Christianity in a country which had many pagan beliefs and rituals.

The Mostra Church is still in use for weddings and baptisms, with some rebuilding over the years. Nearby is a new church where regular services are held. In the same area and adjacent to the Gamle Kyrkja is a unique amphitheater built into the excavation of an abandoned limestone quarry.

Each year about 100 amateur and professional actors re-enact in a pageant the historical happenings during the establishment of this church. Ordinarily there are about 5,000 spectators for this event. In 1995, however, there was a week-long celebration which included concerts and services. The Sunday service on June 6, was an awe inspiring and reverent celebration attracting representatives of many churches from around Europe.

Participants in the service included the prelate of the Greek Orthodox Church, a cardinal representing the pope, the archbishop of Canterbury and area Lutheran bishops. The Queen of Norway read the Gospel of the day. A host of other dignitaries were also present.

In a large field, adjacent to the Mostra Kyrkja, an additional 5,000 people listened and watched the two and a half hour service on a 12' by 19' television screen. About 500 doves were released from a high hill above the amphitheater. On this hill there is a large stone cross. When the doves were released into the bright blue sky, they made a sweeping circle above the crowd. Few dry eyes were to be seen.

Even though my knowledge of the Norwegian language is limited, the services of this 1,000 year celebration were indescribable as I began to realize that my ancestors worshipped at this very spot. Norway is an extraordinary country with a rich and colorful Christian heritage which can be matched by few other nations.

— Johanne T. Langkamp
Ruthfred Lutheran
Bethel Park, Pennsylvania

EDITORIALS

Effective evangelism

Some of the most effective evangelism I have ever been involved in happened while I was going to college, living in a dormitory, surrounded by non-Christians.

A year, and in some cases more, of being in the same dorm provided me the opportunity to get to know my dormmates. They got a chance to know me. And most importantly, some of them got a chance to know Jesus.

The questions and discussion in the dorm was some of the best I have ever had the privilege of enjoying. It didn't happen on the first day. It happened after relationships were developed and lives were shared. I had a chance to share the good news of Jesus with some because I lived where they lived.

Jesus came to live where we live — that is the heart of His method of evangelism. He became flesh and lived among us and, because of that, we have seen the glory of God (John 1:14). It would not have worked if He had simply mailed a flyer or done a radio program. He had to come and walk and talk, touch and be touched, and spend time on this earth in order for the message to be understood.

God has left us on this earth to be witnesses of the good news of His love. He works through tracts

and radio and other means, but most of all God works through Christians sharing their lives, and thus sharing Christ, with non-Christians.

Sadly, Christians often seem to be confused as to what it means to be set apart from the world. We are to be set apart in terms of what we value, not necessarily where we live.

Jesus had a very different set of priorities and way of thinking and viewing life from those around Him. He still, however, was in very close contact with them — unbelievers included, living where they lived, developing relationships with them. We are to do the same. If we operate as if we are on another planet, having very limited contact with those who are outside of the family of God, how do we think we will reach them for Christ? How do we think they will hear the good news if we do not go and truly live among them?

Jesus did not pray that we would be taken out of the world but that we would be different from the world (John 17:15,16). He calls on us who are saved to live in the world, among those who are lost, getting to know them and letting them get to know us so that, by His grace, they can get to know Him.

Doing things differently

A recent *Christianity Today* article was titled "Innovation Remains Billy Graham's Specialty." A report was given of the October crusade in Sacramento along with some of the unique things that were done with audio and video technology as well as in the areas of music and drama. The crusade was not done the same way Graham has always done them.

It would be natural to expect Billy Graham to keep doing things the same way he always has. He doesn't. The question he asks is not what worked in 1950. The question is, what is the best means of presenting the gospel today?

It is vital that we respect those who have gone before and learn from their experiences and how God led them. It is also important to ask how God is leading us today. We must be on guard that we do not love and honor the method more than the Messiah.

The message does not and must not change. Jesus, crucified and risen again is what people have always and will always need to hear. The method of presenting the message will and, sometimes, should change. Let us seek God's guidance as to the best means possible for presenting today and every day the best message the world will ever hear.

Lutheran and evangelistic?

Can a person be a Lutheran and evangelistic. Most definitely! One who is truly Lutheran will also be truly evangelistic. Martin Luther protested against the church of his day because the good news of righteousness by grace through faith was not being proclaimed; evangelism was not going on.

It is good to be in an association of congregations that is Lutheran and evangelistic. We believe people are lost without Jesus and in need of salvation. We believe law and gospel need to be proclaimed, the

means of grace need to be administered. We believe the world needs to hear that Christ died on the cross for our sin and rose again from the dead. We believe it is vital that each person have a living, growing, personal relationship with Jesus as Lord and Savior.

It is possible to be Lutheran and evangelistic. It is not a reason for pride but for praise of God. It is not because we are good but because God is good. Without Him we are nothing of great value. With Him we are more than we ever imagined possible.

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

Second-Class

Belated holiday greetings from the ARC Staff (back l. to r.): Wendy Westlake and Jolene Dietsche; (front l. to r.) Gene Vukonich, Tammy Vukonich holding Natalia, Laura Westlake, Camp Director Eric Westlake, Matthew Westlake, Marry Anderson, Nicole Westlake, Jerry Anderson, David Anderson, Mary Howar, Carol Dietsche, Bob Dietsche and (not pictured) Irene Bantz.



Pastors, note the first event is the 1996 Pastor's Conference. Dr. Waldo Werning will be speaking at the conference scheduled for January 16-18. The cost for the two-day event is \$48.

Greetings from the ARC

and welcome to our new newsletter! During this year, we'll be coming to you quarterly from the back page of *The Lutheran Ambassador*. We hope to better inform you of upcoming AFLC events.

More information concerning these retreats will be sent to each church. Or you may call the ARC at (715) 294-2877.

Attention all couples! Be sure to set January 26 to 28 aside for the 1996 Couple's Retreat. Speakers for this weekend will be Rev. Mike and Jeannie Brandt, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The cost per couple is \$85. Arrange now for a baby sitter, pet sitter, and time off from work. Come and enjoy a relaxing time together.

February is Youth Month at the ARC! Our first retreat is Senior High Sno Daze, February 2-4. The speaker for the weekend is Bob Halverson from Emmaus Lutheran in Bloomington, MN. Junior Sno Daze follows two weeks later on February 16-18. Rev. Tonnes Pollestad will be sharing his love for Jesus to the retreat-goers that weekend. Each of these retreats can be yours for the low price of just \$48 per person. Be sure to bring plenty of warm clothes, long underwear, a huge appetite and come with plenty of sleep because we plan to wear you out on our tube chute and broom ball court. Be forewarned!

Our Men's Retreat will be held March 8-10. The former director of AFLC Home Missions, Rev. Elden Nelson, Willmar, Minnesota, will be the speaker for this time of spiritual renewal and male bonding. Promise Keepers is coming soon and this weekend will be an appetizer for that spiritual feast. Come to the ARC for only \$48 per person.