AMBASSADOR

January 9, 2001

-I-will make you fishers of men.

.— Jesus

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They need Jesus p. 8

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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AN ENCOURAGING WORD

Starting fresh

t's that time of the year again when people vow to make certain changes in their lives to enhance themselves. They want 2001 to be an improvement over 2000. They've given some thought as to how to achieve this but they also need to realize they are working with the same material — themselves. When the material remains the same and the worker on the material remains the same, how much significant change can occur?

The story is told of a young boy who was sick for many days. When he returned to school he was inundated by all the work he had to catch up on. He was defeated at the start. His grades began to drop and his enthusiasm for learning waned. His astute teacher recognized the problem and took immediate action. She called him to her desk, and told him what he desperately needed to hear. She was waving the make-up work and allowing him to concentrate on the work the class was currently doing. The young boy's zest for learning returned and his countenance brightened.

This story reminds me of what Jesus has done for each and every believer. Just as the young boy in the story needed release from the burden that weighed him down, so we as believers need release from our burden of sin. Let's allow the Scriptures to describe this release Jesus won for us at Calvary:

Isaiah 1:18 — "Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be as wool."

Psalm 103:12 — "As far as the East is from the West, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

Romans 8:1 — "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those

who are in Christ Jesus."

These verses describe several things about the release Jesus purchased for us. First, it was necessary because we bore not only the stain of sin in our lives, but its consequence as well. Romans 6:23a says, "The wages of sin is death." Our self-inflicted burden had not only alienated us from God; it had put us under His wrath and condemnation. We needed a release, and we were powerless to do anything about it ourselves.

But Jesus was not powerless. He not only took our sin away by paying sin's penalty, but by so doing also removed God's wrath and condemnation from us. Talk about a fresh start, this is truly it! What is even more amazing is that my sin has been removed from God's memory bank. I've got a clean slate. I look like a model citizen. Yet, I cannot take the credit. Jesus has done it for me.

That is truly the secret to change or starting fresh in the Christian life. It begins at the cross. Brother or sister, are you looking for a brighter year in 2001? Begin it where your Christian life itself began—at the cross. The great Master Designer, the gracious and merciful Savior has a perfect plan for you (Jeremiah 29:11). Let Him work it in you and through you.

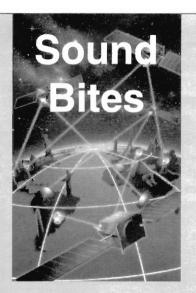


 Pastor Edward Strom Emmanuel and Hauge Lutheran Parish Kenyon, Minnesota

We were made to fulfill the Great Commission, I believe evangelizing is the primary reason God left us here on the

planet. We can spend all of eternity worshiping God, learning from his Word, praying to him, and encouraging and edifying one another. But only here and now do we have the chance to reach lost people for Christ. What a privilege and what an adventure!

-Mark Mittelberg



God has chosen to do His work in the world through specific local churches. Therefore, when God commissions us to take the gospel to the ends of the earth, He is speaking to individual disciples in their connection with other disciples in the local church. If the church is going to be mobilized for evangelism, it is the local church that must be aroused.

-Larry Reesor

Many people have a narrow view of evangelism. Some think it refers

> solely to gospel crusades or church calling programs or approaching total strangers with questions about their eternal destiny. Evangelism is wider than all

these. It includes any and all methods Christians use to invite people to repent of their sins and believe the good news of what Christ has done to redeem them.

-Philip Bickel

To effectively communicate the Christian message is not to follow a set of rules or be motivated by guilt. It is primarily a way of life, and it is at this point that all effective witnessing for Christ needs to commence.

-Dick Innes

When you preach, do not be stingy with the Gospel; bring its consolations to all, even to the greatest sinners. When they are terrified by the wrath of God and hell, they are fully prepared to receive the Gospel. -C. F. W. Walther



If we are to influence culture, we must make the case for Christianity not only by our words, but also by our actions. We must live the truth of what we believe.

- Charles Colson



A growing ministry aging



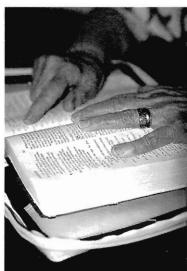
-Pastor Lynn Kinneberg New Luther Valley Lutheran McVille, North Dakota

urrent census figures indicate that Nelson County ranks among the highest of North Dakota counties in the areas of population decline and average age per capita. Evidence supporting such statistics can be observed in the declining number of students in our school system, the smaller number of businesses now lining Main Street, and the fewer number of occupied farmsteads encircling the community. But nowhere is the declining and aging population more visually discerned than in the Sunday morning worship services of New Luther Valley Lutheran Church in McVille.

From the pulpit, the pastor notices that: (1) the Sunday school consists of 10 students; (2) the young couples' group consists of two couples under the age of forty; (the pastor is now excluded) and (3) Lord willing, next fall, the youth group will have its first member in five years!

The challenge has been for the congregation to prayerfully develop opportunities in outreach that would be unique to our own community - and to do so with limited resources. A weekly after-school program (All-Stars Kids' Club) ministers to over twenty children from outside of the congregation. A support group (Mending Hearts) co-sponsored by our sister church, Bethany Free Lutheran of Binford, ministers to widows and widowers through a monthly Bible study and through the distribution of a newsletter and devotional materials. A television ministry was established whereby our Sunday morning worship services are aired twice a week over the local cable channel. Commercial broadcast rights to a Billy Graham film were also recently purchased by the congregation and will be aired over the same channel later this winter.

Yet the ministry which received the least amount of initial "fanfare" and yet has resulted in some great rewards has been a Monday afternoon Bible study conducted at the Nelson County Health Systems Care Center. With the vision and gentle urging of a member of the congregation, who also serves as an assistant activities director at the care center, I began meeting three years ago with a group of four residents for a halfhour Bible study. Shortly thereafter the group began to grow. Currently, an average of twenty residents, with as many as twenty-six, are in attendance at any given time.



While many ministries are geared toward drawing people into a congregation, the very fact that we are meeting in a nursing home reminds us that we are seeking to draw people into the

Church and into the Word. It is the impact that such a seemingly "insignificant" ministry has had upon the nursing home that is most

Expecting God will work

xperience a miracle every Sunday." Ken Houts used these words as a chapter heading in his book, "You are a Miracle Waiting to Happen."

We have recently experienced a miracle every Sunday in our small but exciting church here in southern California. God says, "the Gospel is the power of God ... after the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you shall receive power to witness for him." These promises from God's Word are exciting because He makes things happen as we are willing servants.

In our relatively new congregation in Oceanside, we have been praying that there will be a two-fold miracle taking place every Sunday. Our first prayer is that our members will become more con-



in an community

exciting. Reflecting on the past year alone, some of the benefits and blessings include:

Among the residents

We have seen spiritual growth and development among the residents of the care center. One of the things that is emphasized in our group is the role that the residents have in supporting the work of the Kingdom through their prayers. Also, the personal contact has caused many of them to become faithful listeners to our television services.

Requests have been made for me to be present at the bedside of many who are dying and have no pastor available, locally or at all. On other occasions, in the absence of a pastor (another struggle faced by congregations in a rural community), opportunities to conduct funeral services have arisen. The only tie has been that, "those weekly Bible studies meant so much to Mom."

Among the families and friends

It is quite common for the residents of the care center to invite visiting families and

friends to join them for the short time of Bible study. On more than one occasion, a resident has walked away from visitors or asked them to leave so as not to miss the Bible study!

Doors are opened whereby family members feel more comfortable visiting with me on the street. A contact point for striking up a conversation has naturally been made. Family members themselves will often inform me, "Dad was just transferred to the hospital. Could you stop in and see him?" Praying with the family at that moment and then following up on such a request widens the door of opportunity to share the gospel.

Among the staff

The staff at the care center is among some of the most caring people I have ever met, and yet their work is often under-appreciated. An opportunity to share a little humor, a compliment, and a word from the Word can make all the difference in their day.

Despite the fact that the greater amount of land around the community is no longer being farmed due to CRP (Crop Reduction Program) and the recent years of flooding, the congregation still fully understands Jesus' own words, "Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest" (John 4:35).



Practical ways a congregation is seeking to evangelize families

- Florence Hiepler, Community Lutheran Church Oceanside, California

cerned and animated over every new person entering our doors. Second, we pray that new attendees will develop new valuable relationships. If these two goals become a reality, we will see an increase in repeat visitors and eventually new members who hunger and thirst after Christ. We are praying that visitors will return at a rate of fifty percent rather than the usual ten percent.

Most people who seek a new church have a personal need. We are teaching ourselves to be friendly greeters and helpful friends to all visitors. We can do this by introducing ourselves and asking if this is the first time they have attended our church. Follow up with an important question, "Do you have a need and would you like for us to pray for that need?" This conversation can develop into a good relationship. A plate of cookies will be brought to their home on Monday and this will be followed by a call on Saturday

asking them to sit with you in church. At that time we plan to introduce them to four other church people. It is at that time we discover other needs. We may be the instruments in God's hand to pray for that need and fulfill it.

We are setting new goals for Vision 2001. Vision produces faith, faith produces passion, and passion produces commitment. Someone said that training produces competence and competence produces confidence; confidence produces success.

We, as a committee in our congregation, meet two times a month after the Wednesday prayer meeting and Bible study. We are developing more skills in the area of being "care givers" to new attendees. And yes, the "gospel is the power of God" as five families joined our church the past two Sundays. We're expecting a miracle every Sunday as we minister to new attendees and their needs.

The unseen work



the gift of serving

e are His hands, we are His feet, we are His people, children of the Lord. We share the hope, we share the dream, believers in Jesus, children of the King!" We sing this chorus quite often at our church. When we have experienced forgiveness through the blood of Christ, then we know the real meaning of these words as we sing them from our hearts. God in His wisdom has given to each Christian an ability, a talent, a spiritual gift. In I Corinthians 12:17-18 it says, "If the whole body were bearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him."

If every believer exercised his God-given gift, there would be no gaps in the Lord's work. Jesus said that one who gives a cup of cold water in His name will not lose his reward (Mark 9:41). But sometimes our fallen nature takes over and glory is given to some people and not to others. Who notices the women who have the gift of "helps?" They go to the sick, the bereaved, or the needy and help them, unseen by most.

Elisabeth Elliot told of how she read the story of Jesus' feeding of the five thousand. The disciples could find only five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus took them and blessed them and broke them before He gave them out. A chapel speaker, missionary to Peru had said, "If my life is broken when given to Jesus, it is because pieces will feed a multitude, while a loaf will satisfy only a little lad."

It is a challenge to live our lives as sacrifices to God As a sacrificial act of worship, God expects us to be holy and pleasing to Him (Romans 12:1-2). We first need to pray much and then rely upon God's Holy Spirit to guide

- Jan Galland

and direct us as to whom we are to speak.

I think of the ladies I have listened to over the years. They have poured out their hearts in anguish over one thing or another. It is not easy to be a good listener and really listen with my heart. This has given the opportunity to pray with those women. Prayers were answered. There was rejoicing. Sometimes prayers were answered in ways that there was cause for more tears. I was

During the long winter days we can invite others to join us for a meal. Some are handicapped mentally or physically. Are we watching for these? Is there someone in your life who has a great need? Call that person today and say you are available to help, that you are "on call" twenty-four hours a day. Go out of your way to reinforce your sincerity. What about an encouraging card or telephone call? What about being with the one

Evangelism

busy with my family, but I needed to take the time! Indeed, I was blessed.

Our Women's Missionary Federation Bible studies are so wonderful and rich in the things of God. I have had a burden for the working women and younger women who cannot attend our WMF meetings. We have had morning Bible studies at my home. This has been a blessing to me as well as to the ladies. We share from God's Word around a cup of coffee. We have prayed together. Now we are involved with new home Bible studies. This too has been a real blessing. We have shared meals together, studied God's Word and prayed together. One lady just recently shared a burden. We prayed about it. As she was getting things ready for coffee time I just felt led to go and put my arms around her and give her a hug. I told her I would continue to pray. She said, "Thanks! I needed that." God answered. The problem was taken care of shortly thereafter.

I especially enjoy discipling women on a one-on-one basis. In one particular situation we studied God's Word, prayed and cried together. I was blessed perhaps more than she was.

Bernice, from our church, found out she had cancer. I have gone with her to chemotherapy many times. Sometimes when I could not, others helped out. My husband and/or I take her to the cancer support twice a month. We have been blessed. It has been good for Les and me as well, as we have been able to share about our daughter who has had cancer.

We have helped as a family to clean someone's home. This lifted one lady's spirits who was depressed. Another lady did not have the physical ability to clean her home and appreciated the assistance. These opportunities are missed by so many!

at the hospital who is ill? How about bringing a dish of food to someone to encourage them if there is a need? The appreciation and love given back is truly a blessing. Perhaps these acts of kindness will bring someone to know Jesus or strengthen their faith. It is worth it all! There are many arms needed in the ministry of evangelism.

"Let the Lord have His way in your life every day, there's no rest, there's no peace until the Lord has His way. Place your life in His hand, rest secure in His plan. Let the Lord have His way." This is a wonderful prayer to pray. 1

While there's time



My prayer is that God the Father will continue to use us until the end. and then we will hear Him sav: "Well done thou faithful servant, enter into the kingdom I have prepared for you."

- the late Pastor Verle Dean in his 1987 report to the AFLC annual conference as chairman of the commission on evangelism.

If only they knew how hard it is for me.
I'm turning 16, the world I begin to see.
My friends began to change,
 right before my eyes,
And now they seem to laugh,
 and tell all sorts of lies ...
I've watched a few just fade away,
 with drugs and alcohol;
And many more have given up,
 too many to recall ...

-Tony Overman wrote these lines in "Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul"

They

Danny Chavez
 Youth Worker
 St. Olaf Lutheran
 Montgomery, Illinois

he world has a firm grasp on America's youth. The world tempts them to serve the things that do not last, such as popularity, alcohol, drugs and pleasure. The Bible says that Satan only comes to steal, kill, and destroy, and that is exactly what he is doing with our youth. The other day I turned to the crime page in our local paper. There were twenty-two crimes within a span of 24 hours. Most of them were committed by people under the age of 25. The list included everything from drug use, drug distribution, drunk driving, vandalism, assault (one pregnant woman was assaulted for not opening the door fast enough for her husband), and burglary.

Why do we need youth ministry? The answer is obvious. The Bible says in Romans

They had something I wanted

God used AFLBS students on choir tour

rowing up in a small, rural town in Saskatchewan offered the opportunity to be with the same friends from kindergarten to graduation. I could play any sport or be involved in any social or school activity I wanted. I had a small home church with many caring people who knew everything about me and my family; sometimes more than I even knew about myself. But along with the positive aspects of living in a small community, there can be a negative side. There were very few Christian young people my age. I longed for popularity and approval and being a Christian just wasn't the thing to do to maintain that stature. So I kept a neutral Christian stand throughout my school years.

My first memories of the Association Free Lutheran Bible School students are vague. As a child, I anticipated their arrival at Bible camps and clung to them as much as possible. In my sophomore year, the AFLBS Choral Club sang at our church. This was a first for our community and I was very excited.

After the program the students ate dinner with us and I fell in love with them. They were all on fire for Christ and showed this in their actions, words and smiles. The thing that touched me the most was when the students at our house asked if they could share some devotions with us that evening after we arrived home. I remember wanting to know what they knew and wondering how they came to be like that. I decided after the choir had left that I was going to Bible school because I wanted the joy that those students had. I wanted to know more about God's Word.

I wasn't the only one affected by their stay in our community. The choir's visit was an encouragement to everyone in our church. It was great to see the spiritual maturity the students had reached and to watch them be so on fire and willing to reach out and share what Christ was doing in their lives.

It is now five years later and I too, have experienced Bible school. I never imagined then that I would have the opportunity to share Christ with others the way He was

need Jesus

10:14-15, "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things."

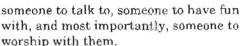
The Bible calls ordinary people like you and me to be witnesses in this sin-filled world. We are to go and tell about the love Christ has to offer. Youth ministry is not only done at churches at designated times, but it is done by believers at all times. Perhaps it is simply asking a teen how they are doing and actually caring about their response. Sharing the love of Christ and also showing it can mean showing up at one of their sports events, or taking a kid out to lunch.

Look at some of the responses of teens in our youth group when asked what is youth ministry and why they need it. Jacob Wittman said, "Youth ministry provides

- Shelley Richman Bethel Lutheran Elbow, Saskatchewan

shared with me. At Bible school there were many ministry opportunities including a choir tour last spring to share and encourage other believers just as it had been done in our congregation.

This past summer God also opened the doors for me to go on a mission trip to Russia to put into practice the things I had learned at school. It was awesome to experience Christ's work and movement in another culture. The people were so receptive. Opportunities to share were on every street corner, marketplace, and in every flat. Upon returning from Russia I was called to be on a summer team teaching VBS to children. Now one decade later, I have a different perspective on camps. Young children were clinging to me - all because of Christ's love. The change Jesus has done in my life is indescribable. Now in everything, I strive to see God's perspective. God has great plans for the next generation of believers and I am honored that Christ would use me to help further His work. STE youth a comfortable environment to show the light of Jesus." Jake Pessina added, "I see it as people teaching and spending time with kids everywhere, all the while they help inspire a closer relationship with the Lord." Youth need the experience shared by adults, as Stacey Simonson sees it. "Therefore we can learn how to walk with God in the best way we can." Teens actually want someone to look up to, someone to teach them,



"I think that youth ministry is all about bringing the youth of the nation to Christ," says Brandon Pessina, another teen at St. Olaf Lutheran. Teens are ready to accept Christ. They need someone to go out and proclaim the gospel. Jesus said, "Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest" (John 4:35). He also said, "The harvest is truly plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:37, 38).

I have found that youth ministry is truly rewarding. What could be better than talking about Jesus and having fun with kids? It gives me an opportunity to serve not only Christ, my Savior, but also other people. In this world it is easy to be self-centered. But when I surrender my life to Jesus and follow the plan and work He lays out for me, I gain a whole new outlook on life and the things of this world. Christ gives my life purpose and with that comes joy that doesn't fade.



What's happening at Bethel?

Giving thanks for what God is doing in a local congregation

-Pastor Lloyd Quanbeck Bethel Free Lutheran Minot. North Dahota

y congregation doesn't have a great new outreach program to tell about, but God is doing something this year at Bethel. Worship attendance hasn't doubled or anything dramatic like that, but it has increased and there are several new faces. It's fascinating for me to try to find out where they are coming from and how they got here.

There's the grandmother on her third round with cancer. She had been invited by her son's family for years to come with them to church, but hadn't been ready for that yet. This year every time she's invited she comes.

There's the family that has brought their children to Kids' Club for a couple of years, the result of the invitation of a daycare mom from Bethel. This year the oldest daughter reached seventh grade. They enrolled her in our confirmation class, and that means taking sermon notes. So the whole family comes for the worship services now.

There are the two young boys who are neighbors to one of Bethel's elders. He had felt the need to reach out to them for awhile. This year when he mentioned Sunday school they jumped at the opportunity. So each week he makes an extra trip to bring them home after Sunday school. Maybe next year they will come to worship or youth group, but not yet. One thing at a time in ministering to the unchurched.

There's the family that just showed up one week last month with plans to plug in. After years of no church involvement, suddenly this year in the middle of the year the mother came to the conclusion that their family was missing something. The dad said he was willing to go with, and the daughter and son are being plugged into Sunday school and confirmation classes, with some

prodding from mom. The kids were excited to receive their own Bibles as a gift from Bethel. Now the mother is working on getting her sister and niece involved too!

There's the young couple with two children who moved to town this fall. Her former pastor notified me of her AFLC roots, and asked me to keep my eye out for them. We baptized their baby a couple of months ago and now they come often to worship with us.

There are two retired couples who have recently moved to this end of town, both with Lutheran Free Church roots. They are trying to sort out their denominational affiliation because of recent developments in their synod. The other Sunday one said to me, "I agreed with the first merger, but not the second." He is missing the strong Bible emphasis of his childhood church. Maybe we can be the place that encourages him that there still are Lutherans who stand on the Word of God!

I can't forget to mention our youth group. Our new youth ministry director has invited youth not connected to any church to come. Several come regularly. A recent lock-in had about half of its participants come from nonmember families. The youth room is starting to get small for our weekly meetings.

Bethel's mission statement is simply "Building Followers of Jesus Christ." It is a joy to be the pastor of a congregation that is actively engaged in that mission. The new faces are not the result of some big outreach program this fall, they are just the natural product of Christians living out their concern for the people around them. We know that God is at work among us. What's happening at Bethel is beyond what any one of us could produce. It is the hand of God in our lives and our congregation.

I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart; I will tell of all Thy wonders. I will be glad and exult in Thee; I will sing praise to Thy name, O Most High.

- Psalm 9:1-2

5

On the shelf or on the altar?

he Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy from his prison cell encouraging him to: "preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching: ... they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings and turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths. As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (II Timothy 4:2-5).

What Paul wrote to young Timothy are good Holy Spirit instructions for every Christian. Paul himself was a living example of his own exhortation. After his third missionary journey, and being made a prisoner in Jerusalem, Paul was ultimately sent to Rome. He spent probably about five years in prison, but he continued to preach the Word, to be urgent about the need of salvation, when it was convenient (in season) or when it was not convenient (out of season). Philippians 1:12 tells us the guards around him were converted. Paul was in every way he could, witnessing to both small and great.

So what's my point? Simply this: Paul could have sat back and said, "I'm tired. They've got me in jail now and I'd better not get into any more arguments and trouble.

I'll just take it easy." But that is not what happened. His "forced retirement" in prison was turned into a time of letter writing and personal witnessing. Our prison epistles are a marvel of faith, encouragement and instruction to the churches and pastors. Truly Paul was not going to out himself on the shelf for Christian service, but rather he put his life on the altar to be used of God to the very end.

Many of you who read this are like me, senior citizens. We, in the eyes of the world have a right to retire, to take it easy and not get involved. But our local church still needs us. The AFLC Home and World Missions still need us. The lost world still needs us.

We now have time to dedicate to God's work and perhaps enough income to help support ourselves, plus years of experience to fall back on. So in spite of having to remember our pills, move slower and shorten our days, there's work for us to do. Friend, don't put yourself on the shelf or on the couch. Stay on the firing line, put your life on the altar for Christ to use in any way He can.

For the past seven years Ruby and I have been going back to our

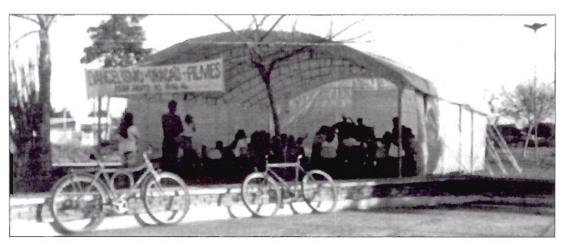


 Pastor John Abel Hitterdal, Minnesota

Brazil mission field for about four months each year. This last year was one of the most fruitful in our tent evangelism campaigns and ministry at Bible camps. Cooperating with the young people has made it possible to do this ministry as the teams set the tent up, canvas the neighborhood, and provide the equipment and music. What a joy to work together and watch the Lord work. One entirely new church was begun in a city on the border with Paraguay.

I notice the word "retire" is not in the Bible. Abraham, Moses, Peter, Paul and others just kept living for God as best they could until He called them home. Maybe your physical health does not allow you to get out-and-about as much; so be it. Leave that with God. However, you can pray - and perhaps write letters, send e-mail, or give. Whatever your circumstances, never place yourself on the shelf, but always be on the altar. May God continue to bless us as we say with Isaiah of old: "Here am I Lord. send me."





The "Evangelism Tent" will again be used in Brazil during the first four months of 2001.



(Last in a series of reflections on the international evangelism conference held in Amsterdam last August.

August 3

This day's focus was the Holy Spirit and the Evangelist. The main speakers were Dr. Bill and Vonette Bright, Dr. Paul Finkenbinder, and Franklin Graham. The latter's message was the compassion Jesus had and has for every person. We were challenged to have the same compassion as Christ demonstrated. He cited the greatest act of compassion recorded in history — Jesus' death on the cross. The Brights shared on the work of the Holy Spirit in every part of our lives.

The afternoon workshop I attended was "How Your Family Can Grow Spiritually in the Midst of Itinerant Ministry." The presenter was Josh McDowell who made two statements that shallenged me: "Rules without relationships leads to rebellion. Truth without relationships leads to rebellion." The Holy Spirit has helped me realize that there needs to be a mixture of rules and love in every area of my life.

August 4

The theme for the day was "The Practical Life Matters for the Evangelist." Morning speakers were Dr. Stephen Olford and Dennis Rainey. Dr. Philemon Choi Yuen-wan spoke in the evening session. He talked

about the necessity to create space for intimacy with God. If we do not carve out the space we will die spiritually. There is a necessity to have boundary lines in our daily lives. He encouraged accountability to God through a brother in Jesus to guard against falling into sexual sin and/or the sin of pride. These temptations come often when God is using us as His servant and mouthpiece. He warned that the new century would be one of rage and addictions, a natural outcome of living our lives separated from Christ. Too often the truth and love of Jesus is not being proclaimed and people remain lost and wondering.

August 5

The emphasis this day was that an evangelist was not in competition with the local church, but was a servant of the local church. It is essential in today's society that the church along with those who preach Christ are seen as one. Atoine Rutayisire, Dr. Paul Negrut, and Dr. Luis Palau were the featured speakers.

Dr. Palau said churches must not become selfish and refuse to work with evangelists because the kingdom of God is hurt. The harvest is left out to rot or freeze and the

Evangelism

e gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evange-

lists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 3:11-13, NASB).

The fall of 2000 has been a very exciting time. The Commission On Evangelism (COE) has had the opportunity to visit with a number of church councils concerning evangelism. We sense the urgent need "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service."

It has been exciting to see the eyes

only one who wins is Satan. Mr. Rutayisire encouraged the evangelists to preach and live the cross or people will not listen. If they do not see the cross lived out, then those you call to the cross will just laugh inside and walk away from the cross. He said, "if we do not live the cross, we have no right to call ourselves Christians."

August 6

The closing day featured "The Evangelist and the World." Rev. Sami Dagher spoke of the hostility to be expected when a faithful stand for Christ is taken. The closer we come to the end of the world, the more hostile it will be to the believer.

The evening session was one of the highlights for me. We closed with explosive singing and tears of joy and sadness. The focus on the cross created a unity I have never witnessed before. Imagine being in a room with more than 11,000 Christians and sharing the Lord's Supper together. The majority were members of another race and yet I felt at one with them. The presence of the

in the 21st Century

of council members and their wives light up as they begin to understand that there are tools available that will help them do the work of evangelism in their own homes and communities. Evangelism is a lifestyle, not an "evangelistic event" for one week a year. Evangelism is prayer, and planning for whom to pray. Evangelism is being available when an unsaved friend needs ministry. These are the things that will open the unsaved to the gospel.

Are you too busy to pray? Are you too busy to minister to the lost? If you are, you're not living the Christian life as it is mapped out in Acts 2. Our lives were meant to be lived with a focus on Jesus. When you pray that God will "enlarge your territory" (I Chronicles 4:10), you are asking Him to make you useable in His Kingdom work. When we pray for God's leading, He gives us the

Lord was obvious in a mighty way.

During the service, an announcement was made that church groups and other ministers had committed to pray for and bring the gospel to every people group on the earth. There had been some 230 groups that had not been targeted before. There was an expectation that this was ushering the soon return of Christ and made each delegate sense the urgency of sharing the love of Jesus and the need to respond to the call of Jesus.

The days at Amsterdam 2000 changed my life. I will be digesting what I heard at that international conference for as long as I live. I urge each reader to share Jesus' love 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year until He returns. Jesus is calling to all who will hear, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

1

 Pastor James Rasmussen AFLC Evangelist/Director of Evangelism

time to handle all His work.

The work of reaching the lost is very possible if we live our lives totally yielded to God's priorities. It has been a joy for me to see people realize this. For many of us, the hardest thing in the world is to say "no" to some of the demands made on our time. How important it is to spend our time first with Jesus, then with our families. Please remember - evangelism is not something you do at a certain time. It is something you do every minute of every day.

This year, some districts will host events called "Fishing in the 21st Century." These events will feature six two-hour workshops, focusing on practical tools for reaching the lost. At the time of this writing, three such events are scheduled:

Illinois District - March 10 at Faith Lutheran, Ottawa, Illinois; Pacific Northwest District -



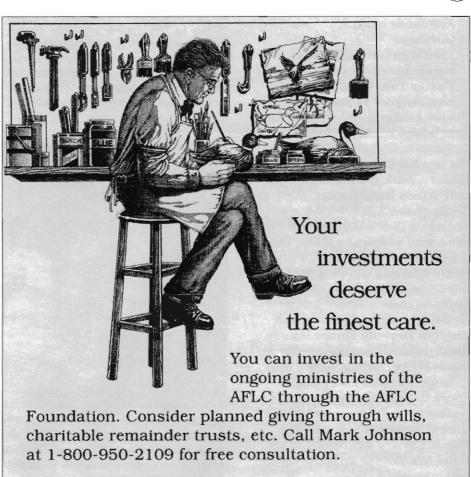
- Pastor Jim Rasmussen AFLC Director of Evangelism Minneapolis, Minnesota

April 26 at Our Redeemer Lutheran, Kirkland, Washington;

Minneapolis District - October 6 at Emmaus Lutheran, Bloomington, Minnesota.

It is a joy to serve you as Director of Evangelism. Please let me, or any COE member, know how we can serve you better. We would love to be able to visit every congregation of the AFLC to share the work of evangelism and our dreams and needs for the future of this work.





AFLC MISSIONS

Pastor David and Sarah Nelson — The Nelson family concluded their ministry in Campo Mourao, Brazil with SEMEAR (the Bible School and Seminary of the AFLC of Brazil) graduation on November 25, 2000. They wrote, "We leave with many fond memories, as well as wishes for God's continued blessing on the congregations, schools and social ministries of the Free Lutheran Church of Brazil."

Plane tickets were stamped on December 4, for their new destination in Lisbon, Portugal. The Nelsons are now living in a downtown apartment near the Savior's Lutheran Church. They request prayer as they begin their ministry with the Lutheran Church of Portugal (which is the AFLC in a nation that has no other Lutheran denominations), and that they would fearlessly proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Their new address is: David and Sarah Nelson Avenida da Igreja 7, 1° Andar Esq. (Alvalade) 17000-230 Lisboa, Portugal e-mail: davidnsarah@aillb.com.br

Pastor Tom Olson, Naknek, Alaska, resigned as pastor of Naknek Lutheran Church and has accepted the call to St. Paul's Lutheran in Cloquet, Minnesota. His new ministry began the first of January, 2001. His new address is: 1301 Wilson Ave., Cloquet, MN 55720; phone: 218-879-5956 (church), 218-879-8093 (home). The new e-mail address for Pastor Olson is pastortomolson@aol.com, Pastor Henry Mohagen w serving the two congregations in Naknek and South Naknek.

Missionaries Connely and Carolyn Dryrud, Campo Mourão, Brazil, returned to the United States before Christmas for a brief furlough. Pastor Dyrud plans to return to Brazil for their annual conference in February and for the start of the new school year in March. Carolyn will remain in the states to await the arrival of their first grandchild.



Missionaries Todd and Barb Schierkolk, Rachel, Megan and Kirstie are preparing to leave for Aguascalientes, Mexico, at the end of January, 2001. Later the Schierkolks plan to join Missionaries Dan and Debbie Giles in their new work in Jerez, Zacatecas, Mexico. The four Ministry Training Institute students, for whom he has served as interim director during the fall semester, also left in January for their six-month internship in Brazil.

Missionaries Paul and Becky Abel and family arrived in Curitiba, Brazil, on December 24, just in time to celebrate the Christmas Eve reunion at their church. The Abels had been on furlough since May 2000.

Missionaries Darwin and MaryAnn Jackson, Puebla, Mexico have adopted Anna Grace, born on November 15, 2000. The Jacksons are missionaries on loan to the World Mission Prayer League.

Missionaries Jonathan and Tamba Abel, Campo Grande, Brazil, are anticipating developing the property next to their church. The property was purchased last fall. They continue to praise God for the evangelistic meetings held last fall with four Bible school students and Pastor Iran. Missionary Abel wrote, "Decisions were made and we have some new people attending church now."

Pastor Eugene Enderlein is traveling with FLS Dean Francis Monseth and AFLBS senior Chad Jankord, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to India and Sri Lanka during the month of January. Dr. Monseth is teaching the evangelists and Bible women while Chad travels with Dr. Anand Kumar and his clinics.



Durant, Oklahoma— Faith Lutheran Church received a boost in their construction project from a joint effort of FLAPS and Partners in Mission Outreach. During the week of November 27 through December 2, thirteen people from four states travelled to southern Oklahoma to assist the home mission congregation. Pictured are some of the workers.

Bringing the message of joy to nursing homes

e just came through the wonderful Christmas season and perhaps you too sang the medieval Latin carol: "Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; Give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today." What a blessed message at Christmas and all other times of the year. There isn't a day of our lives that we do not need to rejoice in our Savior and His birth. Living to rejoice in our Savior is the theme and purpose of the nursing home chaplain.

It is my privilege to share this good news in our area nursing home. One of my helps in ministry to the residents is the hymnal with so many truths of Scripture contained in it. These familiar hymns are there for a blessing. As they are shared and sung, God uses them to lift the hearts and spirits of people that they might realize how precious is our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Whether you are a visitor to a nursing home or a resident, the word "rejoice" can have a very special meaning for you. Possibly the circumstances of the past have not been the kind that would cause you to rejoice. Nevertheless, it is possible to lift your eyes off of the difficulties and focus them on the Savior. The words of "In the Cross of Christ I Glory" are real:

When the woes of life o'ertake me, Hopes deceive, and fears annoy, Never shall the cross forsake me; Lo! It glows with peace and joy.

As a chaplain, I have discovered that there are many different people who will hear and respond to the message. There are some who will immediately know just what I am talking about and await the next worship service. These same people will tell me their personal joys of family and the times when God's Word had great meaning for them. We share the memories of worship and I especially enjoy those Christmas stories when attending services meant walking a distance through the snow in cold and windy weather. I have seen many old photos and other remembrances of those times. It all brings about a sharing of God's Word and a rejoicing in the memories and our Savior who still lives and reigns.

Perhaps no other time in the year is it more obvious when visiting the friends who have had little knowledge and understanding of God's grace. Even their room shows a bleakness and little evidence of the

Pastor Craig Benson, Radcliffe, Iowa attended the four-week Orientation Chaplain Course at the USAF Chaplain Service Institute, in Montgomery, Alabama from October 16 to November 9, 2000. The course introduced civilian clergy members to the Air Force and assisted them in applying their professional skills as a member of the chaplain service. Chaplain Benson received the Commander's Award in recognition as the top graduate of his class. The award is based upon superior academic achievement and high standards of leadership, teamwork and character.

Pastor Benson serves Salem Lutheran Church and is a chaplain in the Air Force Reserves, presently training at Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha, Nebraska. "I have served my country as a combat aviator and now I can apply my ministry skills in the spiritual care of the men and women in the Air Force. I want to thank my family and church for supporting me as I represent them in the U.S. Air Force." Pastor Benson said.

Correction: In the article "I am sending you," by Pastor Tim Skramstad in the November 21, 2000 issue of The Lutheran Ambassador, Pastor Lynn Wilson, Roslyn, South Dakota was omitted in the list of chaplains. He is an Army Reserve Chaplain in the Individual Mobilization Augmentee program.

- Pastor Harvey Jackson Zoar Lutheran Hatton, North Dakota

joys of Christmas. There may be many reasons why the message of Christmas has had little significance in the lives of these people. I can only pray for God to give me the message and to show me the right attitude to share when I enter those rooms.

God gives me love for them. After visiting for a while, I can speak of life and its meaning. The message of the birth of Jesus who came to earth to save us for eternity is the greatest gift I can share. I can speak of the past with them and Christmas gifts that faded away, but how the gift of the love and life in Jesus is forever. The more I can share life - past, present, and future — with these friends, the more we can talk together of our Lord Jesus.

Another Christmas is past. I have seen the love of Jesus radiate through song and tired eyes brighten at the sound of familiar words and music. How valuable it is to be a friend with the resident's family and with those who work in the home! The ministry of the Christmas message continues each day after the decorations are tucked away for another year. We continue to celebrate the birth of Jesus and His promise of coming again. Christmas memories become new and living in the heart of one who calls on Him, "Whose name would be called Jesus, for he would save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

As long as there are people in residences such as nursing homes, there will be a need for chaplains. The chaplain fills an important part in the lives of many and is an aid to a local pastor who is not able to come to the home every day. This is my joy and privilege and it is a blessing given by God. It is my prayer that I may be the instrument used by the Lord to the salvation of many people as I share with them the wonderful person, Jesus, who said: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). 30

AFLC SCHOOLS



The AFLBS choir at the December 3 Christmas concert.



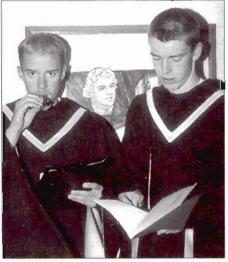
AFLBS junior Gretchen Flaten, Newfolden, Minnesota, with her grandmother, Mrs. Paul Flaten and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Emory Flaten.

Seminary holds January inter-term

On January 3, the first week of the seminary's inter-term began with a class on Christian education, taught by Pastor Phil Haugen.



David Kennedy, Nogales, Arizona played with the AFLBS instrumental ensemble.



Paul Blom, Alexandria, Minnesota, and Kevin O'Neil, Posen, Michigan, await the beginning of the concert.

From January 10-13, youth ministries director, Pastor Kevin Olson is scheduled to teach a class on youth ministries. The third week of the month is open due to the annual AFLC Pastors' Conference at the ARC. The final course offered during this year's inter-term is "The Biblical Dynamics of Worship." taught by Jerry Nelson from Janu-

Pastors' prayer retreat scheduled

ary 22-26. For more information call

the seminary office at 612-544-9501.

The AFLC Regional Pastors' Prayer Retreat will be held at the Galilee Bible Camp at Lake Bronson, Minnesota, from Sunday afternoon, February 4, through Tuesday noon, February 6, 2001. The schedule begins with informal fellowship on Sunday. Monday will focus on prayer and Scripture study led by AFLC Evangelist Jim Rasmussen. A communion service concludes the day's activities. Pastors Dennis Gray and Todd Klemme are the conference coordinators. For more information call 320-239-2105 or email at bethelaflc@netscape.net



The seminary chorus performed at the annual concert held in the campus chapel.

Two congregations added to AFLC roster

Argyle, Wisconsin - Cornerstone Lutheran was placed on the AFLC congregational roster at a recent coordinating committee meeting. The new congregation is located in southeast Wisconsin and is served by Pastor Richard Ewing. It is the third newly formed congregation to join the AFLC in 2000, joining Good Shepherd Lutheran in Camarillo, California, and Christ the King Lutheran in Wilson, Wisconsin. A total of twelve congregations joined the AFLC in 2000, while three congregations were officially closed.

Northwood, North Dakota -Ebenezer Lutheran Church voted on November 12, 2000 by an overwhelming margin of over ninety percent to affiliate with the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. The 420-member congregation, which was organized in 1898 as part of the Lutheran Free Church, withdrew from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America last February, and studied various Lutheran alternatives before voting on affiliation. Rev. Gregory M. Schram is the pastor of Ebenezer and will also be applying for AFLC membership. The Northwood congregation is near AFLC congregations in Hatton, McVille and Larimore.

Cindy Schlenk, Minneapolis, Minnesota, has resigned as the administrative assistant to Vision 2004 Director Tonnes Pollestad. She began that work in 1997 on a parttime, temporary basis. She continues to work with the Medicine Lake Lutheran building project.

Karen Floan, Minneapolis, Minnesota, is the new full-time administrative assistant for the Vision 2004 office. Her husband Wayne, heads the building and grounds department on campus.

A Partners in Mission outreach bus trip to Mexico is scheduled for January 27 to February 6. For information call Pastor Steve Snipstead at 406-752-2481.

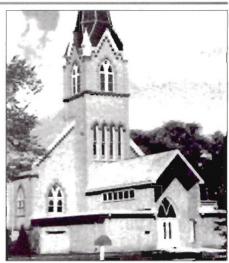


The 2000 fall semester seminarians with Dr. Francis Monseth (far left). The late Kenneth White is pictured far right.

Pastor Kenneth White, 42, died suddenly on November 12, 2000. He was the senior pastor of "Light Foundational Ministries," an inner-city ministry in Minneapolis where he served with his wife, Barbara. Ken had begun part-time studies at the Free Lutheran Seminary with plans to pursue a Master's of Divinity degree. Ken was also currently involved with the Salvation Army as a chaplain in prison

ministries. He was a graduate of the Lay Ministry Training Center in Roseville, Minnesota and from Bethany College, Scotts Valley, California, with a certification in addiction counseling.

Pastor Ken's heart and life was a testimony of bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to the inner city. His joy and love for Jesus touched all at the Free Lutheran Seminary. Blessed be his memory.



Ebenezar Lutheran Church

2001 mid-winter Bible conferences

Northwestern Minnesota District - Our Saviour's Lutheran at Argyle, Minnesota will host the district conference on February 2-3. The Friday evening speaker will be AFLC President Robert Lee. Pastor Terry Olson of Thief River Falls, Minnesota, will teach during the weekend on the book of Nehemiah. For more information call Pastor Ken Thoreson at 218-437-8483.

Western North Dakota-Eastern Montana District - Our Savior's at Stanley, North Dakota will host the district conference February 2-4. Speakers will be Missionaries Connely and Carolyn Dyrud and Pastor Mark Olson of Tioga, North Dakota. The district youth rally will meet at the same time with the theme, "Blueprint for Relationships." For more information call Pastor Rodney Johnson at 701-628-3384.

Corrections:

In the November 21, 2000 issue the poem "Grow Rich in Giving" by an unknown author was submitted by Margaret Kittleson of Newark, Illinois.

In a recent issue, New Hope Lutheran Church of Janesville, Wisconsin was introduced as a new AFLC congregation. They joined the AFLC coming from TAALC and not the ELCA as stated.

Dan Keinanen, Cokato, Minnesota resigned as the youth worker at Good Shepherd Lutheran and is serving as youth director at Ruthfred Lutheran in Bethel Park, Pennsylvania.

AFLC Memorials

Department given to

In memory of

AFLBS

Esther Burton Halvor Larson

Helen Lindgren

Bob Nelson

Mary Hestness

Gordon Melbye

Lena Hassler

Dorothy Pentli

Adair Erickson

Magda Russum Roland Olofson

Vision 2004

Fred Tessmann

Orrin Nyhus

Mary Jo Weber

AFLTS

Harold Kielgaard

Lena Hassler

Erling/Esther Brekke

Dick Dimick

Home Missions

Marvin Monson

Frances Flaa

Betty Hendrickson

Jordan Walker

Dorothy Pentti

Dorothy Gebhart

Eddie Schultz

Ruby Moore

World Missions

Matilda Anderson

Halvor Larson

Eddie Schultz

Minnie Salvhus

Jordan Walker

Margaret Kyllo

Magda Russum

Youth Ministries

Agnus Lewis

Evangelism

Jordan Walker Dorothy Pentti

For all life's blessings

My days are numbered, that I know, I have not got so far to go. A rugged stretch of road may be. There still may lie ahead of me. Bit if my Savior holds my hand. I know I shall reach heaven's land.

The span of life allotted man, On earth is three score years and ten.

Those years I've passed, My strength seems spent, My tired soul is heaven bent. I long to leave this world's discord And be forever with my Lord.

Memorials to the Women's Missionary Federation

Matilda Anderson, Bruce, SD Martha Hove, Tioga, ND Bertha Koester, Milford, IL Mary Jane Svendsen, Argyle, MN Laverne Vogsland, Grafton, ND Minnie Johnson, Valley City, ND E. J. Fjeld, Valley City, ND Phoebe Butler, Sell Lake, MN Maybelle Miller, Binford, ND Halvor Larson, Binford, ND Frances Flaa, Wahpeton, ND In honor of

Anna Smith, Milford, IL Mable Almos, Sisseton, SD Betty Iverson, Sisseton, SD Agnes Hove, Sisseton, SD Mary Anderson, Sisseton, SD Mrtle Almos, Sisseton, SD

Thou, God, has been my strength and stay.

My helper through the darkest day. When burdened with a load of care I turned to Thee in earnest prayer. You gave me strength, and hope and cheer.

And took away all anxious fear.

Thy goodness Lord, along life's way Has followed me from day to day. So often Lord have I failed Thee. But Thou has never once failed me. For all life's blessings, joy and pain, I give Thee thanks in Jesus Name.

Sina Molskness

(The author is the mother of Magda Russum. Submitted in her memory by Vernon and John Russum.)

Rev. Kenneth Marquardt.

Laurel, Nebraska, was accepted on the AFLC's Fellowship Clergy Roster at the December coordinating committee meeting. He serves United Lutheran Church, which joined the AFLC last fall.

Rev. Steven Heilmann, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, accepted the call to Grace Lutheran in Morris, Illinois, beginning January 1, 2001. Grace Lutheran joined the AFLC a few months ago. For 17 years, Pastor Heilmann has served Missouri Synod Lutheran congregations in Maryland, Wisconsin and South Dakota.

Association of Free Lutheran Congregations

3110 East Medicine Lake Boulevard Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

AFLC Benevolences (11 months) - January 1 - November 30, 2000

FUND	TOTAL Subsidy	RECTIN NOVEMBER	10 FAL REC'D TO DATE	% TOTAL
General Fund	\$252,865.00	\$27,208.68	234.056 65	93
Seminary	118,291.00	11,765.04	91,482.00	77
Bible School	164,270.00	14,124.27	131,285.24	88
Home Missions	262,125.00	22,042.34	217,890.90	83
World Missions	239,968.00	20,383.70	150,767.88	63
Capital Investment	15,226.00	1,072.87	9,887.64	65
Parish Education	69,480.00	6.577.95	58,638.97	84
Church Extension	25,285.00	4,649.45	20.619.09	82
TOTALS	\$1,147,510.00	107,824.30	914,628.37	80
TOTALS 1999	1,013,386.00	85,885.39	878,128.74	87
Goal 92%		ŕ		

The Evangelism department received \$7,110.19 in November:

The doctor loves sick people

magine a doctor who can't stand sick people. They make him sick. He doesn't want to be around them any more than he has to. If they were as smart and as disciplined as him, in his opinion, they wouldn't have gotten sick in the first place. He sees them as the cause of all the problems in society. He would much rather be around other doctors. He never finds his time around sick people to be enjoyable, but he does it because it's a necessity and he would feel guilty if he didn't.

A doctor with that kind of attitude probably won't have a great number of patients. If he is skillful and the number of other doctors around is limited, some may go to him. His negative attitude, however, is bound to become apparent and impact his relationships with patients. It is also certain to affect the type of care he gives. How much and what kind of service will he render if he has such a dislike for the people he is serving?

The Old Testament prophet Jonah did not like the people of Nineveh much. When God first called him to go and preach to the people he ran the other way. After his time in the belly of the fish, he finally went. The people turned from their evil ways and God had compassion on them. Jonah still didn't like them much, though. He was "greatly displeased and became angry" (Jonah 4:1, NIV). He was upset that God was so compassionate and abounding in love toward the people and relented from sending calamity. God asked him,

"Should I not be concerned about that great city?" (Jonah 4:11, NIV).

As Jonah warned the people about the impending destruction, it appears he was hoping what he was preaching about would become a reality. It is much different with God. He hopes for people to respond so that devastation can be avoided. The Lord "is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9, NIV). "Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign Lord, Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?" (Ezekiel 18:23, NIV).

The religious leaders of Jesus' day did not like being around non-religious folks. They wondered about Jesus because He seemed to actually enjoy associating with that suspect crowd. "When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and "sinners"?"" (Matthew 9:11, NIV).

Jesus not only ate with them, He even called one of them - Matthew - to be one of His disciples and the writer of the first Gospel. Christ is a Doctor who loves being around people who admit their sickness and are looking for healing. He responded to the Pharisees by saying, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ... I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matthew 9:13, NIV).

If you are someone today who knows Jesus as Lord and Savior, how do you feel about those who don't have a relationship with Him? Are you like the doctor who can't stand sick people and only spends time with them because he has to? George Barna, a researcher of cultural trends and Christianity in the United States, says a major obstacle to reaching the unchurched is the attitude of the churched. Most church people aren't really concerned about the unchurched.

Too often people who know Jesus have few, if any,

meaningful relationships with people who don't know Him. They treat non-Christians like projects instead of people. They say, "We love the sinner, but hate the sin," but with their attitude and actions they give the message that they hate the sin and they don't like the sinner a whole lot either. It is difficult to imagine that lost people will want to spend much time with ones who don't like being around them and do so only out of guilt.

Jesus loves the lost. He wants to forgive their sin. He wants to get

involved in their lives and spend all eternity with them. He sees so much value in them that He died for them. He loves them as much as He loves us. Let us ask the Lord to open our eyes so that we might see their value. Let us also see how wonderful an experience it can be to make friends with someone who doesn't know Jesus and introduce them to the Savior.

I enjoy spending time with non-Christians. It can be a challenge and also a privilege to enter into a conversation, sincerely listening like a doctor listening to a patient describe their pain, looking for a chance to share the healing truth of God's good news. Being around people who don't know Jesus and how much He loves them - that's where the action is and that's where great opportunities abound for serving the Lord and seeing God at work.

-Pastor Craig Johnson

THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd. Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

THE ASSOCIATION RETREAT CENTER

Three upcoming retreats:

Couple's Retreat
January 19 - 21, 2001

The Association Retreat Center (ARC), Osceola, Wisconsin is a wonderful facility located a half-hour east of Stillwater, Minnesota. The staff is dedicated to providing a comfortable, relaxing atmosphere; programs that support the AFLC church ministries; to bring people into a relationship with Jesus Christ and to build up and strengthen the believers. Here's what some of our attendees have to say:



JESSIE PARSLEY, Pipestone, Minnesota: I've been coming to camp twelve years. The friends I have made here are awesome. We get a chance once a year to get together at the ARC and goof off. Then there are the times when we get serious about our faith during dorm devotions. It's a great time to see what other girls have to say about their relationship with Jesus Christ. It's really cool.

Side-by-Side Grades 7-12, February 2-4, 2001 Junior Sno Daze February 16-18, 2001



KATHY AND DAVE OSTHUS. Eagen, Minnesota: Whenever the kids get an invitation from The ARC in the mail, they're ready to go, whether we're ready or not! I've also noticed our kid's attitudes are different here at The ARC just by being away from the influences of the kids at home. We've enjoyed the mission input. Our kids can do some of the same fun things side-by-side together with the missionary kids. They get a chance to talk to one another and see that we live like them and that they're not some missionaries far away. They've built some good relationships with my kids and have been a source of encouragement with the talents they have shared.

We appreciate the simple gospel message that's presented each day. It's not highly intellectual, but it reaches down into the hearts of people. We appreciate the programs at The ARC because they are practical. They are a recharging of the basics.

The ARC would like to invite you, your spouse, family, extended family, friends, neighbors, Bible study group, elders or deacons, Sunday school teachers, youth group, visitors of the church, and your entire congregation to come and experience what so many have found to be a precious time in their life.

The theme for the 2001 Camps and Retreats is "DARE 2DV8": "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). There are a number of retreats available. Come away and rest awhile. Call 1-888-748-3969 for more information about the camps and retreats being offered in 2001.



JORDAN LANGNESS, Ishpeming. Michigan: There are so many Christian friends at The ARC that give quality support. I've learned so much. God is made real to me. Learning about God helps my life. We've been coming for years to The ARC, but I'm just starting to realize how much I have been blessed.