

THE 
LUTHERAN

JULY 2017

AMBASSADOR

Yes,
missions
is
for
you





THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

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THE HALLMARKS OF REFORM

BY PASTOR PETER FRANZ

If we were to summarize what the Reformation was all about we could say that there were five great principles or five core teachings that the church rediscovered. When I was in seminary Dr. Francis Monseth called these “the hallmarks of the Reformation.” These five core teachings are Scripture alone, Christ alone, grace alone, faith alone, and to the glory of God alone. We sometimes call these five the “solae” of the Reformation because the Latin word *sola* means alone.

The order in which I have listed these *solae* is important. The place that we must start is with the Scripture alone because this is the foundation for everything else that we believe. All that we know about Christ and grace and faith and the glory of God is found in the inspired, inerrant, completely sufficient Word of God. We must not add to or take away from God’s complete revelation. The decisions of bishops or councils or the pope can never be placed on par with God’s Word.

From Scripture alone we come to understand that salvation is found in Christ alone. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me” (John 14:6). When Jesus died on the cross He said, “It is

finished” (John 19:30). Nothing need nor can be added to what Jesus has done. Jesus paid it all.

Salvation is found in Christ alone and is offered to us by grace alone. There is nothing we can do that could ever merit eternal life. As the hymn writer Augustus Toplady wrote, “Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling” (“Rock of Ages”).

This salvation which is found in Christ alone by grace alone is ours by faith alone through the power of the Word alone. The apostle Paul wrote, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). We who are dead in sin are given spiritual life by faith in Jesus.

When you consider all that God has done to save us you come to understand that all glory is to be given to God alone. God gave His Son for us. God gave His Word to us. Through His Word God gives faith to us. And it is all because of His grace. To God be the glory, great things He has done.

Franz, who is the vice president of the AFLC, serves Grace Free Lutheran, Maple Grove, Minn.

The spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions. The nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we become.

—Henry Martyn

The Great Commission says to make disciples, not get followers. There is a difference.

—Miguel Nunez

The man or woman at home who prays often has as much to do with the effectiveness of the missionary on the field, and consequently with the results of his or her labors, as the missionary.

—R.A. Torrey

It was strictly forbidden to preach to other prisoners. It was understood that whoever was caught doing this received a severe beating. A number of us decided to pay the price for the privilege of preaching, so we accepted their [the communists'] terms. It was a deal; we preached and they beat us. We were happy preaching. They were happy beating us, so everyone was happy.

—Richard Wurmbrand

Surely it is worthwhile to lay ourselves out with all our might in promoting the cause and kingdom of Christ.

—William Carey

By Pastor Andy Coyle

As the pastor of a new church plant in a region that knows very little about the Free Lutheran Church, I often find myself describing who we are both in terms of our beliefs and our design. Built into the Free Lutheran DNA is the value and primacy of the congregation. We believe that the congregation is the right form of the kingdom of God on earth. We celebrate that this kingdom is not stagnant, but on the move with a mission to make disciples of Christ. We get to partner with our Lord in His work of seeking and saving the lost, maturing believers, and equipping the saints for the work of ministry. How thrilling! It's the front lines of ministry.

Because of this incredible reality, it is vital for us to continue to joyfully strengthen and focus our congregations on this specific mission. And in our increasingly secular and morally confused culture, it is vital for us to plant new congregations. Why? Don't we already have enough congregations? Ongoing research shows that new congregations are the most effective form of evangelism today in bringing new believers into Christ's kingdom. In church plants, 60 to 80 percent of new members come from people who have no church background. Compare that to an established church where 80 percent of new members are actually transferring from other congregations.¹ This is a substantial difference and reinforces the great opportunity we have to reach new souls for Christ.

It was this passion for evangelism that led members of Abiding Savior Free Lutheran in Sioux Falls, S.D., to help

establish the congregation I now serve: Shiloh Free Lutheran in South Dakota's Black Hills.

This intentional partnership takes numerous forms. Members of Abiding Savior have been and are committed to encouraging and blessing our new congregation through intentional prayer, strategic planning, biweekly coaching, continuing education through church planting conferences, technical help, congregational visits, and a generous diminishing subsidy that will lead us to self-sufficiency within four years. This continual, ongoing, and very intentional partnership

has given us the freedom and resources necessary to develop and stay focused on our ministry strategy. Our desire for this congregational partnership is to mutually strengthen and encourage one another in our joint mission of helping people "know Christ and make Him known."

This partnership has not been lost on our people. Despite being an infant congregation, we have from the outset spoken about paying this blessing forward by seeking to plant another congregation in the near future. Congregations intimately partnering with another: Strategic. Effective. Beautiful.





Given our DNA as Free Lutherans who love the congregation and value evangelism, I am excited and optimistic for the celebration and growth of church planting among us. It's right in our wheelhouse.

It would be easy to assume that a congregation's size determines their ability in church planting. But that is simply not the case. I realize that few churches in our AFLC would be able to do what Abiding Savior has done for us, but I would love for you and your congregations to consider how you might be intentionally involved in a church plant.

The mission that we have been

entrusted with is beautiful and significant. Let's embrace and celebrate the best of our heritage, and unleash it forward as we consider how God might use our Free Lutheran congregations to plant more and more "mission centers" for Christ and His glory.

Coyle serves Shiloh Free Lutheran, Rapid City, S.D.

¹ http://download.redeemer.com/pdf/learn/resources/Why_Plant_Churches-Keller.pdf



Church Planting 101

Here are just a few of many possible ways your congregation can be involved in church planting:

- If you are a larger congregation, consider the model that Abiding Savior has shown. Target a strategic area, call a plant pastor, and allocate resources and personnel for this work.
- If you are a congregation, regardless of size, that has been blessed with a large financial gift, prayerfully consider designating a portion of these resources for church planting.
- Adopt a Home Mission congregation or gathering through prayer, personal communication, and support.
- Consider allocating five percent of your annual budget, above your normal tithe, to the AFLC for supporting a new church plant.
- Consider communicating within your district how you might cooperate with your fellow AFLC congregations to plant a new congregation.
- Pray for the work of Home Missions, that God would raise up men with the spiritual gifting and passion to plant free and living congregations.
- Pray for the Home Mission director and board.



(Photo by Andrew Abel)

Christ in you

By Anja Ferkinghoff

The hot afternoon sun sends her first blazing hints. It is time to return home. I grab the cheap plastic bag and thank my vegetable vender for her kindness to serve me tea. Hands together as if piously praying I say, “*Wandanamalu*,” wiggle my head, and off I go. Snaking passed customers I ignore the sellers who call me “*Amai!*” (girl) to gain my attention. I hang my produce on my scooter, sit up on the seat, and speed out the market.

First I pass by fruit stands which balance pyramids of ripe, yellow mangoes this season. I wind down the road maneuvering around chewing cows, rusty bicycles, pedestrians burdened with their groceries, and a small water truck. The golden statue in the traffic circle formally greets the heavy traffic circling around it. My focus is on proximate honking.

I fly by everyone’s favorite juice booth, which presents an array of pineapples and a line of people buying “parcels” (juice to go). I speed by the repair shop with the never-ending supply of used, dusty blenders ... I still wonder who buys them. Colorful patterns of sari fabric and stitched dresses become a head-turner as they flutter in the slight breeze. Auto rickshaw drivers shove past while I try to navigate around an oversized bus blocking the road. The heat beats down uncomfortably. I notice the old shoemaker sitting under his shallow stall while intimidatingly tall, creatively painted trucks pass on my right.

Outside the city center I nearly run into a herd of communicative goats. Impatiently, motorcycles and cars follow along and take risky chances to pass the flock. Finally, the road frees up and I can resume. I slow my pace over potholes, speed bumps, and a bridge framed by smelly garbage piles set

by a view of a grass-tinted lake. Palm trees wag their leafy heads as I wave to my tailor and her father, the wood worker, and marvel at the artistic carving of a bed frame. More bumps and holes later, I reach my breakfast house where someone just ordered *dosa* wrapped in banana leaves and newspaper.

At last I turn into the sandy, white road that leads straight up to the school. Home.

This is an impression of my current world. For the last eight months I have been a familiar sight in this town of India, learning the local language, adjusting to the initially incomprehensible culture, and “spreading the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere” (I Corinthians 2:14).

My relationship with God has deepened more personally through this service and experience. I had to trust when I couldn’t obtain money during demonetization, and at my last rupee received cash from an unexpected source. When temperatures climb above 105 Fahrenheit, He provides energy. When restful sleep is lacking due to early morning services or late night preparations, He uses me anyway. I came to serve, but God served me and inspired heart growth—while using me in the process.

I learned to find more love, more time, more creativity ... because God loves me first and abundantly (I John 4:19). I learned in tough times not to pray, “How long, oh Lord?” rather, “How do you want to use me now?” Sometimes it’s enough when one person is impacted.

As my weaknesses inevitably came to light and I was reminded daily of my insufficiency, I learned dependence upon my Lord. The familiar phrase, “God does not call the equipped, He equips the called,” came true as He used me in a country a

few numbers too big for me. God proved that He can cultivate anyone to be His “sufficient” witness. God told me: “It is not you who makes the difference, it is Christ in you” (John 14:23) and, “No qualification can top that. Even when motivation or sense of purpose fail, I am. I love you” (Isaiah 43:4). When I laid down my frustrated pride and said: I can’t do this. God answered: Do as much as you can and I will do what you can’t. Real dependence. I contributed (a tiny bit), but God bestowed the growth.

Prayer and devotions have at last become my most essential tool in ministry. “The power of prayer can only be undermined by neglect,” said Hudson Taylor. Prioritizing prayer while juggling the establishment of ministry and an alien lifestyle is a challenge but worth it. When I met M., a former Muslim who found the Lord through a vision, I had the privilege to pray for her baptism—a crucial step of irreparable abandonment of her former belief. And she did it. Praise God!

For now I am signing off in India to check in with my earthly homeland of Germany. While pursuing a bachelor degree, I hope to find open doors to point out the narrow path (Luke 13:24-30) in the universities’ study halls, at parks, on streets, or in friends’ homes. A Christian never retires. Christ in me spurs me on. We can rest later.

Ferkinghoff, who graduated from AFLBS in 2015, and served on staff for one year, has worked as a short-term mission assistant in India with Journey Missions. She returns to her home in Germany this month. She writes about her time in India on her blog (whowillgoforusblog.wordpress.com).

Missions is for you

By Jordan Langness

In a land long ago and far away from Beulah, N.D., there was a man who was tasked with a mission that seemed ill-suited for his skill. That man was named Moses, and that mission involved public speaking. In a much less dramatic fashion, my being asked to write this article seems like a similar endeavor. Moses was tempted to excuse himself because he wasn't good at talking; my excuse is that there are others more qualified to talk about missions. Most of my time is spent serving the youth of my church, community, district, and our association. Even so, there are times when my focus on youth ministry actually leads me to engage in the realm of world missions. Yes, I did specify world missions because I don't believe there should be a distinction between youth ministry and missions on a local level. If we are to take Jesus' words in the Great Commission seriously, then each one of us should be living our lives understanding that we are missionaries making disciples wherever we are.

As a local missionary to our youth, there are times when I have seen the benefit of exposing my students to God's work on a global level. There is so much that can be learned and transformation that can take place in this wonderful setting. Since the summer of 2015, individuals from our congregation have gone on mission trips to Alaska, Ecuador, Cuba, and Brazil with a trip to India happening this month; we also have a young adult serving in Alaska at the Net this summer, and there are ongoing conversations to plan at least one other

trip in the next year. It has been exciting to hear from each group as they present their upcoming trips, watch the congregation support them financially and spiritually, and hear of Christ's work after they return. I am sure that not only is our congregation better for it, but the work of missions in our association is strengthened, as well.

First on the list of ways that participating in world missions has strengthened our congregation is how these experiences have tangibly connected our missionaries and mission fields to our church. Like many other churches, we have our missionary prayer cards displayed so that we can remember them in prayer. Before going to Ecuador, I would venture to say that nobody in our church really knew who the Pillmans were or that we even had a work in Ecuador even though their card had been on our missionary board for several years. Having served alongside them, we now have a small group of members who not only know of the Pillman family and their work in Ecuador, but are passionate about it and eager to continue supporting them. The same is true for each of the other places and missionaries we have served.

The second benefit to our congregation has been an understanding that God's work is not limited to our city, country, or even our great association. These trips have reminded us that the Lord is actively building His kingdom and His body all over the world. In our day-to-day lives, we can sometimes overlook all the ways that Christ is present and working; these mission trips

bring that reality into focus.

Finally—only because of space, not lack of material—I would have to comment on the aspect of unity that has resulted from these experiences. One of the most formative results of mission trips that I have participated in was coming to a whole new understanding of the amazing reality of unity within the body of Christ. These experiences have resulted in true bonds that transcend nationality, skin tone, language, class, gender, and nearly every other demographic that is used to separate people today. Given the tragic state of disunity in our own land at this moment, this unity is no small thing. Jesus knew what He was saying when He told His disciples that we would be known as His by our love for one another.

When we are obedient to God's call to the work of evangelism and missions, He not only advances the work on the mission field, but He also accomplishes transformation in our own hearts. Despite this reality, there are still some who are more comfortable dwelling in the mind-set of Moses. My challenge to you: instead of focusing on why you can't go, focus on Jesus as He calls you to go. The location of His calling for each one of us may be different, but the simple fact remains, we are all called.

Langness, the AFLC Youth Board treasurer, is the youth pastor at Prince of Peace Lutheran, Beulah, N.D.





Waves of good news

May marked the 30th anniversary of the ministry of KAKN Radio in Alaska. What first began under the Lutheran Mission Society (LMS) was later taken up by AFLC Home Missions. But its mission has not changed: to broadcast good news to the people in Bristol Bay. Here are some thoughts from current and former missionaries to Naknek.



It's not the end of the world

Have you ever heard the statement, “It’s not the end of the world but you can see it from there”? Some might say that that phrase describes the little fishing village of Egegik on the western coast of Alaska in Bristol Bay. You may enjoy googling Egegik to see exactly where it is and learn a little bit about it. While it is a small place with relatively few people on a far distant remote coast, it is not forgotten by God or by KAKN radio, a ministry of the AFLC Alaska Mission. You see, we have a 24/7 radio translator there broadcasting Christian music and programming. Is radio having an impact in such places? Here’s a note we recently received from a woman in Egegik.

“Thank you for coming and fixing the radio station. That is one of my pleasures. I like to surround myself with God, the station helps me with that. I never really gave God a chance—thinking what He could do. But He has done a miracle in me, showing me that He is in control. Now He is working in me to learn to be dead to sin and alive unto Him. He is working on transforming me. It isn’t just about salvation. It is about a relationship with God, walking with Him, not me in control. I also praise God for the church services you broadcast from Naknek, simple and right on the money. Praise God in all things.”

It is a joy to be a part of proclaiming the good news to the ends of the earth.

By Pastor Jeff Swanson, AFLC Home Missions missionary to Naknek, travels throughout the Bristol Bay area, preaching in local villages.



The history of KAKN ministry

In 1979, the LMS board approval began a long process to start a Christian radio station in Naknek.¹ In the early 1980s, Curtis and Jewel Nestegard poured their hearts and souls into getting this ministry started. There were many who helped them during this time. One of them, Rey Lark from Amery, Wis., was a radio engineer who helped with the planning and setup of the station. There was much that had to be done to get the radio station going. At the 1987 annual conference of LMS it was reported that KAKN had been on the air since May 9 of that year.² The radio station continues to spread the gospel today.

In a biographical sketch of the Nestegards, Curtis mentions that he was involved with many aspects of community life in Naknek, from serving as fire chief to owning a lumber yard and hardware store. But he also says in this letter: “I have listed the physical accomplishments for whatever that is worth, but the great joy and heart of our work has been to testify and preach the great grace of God to whosoever would listen. Our joy has been to see people saved and come to real joy-filled, peace-filled lives of victory.”³

Compiled from “The Development Years,” written by Pastor Jeremy Crowell who serves as a missionary pilot based in Naknek.

¹ *Alaska Mission Outreach*, Spring 1984, pg. 3

² 1987 Report of the Annual Conference for LMS, pg. 2

³ Biographical Sketch of Curtis and Jewel Nestegard dated Aug. 16, 1999.



The birth of KAKN

The late Cory Hjalseth and I had the idea; and as we prayed about it, it seemed like a wonderful way to get the gospel to the different villages and also to all the fishermen who came every summer. We especially wanted to have the Pacific Garden Mission broadcast, “Unshackled,” aired. I approached the LMS Board in 1979 at their annual meeting at Denny Park Church in Seattle. The board said they didn’t have any money, but it was a good idea, so we should go ahead with it.

We were led to a radio engineer, Rey Lark of Amery, Wis. He said he would be interested in a mission project like that. In fact, he engineered the whole station, guided the purchase of equipment, tower, and antennas, and donated much of the equipment from what he had in his possession. He arranged to have a tower construction crew under the direction of Sig Haugen and Pastor Paul Bittner, who not only raised the first tower (Paul came and raised a temporary one after a plane destroyed the first one), but then came back to raise the one that is still standing today. Rey also arranged to have Lorne Bridges and his wife, who had filed many FCC applications for Billy Graham, come to Naknek and do our application for us, besides giving us much needed wisdom.

We traded a house we built for the land from Steve Kie. The building was built by Jim Phelps with much help from several people. Jerry McKee and Raymond Nekeferoff come to mind. Pastor Conrad Jergenson and his wife produced the film, “To Alaska With Love,” to show in churches to promote the building of the station.

Finally, in the spring of 1987, after many trials and setbacks, KAKN went on the air with praise and thanks to God for all of His miraculous provision. Scott Jacobson managed the station with his side kick, Bill Gentile, and many locals also helped with sports broadcasts, etc.

The station was dedicated in July of 1988 with many attending from the lower 48.

By Curtis Nestegard, founder of KAKN.



We’re so thankful for KAKN

For the past 15 years, KAKN Radio has brightened my day. I’m especially thankful for the devotionals, preaching, and radio dramas. They provide inspiration and motivation to press on to that “upward calling” in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14). Again and again a word heard on KAKN will stick with me throughout the day. I hope many other listeners are edified in the same way. Thank you for your excellent selection of programming. May the Lord strengthen and encourage you in your service to Him.

By Heidi Steinberg, who runs the Bristol Bay Christian Learning Center in Naknek.



KAKN today

Some of those who come to fish during the summer find themselves listening to a Christian station simply because in some areas it is the only one available. There is a variety of Christian music throughout the 24/7 broadcasting day: contemporary, native, bluegrass gospel, Southern gospel, hymns, children’s, and a national choir. Just a few of the programs that many would recognize are: Unshackled!, Adventures in Odyssey, Your Story Hour, Focus on the Family, Alister Begg, Ravi Zacharias, Chuck Smith, James MacDonald, White Horse Inn, and Lutheran Hour.

May 9 marked the 30th year of KAKN broadcasting good news to villagers and the 12,000 summer visitors who come to fish and process the largest sockeye salmon fishery in the world. Forty-one million sockeye salmon are predicted to return to Bristol Bay this year, many of which will be caught, frozen, processed and shipped to markets throughout the world. KAKN broadcasts the all-important fishing, tide, and weather reports every hour during fishing season. Fishermen are dependent on those reports.

KAKN is situated on the 15-mile Alaska Peninsula Highway and near Katmai National Park, including Brooks Falls, where visitors walk among bears. If you’ve seen a picture of a bear catching a jumping salmon, it was probably taken at Brooks. Within sight of the station is the mountain range that includes 10,000 Smokes, which erupted in 1912 and still smokes today.

Although I am the station manager and lone staff assigned to the station, there are many who very capably and graciously assist. Pastor Jeremy Crowell lends his engineering and maintenance skills and serves as substitute station manager whenever needed. His wife, Lacey, serves as hostess to guests. Pastor Jeff Swanson is heard on KAKN-Live as are his weekly sermons. Jeff and Wesley Foster are play-by-play broadcasters of the local basketball games. Loren Tungseth serves as director of resource management, Rod Scheel from Minnesota as engineer, and Dave Perkins from Washington as computer consultant.

A local woman recently told me, “I am so thankful for your radio tower. It saved my life.” She went on to say, “I was out skiing and the weather turned bad. I couldn’t tell where I was at. I was lost in the storm. Then suddenly I saw the red flashing beacon on the top of the KAKN radio tower and I headed to the light.” What an apt description of what KAKN aims to do: Bringing the light of the gospel to its listeners and to those who are lost!

By Pastor Bob Lee, AFLC Home Missions missionary who currently serves as station manager at KAKN.

Compiled by Margaret Lee

"Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, 'Where are you?'" (Genesis 3:8-9).

Out of the Garden

By Rebekah Ehlert

It was during my lesson on the fall of man that I realized just how deep God's love is. Even in the very beginning of the Bible, we see that God cares for us deeply and continues to give new chances to His people.

My name is Rebekah and I am serving as a short-term missionary assistant with AFLC Journey Missions in Jinja, Uganda.

My largest role is teaching for the Ambassador Institute. In these classes, I memorize select Bible stories and bring them to life through storytelling and acting. After the class has the story memorized, we discuss how the Bible story applies to our lives.

Even as the teacher, I learn so much about God's character. As I rehearse the story for class, I start to understand the emotion and just how dramatic the Bible is.

When I recited the story of the fall of man to my class, I almost broke down into tears. You see, I learned the story as a factual event—I read the words from the Bible and analyzed this as the reason for sin, but I did not truly understand the story until I acted it out in Ambassador Institute style.

Now when I read this passage, I imagine the events unfolding. I see God's character as He walks in the garden in the cool of the day, breathing in the smells and beauty of paradise. I see God chatting with Adam and Eve on these walks—what a relationship to have.

My heart races as I yell to Eve—"Don't

fall for the serpent's scheme!"—because I know first hand how the Devil twists ideas and scenarios in our heads that are far from the truth.

I feel my stomach sink when God calls for Adam after he ate the fruit, knowing the deep sadness God felt as He knew things could not continue the way they had. I begin to weep when I imagine God painfully disciplining the people He loved so much and created in detail, in His image.

My tears fall with abandon when I see God standing in the garden alone, watching His children walk away from paradise and the beautiful relationship they had, forever.

This story has so much emotion and relates to our relationship with the Lord. It's broken. God wants to have a meaningful relationship with each of us, but we continue to break His trust and leave pain in our wake.

Yet I couldn't help but think, *God is still love*. When I reread the story, I saw God enjoying paradise with His children as He walked in the garden in the cool of the day. I saw God's forgiving nature as He held back total destruction and wrath from Adam and Eve. I saw God the Savior already prophesying Jesus' coming and the destruction of Satan when He said, "He will crush your head and you will strike his heel." I saw God the Father clothe His dear children before they walked one last time in paradise and left the Garden of Eden forever.

After teaching the class about Adam and Eve that day, my co-teacher, Sheila,

and I were notified that one of our students was attending to a gravely sick man. Sheila has a fire for God that is unmatched. She immediately told the class we would go over to the man's house and pray for him.

As we marched to his house, a woman shouted to Sheila in her native tongue, "Stop! You must not come in. This man is a Muslim. He does not want you here!"

Sheila, who was raised in a Muslim family, boldly stood her ground and said to the woman, "Let him speak for himself."

The woman went inside to ask the sick man, and to our surprise he told her, "Let them come in. I need their prayers." So we went in, prayed for his healing in Jesus' name, and visited with him. I thank God for that moment to witness to this man.

In the darkest crevices and ugliest parts of our lives, He is still there. I see God's love in Uganda. Here, people don't have much and yet they open their arms to anyone who visits them. I see people who have lost so much because of war, corruption, and circumstances. Yet, when they talk about how good God is their faces glow. In this brokenness, I see God's reflection.

God's love and redemption isn't out of reach. I see that in the story of Adam of Eve. I see that when I think of the Muslim man grasping for God's healing. And I see that when I work with men and women hungry to hear about Jesus.

Ehlert is a short term assistant working in Uganda with Journey Missions.

arden





When
we
pray

"The Lord said one night to Paul in a vision,
'Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be
silent; for I am with you, and no man shall attack
you in order to harm you ...'" (Acts 18:9-10).

By Pastor Jerome Elness

It was during the Chinese civil war in 1930 that Arthur and Minnie Olson were serving as Lutheran Free Church missionaries in Suichow, Hunan Province, China. Minnie's sister, Alma Shirley, a nurse, was also at the mission station.

Twelve-year-old Albert, son of Arthur and Minnie, became desperately ill with a kidney problem. The city was surrounded by the army of Nationalist General Chiang Kai-shek and the army of a Christian general, Feng Yuxiang. The area was run over again and again as the opposing Chinese forces fought for control, in spite of the Japanese invasion and a growing Communist threat.

Since the Olsons were unable to leave the safety of the mission station, Alma Shirley took a urine sample from young Albert and wrote down his symptoms. Then a beggar chief was paid to carry the sample about 35 miles to a Canadian Presbyterian hospital in the city of Kweiteh (Shangqiu) to secure medical advice and assistance. In answer to the prayers of the missionaries, he made the journey successfully and returned with a doctor's instructions. The diagnosis was what Alma has suspected—Albuminuria—and the prescription for the boy was complete bed rest and lots of milk.

Arthur went out to get milk from their cow only to discover that the cow had gone dry. There would be no milk until the cow freshened and gave birth to a new calf. Imagine the father's desperate feeling as

he wondered, "What do we do now? Are there any prayer supporters back in the U.S. who are upholding us before the throne of grace?"

Then he noticed a goat nearby with a large udder, even though it seemed that she was without a kid. To his surprise the udder was filled with milk, enough to meet his need. What an answer to prayer!

And this is not the end of the story. After the nanny goat dried up and ceased to give milk, the cow gave birth to a calf. So during the three months of complete bed rest for young Albert, he continued to be nourished with milk and was healed. More answered prayer.

There is still more to the story. Years later at a mission service, Arthur told his story about the milk prescription and God's miraculous supply. A medical doctor was in the audience and told him afterwards that it was goat's milk that contained exactly the right nutrients that the boy needed to fully regain health. So it was God who wonderfully provided just what was needed at just the right time. Yes, He truly answers prayer, even beyond what we ask or think.

Young Albert would grow up to be a missionary, too, and together with his wife, Anna Marie, would serve for many years in China and Taiwan as well as in parishes in the U.S. They retired to the Amery, Wis., area. Both of them died in 2014, she at age 88, and he at age 97. [Among their survivors is Pat (Mrs. John) Rieth, Grand Forks, N.D.]

What about Arthur and Minnie? As the

Japanese army approached their city, they wondered if they should flee. With a Bible in his hand, Arthur knelt and prayed, "Lord, show us from your Word what we should do." Then he opened his Bible to Acts 18, where he read these words: "The Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man shall attack you in order to harm you ...'" (verses 9-10). So they stayed and enjoyed a fruitful ministry.

Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the declaration of war between Japan and the U.S., they were taken as prisoners and spent almost two years in an internment camp. After the war they continued missionary service in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, retiring to Minnesota after 47 years of fruitful service and many other stories of answered prayer. While vacationing at a Bible camp in north central Minnesota, they were killed together with their daughter, Evelyn, when a tornado swept through the area on Aug. 6, 1969, and demolished their cabin, fulfilling their oft-expressed desire to depart this life together. He was 80 years old, and she was one day short of the same age. Perhaps one might say that even the manner of their death was an answer to prayer.

Blessed be their memory.

Elness, Duluth, Minn., is a former missionary to China.

Lord, keep us steadfast in thy Word

T

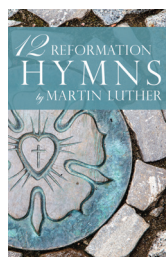
he most widely used of all of Luther's hymns is "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word," a short hymn of prayer for God's care and protection.

In the original German, the second line of stanza one was written against the Pope and the Turks, who wanted to take over all of Europe. Over the years, the second line was changed to "Curb those who fain by craft and sword." Instead of a prayer against the threatening Turkish army, the hymn became a general prayer against all enemies of the Word of God and the Church.

The last chord of this hymn has a musical Picardy third. In the first two stanzas, the last chord commonly ends with a G natural. But in the third stanza, this chord ends with a G sharp, which makes the ending chord a major chord (with a Picardy third) rather than a minor chord. The brightness of the major chord in contrast to the preceding minor chord endings is fitting with the closing text, "And lead us out of death to life."

~Pastor Gordon Waterman
Crown of Life Lutheran
Tomball, Texas

1. Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy Word;
Curb those who fain by craft and sword
Would wrest the Kingdom from Thy Son
And set at naught all He hath done.
 2. Lord Jesus Christ, Thy pow'r make known,
For Thou art Lord of lords alone;
Defend Thy Christendom that we
May evermore sing praise to Thee.
 3. O Comforter of priceless worth,
Send peace and unity on earth.
Support us in our final strife
And lead us out of death to life.
- Amen.



These hymns are featured in a new booklet from Ambassador Publications, *12 Reformation Hymns by Martin Luther*. Featuring a hymn of Luther for each month of the year, the booklet is available for \$2/each. For more information, visit ambassadorpublications.org.

LIFE IN A NEW CHURCH PLANT

BY MARY BERNTSON

For the past 16 months, I have been experiencing life as a Home Missions pastor's wife. In early 2016, my husband, Steve, took a call to serve New Hope Free Lutheran in Jamestown, N.D. The congregation has been an organized AFLC body for six years, and has moved from meeting in borrowed buildings to purchasing an older church at a very nice price, to its current situation of purchasing yet another church building they have had their eye on for these past six years. It is a very exciting time to be involved in the growth and development of a Home Mission congregation that is establishing itself and reaching out to the community. We moved into our building on June 11.

When I first arrived at New Hope, I was struck by two things: the sincere and fervent faith of the congregation, and the relatively small size of the flock. It was refreshing to be among Christians who took their faith seriously, and were always striving to improve their Bible knowledge, be intentional in fellowship activities to support and encourage one another, and worship the Lord wholeheartedly on Sunday mornings. I found myself in the position of being a leader, but one among many strong leading ladies in the congregation. There was no pressure to take on roles that no one else could or would do, and yet I felt completely welcome and included in activities in the congregation.

We weren't at New Hope very long before the pews began to fill a little more substantially as folks came to check out the



new pastor. My husband had pastored in the community before, from 1996-2009 in another church, so there were also folks from our previous relationships coming to say hello, and check out the new congregation.

On the home front, I established a day care as soon as we were settled in our house, and immediately filled my days with happy little kids. Working full-time has been a blessing, yet I still enjoy many evening and weekend activities at New Hope. Our Wednesday night Bible studies and fellowship meals have been a special part of my life.

New Hope is peopled with many folks who did not grow up in the Free Lutheran tradition, so in many ways, we are all learning together what the association is about, how it organizes itself, its

goals and purposes, and its history. It has been a fascinating journey, and as we learn, we agree that it is where we belong. My life has been greatly enriched by coming into this Home Missions congregation arm of the AFLC, and the reception my husband and I have felt among our colleagues in ministry has been phenomenal.

I want to thank everyone who prays for the Home Missions pastors and wives. We can feel the effects of those prayers in our daily interactions with our congregations. What a blessing to be a part of the AFLC.

Berntson and her husband serve New Hope Free Lutheran, an AFLC Home Missions congregation in Jamestown, N.D.

WMF

WOMEN'S
MISSIONARY
FEDERATION

AFLC Schools host Bible school, seminary graduation



AFLTS graduates Andrew Olson, Andre Vogel, Alex Amiot, Chad Friestad, Gideon Johnson, Paul Kinney, and Steve Jensen. Not pictured: John Lee.

AFLBS graduate Madi Carley receives her diploma from Pastor Joel Rolf, dean. TOP: AFLBS grads.

Members of the Proclaim Choir (top) and Concert Choir (above) sang during the graduation service.



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MAY MEMORIALS

AFLBS Darrel Tungseth Helmer Rice Kaare Berge LuVern Jones Mabel Quanbeck Marlys Johnson Ruth Claus	AFLTS Sylvana Ray Parish Education Mabel Quanbeck General Fund Tim Korhonen Twyla Odegard	Home Missions Peter Hill Adeline Monson Carol Mackey Darrel Tungseth WMF Bernice Ness Marlys Johnson Mabel Quanbeck World Missions Peter Hill	Adeline Monson Glen Nelson Joseph Hegstad Pastor Ted Berkas Mabel Quanbeck Edwin Swanson Joseph Hegstad ... in honor of AFLBS Pastor Ken Thoreson
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In 2015 my wife, Karen, and I visited St. Thomas church in Leipzig, Germany. In this

church—noted as the final resting place of its former cantor Johan Sebastian Bach—one whole side is made up of stained glass windows. As you face the wall, the window on the far left is a memorial to those who suffered and died during WWI, while to the far right is a window of peace. In between these windows are windows with images of Bach, Philip Melancthon, Martin Luther, Gustavus Adolphus and others.

The peace window is based upon an event that occurred in 1989 at nearby St. Nicholas Church. In the late 1970s, the church began to have prayer meetings for peace every Monday evening. The pastor, Christian Fuhrer, also preached on the Sermon on the Mount. What began as a small gathering grew to point where so many people attended that there was often only standing room available. Because the church was in East Germany, communist members would try to outnumber the attendees to deter any effectiveness. But the people prayed. Their

POWER OF UNITED PRAYER

BY PASTOR JERRY PETERSON

prayers were focused especially on peace and re-unification of East and West Germany. On Sept. 4, 1989, by candlelight, a peaceful protest began at the church. From September to November, the crowds grew from a few hundred to 70,000. A week later there were 120,000 in the church courtyard followed by 320,000 the next week. These peaceful demonstrations ignited other prayer groups throughout East and West Germany to do the same. The soldiers did not have the will to use their rifles to stop the candle-carrying people of prayer.

St. Nicholas church stands as a reminder of the power of united prayer. Many believe that these prayers caused the fall of the Berlin Wall on Nov. 9, 1989, and the reunification of Germany in 1990. Prayer united the people. Those prayers were answered.

In John 17 Jesus prayed that we who are following Him today would be united. “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ... My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also

be in us so that the world may believe that You have sent me” (John 17:17-18, 20-21). Today Jesus continues to pray for us to be one as the Father and the Son are one. As members of His body, we are to keep praying and working together to further Christ’s kingdom.

Prior to Pentecost Jesus told the disciples to remain in Jerusalem. His last words before His ascension were, “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 disciples remained in Jerusalem and prayed in the upper room. And on Pentecost, Peter preached the gospel and more than 3,000 souls were saved.

Everyone who is a believer in Christ is part of the mission. The mission of the church is to keep praying and proclaiming Christ whether locally, nationally, or internationally.

Peterson, who is the chairman of the Home Missions Committee, serves First Lutheran, Oklahoma City.



Gola Dynneson

Gola (Opdahl) Dynneson, 101, died May 28. She was born Jan. 11, 1916, near Marion, N.D., to Carl and Julia Opdahl. She graduated from Marion High School in 1933, and found employment in Fargo, N.D., and Portland, Ore. She attended the Lutheran Bible Institute, Minneapolis, where she met Lawrence Dynneson; they married on Aug. 23, 1947. Preparing for mission work, they settled on the Mexican border at Nogales, Ariz., where they established a mission, which today is Triumph Lutheran (AFLC). In 1956 they returned to Minneapolis where Lawrence attended college and seminary while Gola supported the family by working at the Ebenezer Home. Upon graduation and ordination, Lawrence accepted a call to Louisville, Miss., where the family lived from 1960 to 1963, and then returned to Nogales. Lawrence died in 2002, and in 2011 due to declining health Gola moved to Bigfork, Mont. Gola was the oldest graduate of our AFLC Bible school. Combining her LBI credits with independent study and J-term courses, she received her Certificate in Biblical Studies in 2002 with two grandchildren, David Kennedy and Kayla Ramse.

She is survived by four daughters, Karla (Rev. Ted) Kennedy, Nogales; Miriam (David) Ramse, Minnesota; Pauline (Bill) Eardensohn, Kentucky; and Lois (Steve) Haag, Montana; two sisters and one brother; nine grandchildren and fourteen great-grandchildren.

A service was held June 4 at Triumph Lutheran. Several family members took part in the service, and the message was preached by missionary Darwin Jackson on Gola's favorite text, Isaiah 12:2-3. Blessed be her memory!



Pastor Scott Nocton

Pastor Scott Nocton, 49, of Brooklyn Park, Minn., died May 2. Born Dec. 11, 1967, he was the son of David and Jayne Nocton. He graduated from Big Lake High School, Minn., in 1986. He graduated from the University of Minnesota Duluth with a double major in chemistry and geology. He graduated from Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., and served several churches in Minnesota and started The Well in Walker, Minn. He joined the AFLC's Fellowship Roster in 2013, and served as an interim pastor before he resigned due to health concerns.

Surviving are his wife, Christine; three daughters, Jordan, Paige, and Isabelle Nocton; his parents, and one sister.

The memorial service was held May 5 at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fridley, Minn. Memorials preferred to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

Reformation conferences planned this fall for East, West & Northwest

To mark the quincentenary of the Lutheran Reformation, the AFLC will host three regional Reformation conferences and a hymn festival this fall.

Five hundred years ago, Martin Luther nailed his 95 *Theses* to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church. His statement, "Here I stand," has summarized his defense of the theology of the Word of God alone, faith alone, grace alone, and Christ alone. This year, the Protestant Church around the world will remember and celebrate these life-giving truths in various ways.

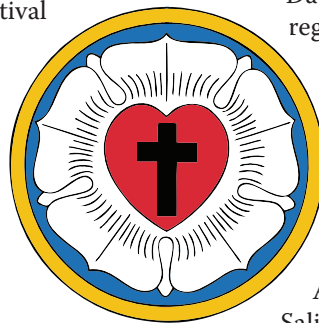
Reformation regional conferences have been planned through a grant provided by Thrivent. They will be hosted by three AFLC congregations. Speakers and their topics at the three conferences will be:

- Pastor Wade Mobley, president of the AFLC Schools, will speak on "The Mind of the Reformation: How People Thought in 16th Century Europe."
- Pastor Robert Lee, professor at the AFLC Schools and editor of *The Lutheran Ambassador*, will speak on "The History of the Reformation: A Brief Retelling of the Lutheran Reformation."
- Pastor Brett Boe, pastor and adjunct teacher at the AFLC Schools, will speak on "The Heart of the

Reformation: Justification by Grace Through Faith."

Dates and locations for the regional conferences include:

- October 6-8: Ruthfred Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bethel Park, Pa.
- October 27-29: Atonement Free Lutheran Church, Arlington, Wash.
- November 17-19: St. Ansgar's Lutheran Church, Salinas, Calif.



The AFLC Schools will host a Reformation Hymn Festival on Nov. 10 in Hauge Chapel on the School's Plymouth, Minn., campus. Andrew Hanson, AFLBS music director, and Marian Christopherson, director of Parish Education, will lead the hymn sing, which will also feature choral presentations by a festival choir made up of students, alumni, and friends.

The hymn festival will be held in conjunction with the second annual Friends of the Schools Banquet, held Nov. 9 on campus. The evening will include a gourmet dinner and a program highlighting the ministry, mission, and future of the Bible school and seminary.

More information regarding these events will be posted on the AFLC website (aflc.org). If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Terry Olson at the AFLC headquarters: (763) 545-5631.



Meredith Bursheim

Meredith Bursheim, 98, of McIntosh, Minn., died Feb. 18. Born Oct. 28, 1918, in Winger, Minn., she was the daughter of Oscar and Ragna (Snustad) Raaen. She married Robert Bursheim June 16, 1940, in Winger. He preceded her in death.

She grew up in Winger and graduated from Oak Grove Lutheran High School, Fargo, N.D., in 1937. After marriage, they lived in Winger. They moved to Plymouth, Minn., in 1964, where they lived on the AFLC campus.

Meredith was a resident mother in the chapel building while Bob worked in the treasurer's office and in campus maintenance. They returned to Winger in 1970, where they were members of Dovre Lutheran and she served as organist. Bob preceded her in death in 1995.

Surviving are two sons, Neil (Carol) Bursheim, McIntosh, and Dean (Chyrl) Bursheim, Erskine; one brother; four grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; and four great-great-grandchildren.

If you grew up like I did, you can picture a super hero in your mind. He or she

might have a cape, for sure bulging biceps, and the hero is dedicated to truth, justice, and the American way. But the qualities that make up my super hero have morphed over time.

Let me introduce you to one of my current-day super heroes. Nair is barely over five feet tall; I'm pretty sure she is incapable of leaping tall buildings—even in multiple bounds—and to my knowledge she has no lair nor a Nairmobile (though that would be fun). On the other hand this precious sister wields the Sword of Truth with authority and has seen chains fall and mountains move as she prays. Her participation in the Bateias church began 15 years ago when she started bringing her grandson to kid's club and Sunday school. Soon both little William and Grandma Nair were bringing home the good news of God's love to their family. Eventually Nair saw all but one son enter the kingdom of God—and we are still praying for the holdout.

Several years ago, after hearing an update on the coming and goings at the Miriam Home, Nair decided that God was asking her to be a part of the ministry. At that

A TRUE SUPER HERO

BY JONNI SLIVER

time she was well over 60 years old and worked five days a week cleaning homes. In her free time she loved to bake and every now and then someone would ask her to make party foods for a birthday or graduation. Nair decided that her hobby was just the means for her to do her part for the children in the home. She asked God to bring customers to her for her baked goods whenever the Miriam Home needed help. Since that time, she has sent 150 to 200 Reais every month, literally, the fruit of her labor. And Nair sees her “little” ministry as a spring board, an example that others can use to give them ideas on how they can take part in the wonderful things God is doing around the world.

Several things have changed in Nair's life over the last five years. One of her grandchildren had a time when he slipped away from the Lord, and grandma prayed him back. She had to stop cleaning houses because her husband, Vagner, has advanced diabetes and can't be left at home alone any longer. And, more recently, Nair began caring for her aunt (and neighbor) whose health is failing and also isn't able to care for herself any longer. The idea of free time has to be a fond memory for



this dynamo. Though she has given up many things to take care of her family, she hasn't dropped her part in the Miriam Home. I was just recently in Bateias and Nair made special arrangements so she could leave the house and we could visit a bit. The first thing she did was slip me an envelope, sealed with a heart, containing 170 Reais. The gift Nair gave is greatly appreciated (and will provide formula for a newest arrival, just 2 months old, for a month), but what blesses my heart is the joy she has in giving. Nair doesn't see what she does for the Miriam Home as her responsibility, but her privilege.

Super heroes come in all sizes and shapes, what matters are their super powers—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, and above all, faith in the one who gives us the fruit of His Spirit. I personally am hoping to be a Nair when I grow up.

Sliver is an AFLC missionary serving at the Miriam Home in Campo Mourão, Brazil.

Vandals damage Calvary Free Lutheran church building in Everett, Wash.

Vandals broke into and damaged Calvary Free Lutheran's property, one of the oldest church buildings in Everett, Wash. Pastor Cal Willard, who serves the congregation, discovered the damage on May 24 after a homeless couple he knew alerted him to suspicious activities there. The vandals broke in through a window and damaged areas in the basement level, as well as bathrooms in both the basement and upstairs.

According to a May 31 article in the *Everett Herald*, there was no damage to the sanctuary. The article also stated that nothing of value was stolen. The Everett Police Department has not made any arrests in the case.

Members of the congregation took part in a clean-up party in lieu of Bible study, and concluded their time in the sanctuary praising God for His protection and also praying for the perpetrators of the vandalism.

"We are here to reach out to people who are hurting in darkness and try to show them the light," Willard said.

PEOPLE & PLACES

Pastor Gary Jorgenson, Baxter, Minn., has accepted a call to serve as assistant to the president of the AFLC.

Pastor Christian Andrews has accepted an interim call to Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Madison, S.D. Andrews has most recently served Mt. Zion Lutheran, Landisburg, Pa., and Tressler Memorial Free Lutheran, Loysville, Pa., on an interim basis. The parish recently called Pastor David Lusk.

Chad Forman, who serves Stronghold Lutheran, Detroit, Mich., will be ordained July 16 at Stronghold, with Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, AFLC president, officiating. Both Forman and Stronghold Lutheran recently joined the AFLC.

Members of **Bethel Lutheran**, Faith, S.D., will celebrate the congregation's 100th anniversary on Aug. 6.

Margaret Balderach, 78, of Hondo, Texas, died Feb. 21 in Hondo. She was the wife of Pastor Louis Balderach, who serves Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Pleasanton, Texas. She is survived by her husband and one son, Henry (Ishna) Balderach, San Antonio. The service was held Feb. 27 at St. Paul Lutheran, Hondo, Texas.

AFLC Canada holds annual conference

AFLC Canada's 34th annual conference was held March 31-April 2 at Bethel Evangelical Lutheran, Frontier, SK. Thirty-nine registrants and others who attended the services met together under the theme: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for Jesus" based on Matthew 5:10-12 and Hebrews 13:1-3. We praise the Lord for His blessings to all who attended our conference.

The guest speaker was David Anderson, a member of the Canadian Parliament in Ottawa for Cypress Hills-Grasslands Constituency and a member of Bethel Lutheran in Frontier. He shared on suffering and religious persecution and some of his own experiences in working for religious freedom in our world. We were enlightened and encouraged through David's presentations. There are more brothers and sisters in the Lord who are facing oppression and persecution for their faith in Christ than ever before. It is important to remember to pray for those who are suffering for Jesus and prepare our hearts for the increasing opposition and persecution that is spreading around our world, including Canada.

We also thank the Lord for His leading through our elections and business items. Pastor Kelly Henning was elected as our new president for a three-year term beginning in September. Pastor Manfred Kurschner was elected as our new vice-president for a one-year term, and Linda Lee was again elected to serve as secretary for a one-year term. Pastor Brian Smith was elected to a five-year term on our Coordinating Committee board, and Cady Gfeller was elected to a three-year term on our World Mission board.

Pastor Al Pinno has served as president since 2005; he followed Pastor Gene Sundby, our first president, who retired after serving for 22 years. Pastor Al sensed that he needed to spend more time on overseas ministries and to give opportunity for new leadership of our association. We continue to pray for the Lord's guidance and blessing on our association, that we might remain faithful and occupied with the ministry of His kingdom until He comes.

~Submitted by Dorothy Pinno, Editor, Canadian Ambassador



Pictured are Pastor Kelly Henning, newly elected president of the AFLC Canada, and Pastor Al Pinno, outgoing president.

AFLC BENEVOLENCES January 1-May 31, 2017			
FUND	REC'D IN MAY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$37,644	\$196,940	\$154,758
Evangelism	11,406	49,697	47,201
Youth Ministries	9,334	38,831	50,272
Parish Education	8,715	67,704	52,868
Seminary	17,055	103,495	94,318
Bible School	54,119	230,185	216,016
Home Missions	36,692	249,400	186,769
World Missions	42,104	184,875	233,057
Personal Support	63,699	269,473	264,206
TOTALS	\$280,769	\$1,390,603	\$1,299,467
For additional financial information for each department, go to www.aflc.org/giving			

MISSIONS AND THE REFORMATION

The very best of all works is that the heathen have been led from idolatry to the knowledge of God.” “The Gospel is not to be kept in a corner but should fill the whole world.” It may be surprising to learn that these words were



Pastor Robert Lee

not spoken by some famous missionary statesmen, but instead in sermons by Martin Luther, father of the Reformation, whose name is generally not associated with mission endeavors.

Some would even go so far as to say that he failed to recognize any missionary obligation to the lost of the world. This 500th anniversary year is a good time to correct such an unfortunate misunderstanding.

The fact is that Luther saw the Bible as a missionary book. This was especially true of the Old Testament, and in his commentary on Genesis he noted that the promise of blessing to Abram included all the families of the earth (12:3). In the same chapter he interpreted the wandering of the Israelites in the light of missions, and he saw the history of missions in the accounts of Abraham and Joseph and their years among the Canaanites and Egyptians. The Book of Psalms was also taught by him as a powerful source of missionary instruction and inspiration.

There is much interest in Luther’s doctrine of vocation, that every Christian is called to serve Christ, regardless of his or her calling in life. This certainly applies, as well, to his theology of missions in a unique and different way than we are accustomed to think. Missionary service is not a separate category for certain special people, rather, it is at the heart of the common calling of all of God’s people.

This missionary service begins at home. “The noblest and greatest work and the

most important service that we can perform for God on earth is bringing other people, and especially those who are entrusted to us, to the knowledge of God by the holy Gospel.” Surely we can apply the words of John the Beloved to our families when he wrote: “I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth” (III John 4).

In an essay entitled, “Luther as Missionary,” Dr. Gene Bunkowske lists several aspects of the reformer’s ministry that might be termed missionary work. Luther’s writing is first and foremost proclaiming the gospel through his sermons, hymns, and pamphlets—keeping an army of printers prosperous as they produced thousands of copies and distributed them. Bunkowske notes, too, the missionary dimension of the Small Catechism, which provided a simple means of instruction in plain words, translated into a long list of languages. Luther’s translation of the Bible into the German language makes him the father of Bible translations in the vernacular, a powerful ministry that continues today around the world.

I was encouraged to read of the missionary outreach of Luther as a teacher. During his years as a professor at the university in Wittenberg, he shared his rediscovery of the gospel with fellow faculty members, and together they touched the hearts and lives of as many as 16,000 students. Approximately one-third of them were from other lands, equipped through their studies to carry the message of “Grace Alone,” “Faith Alone,” “Holy Scripture

Alone,” “Christ Alone,” and “to the Glory of God Alone” to a lost world. Thus, Luther’s university became the first missionary training school.

One might suggest that Luther’s first mission was the “Christianizing of Christendom.” The Spirit of God opened his eyes to see the widespread ignorance, idolatry, and work’s righteousness of his contemporary church world, and his lifelong ministry may be seen in light of his burden to introduce the baptized people of Germany and beyond to true evangelical freedom in the gospel. But his sense of mission did not stop with them. There were Muslims and Jews in his world who needed Christ, too, and believers must live their

lives in such a way that the reality of the Christian life would be clearly seen. In an interesting essay, he counseled those who might be captured as prisoners by the Turks to let their lights shine even in those most challenging circumstances.

The gospel that transformed the life

of Martin Luther is the wellspring of world missions. He was not a mission strategist in the way we might look at it in the 21st century, but he was a missions theologian. The Bible teaches, he would remind us, that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and so all need to be saved. The missionary heart is renewed when we truly believe this simple message and seriously trust in the power of the Word of God to make disciples among all nations.

The gospel that transformed the life of Martin Luther is the wellspring of world missions.

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association retreat center

WHY CHANGE?

BY PASTOR RICH CARR

I have long driven a minivan. Our past minivans have served us well and I got used to the many benefits they provided our family. Why should

I change what we have always driven? After driving past a local car dealership countless times my wife said, "Let's look at a Suburban." I remember telling my wife we had no need for a big, gas-guzzling SUV, and that we should just stick to what we had. But after our minivan's transmission went out, we traded what was left of our van for a used Suburban. I can tell you that after having that extra space, the big aggressive tires, and four-wheel drive for the snow, there is no better vehicle that I could imagine for our family. Even though change was especially hard for me, it was a step in the right direction.

At the Association Retreat Center we have had a rich history of wonderful staff, well-implemented retreats, and countless other blessings directly tied to our ministry. We have been greatly blessed by so many,

and been a blessing to countless others. As a result, some may wonder why we would or should change the way we operate. Yet I believe that the direction of change we have undertaken is similar to that of my family transitioning from our minivan to a Suburban. Our past is important because it has helped shape us into who we are today. Yet our future is just as important because it is where God wants to take us.

The ARC has secured a 20-year loan from Thrivent only to be used to help pay off existing debt from creditors. This move shifts us from only paying interest on many of our loans to having a secured 20-year pay off date. This means that if nothing else changes, in 20 years the ARC will have a significantly smaller debt load. Our children will have the joy of enjoying our AFLC camp without worrying about debt. Our prayer is that God would multiply the blessing of this loan by moving those who currently have loaned the ARC money to partially or fully forgive their loan against us in order to further bless the next generation.

Change is clearly highlighted in the new faces you are seeing at the ARC. We are so grateful for the many years of service so many have dedicated in serving our guests at the ARC. And we are excited to welcome new members into our ARC staff family. But change at the ARC is more than just fiscal and staff-related. We have embraced technology with the help of gifts specifically used to update our computer system in order to automate and organize retreat registrations. Kirk Rautio, our new executive director, is a specialist in organizational management who is focused on streamlining and efficiency.

While change is rarely easy, let us look forward to a new chapter in the ministry of the ARC. And may we embrace the change that God is bringing, while keeping an eye on the rich heritage of our past.

Carr, a member of the ARC Board of Directors, serves Zion Lutheran, Tioga, N.D.