



## **ENTERTAINING OR HOSPITALITY?**

BY CHRISTINA OSTHUS



y roommates and I moved into a bigger house in January and dove into our life together as four women: two 30-somethings, an 86-year-old, and a 16-year-old. At the beginning

of the school year we purposed that we would invite people to dinner every other Thursday based on work schedules. I had a list of people to invite, and we worked through people as well as we could. We also threw a large Christmas party that helped us through the list a bit.

Our goal was to demonstrate hospitality and to have some enjoyable times over food and games, and we talked a fair bit about the difference between hospitality and entertaining. This idea is elaborated by Margaret Feinberg in her book Wonderstruck. She and her husband had just moved to a new area and were trying to get to know their neighbors, so they decided to invite a couple they had met over for supper. Everything was just perfect—their dining room was beautifully furnished, the meal turned out well, nobody said anything impolite ... but that was it. No friendship sprang up as a result. The two couples were no closer at the end of the time than they had been at the beginning.

Margaret decided to try a change of setting the next time they had company over, so they sat on couches at a funky old table made of found wood from a barn. The night was the total opposite of the previous attempt at hospitality. Conversation and laughter just flowed. The couple they had invited that evening became very close friends with Margaret and her husband. Margaret tried to convince her husband that the table was

magic, but they both knew that the difference was between trying to impress new friends and welcoming new friends into their home.

When I was completing my studies to become a secondary English teacher, my methods professor Pat met with each of us in the English cohort one-on-one, and she told me that she knew students would feel at home in my classroom. I had a weird understanding of hospitality from growing up in the suburbs, and thought the gift of hospitality came with a hefty price tag of a huge house and a catering bill. During my meeting with Pat I suddenly realized that those who are hospitable can bless and welcome others into their homes, their studio apartments, their classrooms, or their cars with equal gusto. That is what I have tried to do as a teacher, and now as a youth worker and mom I am working for the same thing.

So what are the ingredients for facilitating fellowship around your table? We have found good food, hot beverages, music, and games to all be helpful, but certainly not necessary. Here's the key: someone who is hospitable is not just welcoming you into her home, she is welcoming you into her heart. And by doing this she is welcoming Jesus: "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes Me. And whoever welcomes Me does not welcome Me, but the One who sent Me" (Mark 9:37).

Osthus, a 2006 graduate of AFLBS, works in youth and family ministry on the Cheyenne River Reservation, Eagle Butte, S.D.



#### THE LUTHERAN **AMBASSADOR**

JULY 2018 VOL. 56 NO. 7

#### **EDITOR**

Pastor Robert L. Lee rlee@aflc.org

#### MANAGING EDITOR

Ruth Gunderson ruthg@aflc.org

#### CIRCULATION

Liz McCarlson lasubscriptions@aflc.org

#### **EDITORIAL BOARD**

Monica Coyle Pastor Jerry Moan Pastor James L. Johnson

#### THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

(ISSN 0746-3413) (USPS 588-620) is published monthly by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441 Phone (763) 545-5631 Periodicals postage paid at St. Paul, MN and additional mailing offices.

#### **POSTMASTER**

Send address changes to The Lutheran Ambassador, 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441.

#### SUBSCRIPTION CHANGES AND INFORMATION

3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd., Plymouth, MN 55441. 763-545-5631 lasubscriptions@aflc.org

#### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

\$19 a year, Group, U.S. \$20 a year, Individual, U.S. \$22 a year, International

#### sound bites

Only a small percentage of churches have recognized the problems of a growing lost and unchurched population in America.

—Thom S. Rainer

The Father's controlling motive in sending His Son to provide for humankind's salvation was His love for the helpless and hopeless.

—Robertson McQuilkin

Missions is part of the genius of Christianity. Broadly conceived it is the deliberate attempt to bring to others the blessings of the Christian faith, whether at home or abroad.

—Harold R. Cook

This is the good and happy news, that Christ has paid for our sin, and through His suffering has redeemed us from eternal death. It is His kingdom and His ministry, to preach the Gospel to the poor; that is His purpose.

—Martin Luther

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





#### BY MATTHEW ABEL

y wife, Ednay, and I are standing before a new frontier—a new mission field—Paraguay.

There is a lot of newness in what lies ahead.

The process of moving into a mission field where no foundation has yet been laid is both exhilarating and frightening. Exhilarating because we have been called by God into missions and desire as the Apostle Paul "to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation" (Romans 15:20).

In 1962, my grandparents John and Ruby Abel was sent out as the first missionaries of the AFLC. They accepted the challenge of starting the mission work in

Frightening because we know that all of our battles lie

before us.

Brazil, and it is amazing to see what God has done through their lives.

One day early on in the ministry, he stood at the bank of where the Iguaçu and Paraná rivers join. From where he stood on Brazilian soil he could see Paraguay to the west over the Paraná river, and turning his head to the left he could gaze southward over the Iguaçu river and peer into Argentina. While he stood there the Holy Spirit impressed upon him what came to be called the tri-nation vision: to have Free Lutheran congregations in Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina. As he and many others labored to establish the work

in Brazil, he often remembered the tri-nation vision.

King David had vision for building a house for the Lord to replace the tent that was the tabernacle, but God told David that he would not be the one to fulfill this vision (II Samuel 7). It was not until more than 40 years later that King Solomon built the temple, fulfilling what had been his father's vision. In a sense, that is how I feel about Paraguay. God cast the vision for the establishment of AFLC mission work in Paraguay to earlier generations, but the time had not yet come for it to be fulfilled. Coincidentally, it was at the 1977 Annual Conference that a resolution was passed to have a tri-nation vision for South America. And now more than 40 years later we are embracing this vision.

My wife and I were commissioned as AFLC missionaries in 2015 at the Annual Conference in Warm Beach, Wash., and were sent to work in Brazil, our home country. Our first term of full-time ministry

has just come to an end. It was marked by mobility, flexibility, and change as we were led by the Holy Spirit to meet temporary needs. In doing so we ended up moving within Brazil on average every three months. With each move, God was preparing us for the vision He is giving us. But in our impatience we often desire to know the end from the beginning. We ask: God, what is the point in all of this? Where are you taking us? In His patience God answers: trust and obey.

It is reassuring for us to see the pieces of the puzzle falling into place so perfectly, confirming that this is the time and place—an answer to years of asking for God's direction for long-term ministry and what that might look like

Our vision for Paraguay is two-sided. On the one hand is the task in itself: to reach the spiritually lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ and disciple them in God's Word, gathering them together to be the church—free and living in the Holy Spirit. On the other hand our vision is for the Brazilian AFLC (the AILLB).

We will work to mobilize the AILLB and help to organize the sending of missionaries from the Brazilian church to join us in Paraguay. We hope the Brazilian church embraces missions in Paraguay as their own foreign mission field.

God in His wisdom has been preparing us for exactly this. Through all the moving, the interim work, the Bible camps, missions trips, and vacation Bible schools, God has given us the opportunity to get to know each of the churches in the AILLB. We also have had our influence extended by being involved with the leadership of the AILLB.

Linguistically God has also prepared me ahead of time for the task of reaching Paraguay. I learned Spanish as a teenager and had the opportunity after college to live in Panama immersed in Spanish and working as a translator. We must learn the Guaraní language as well, but in the meantime Spanish will get us by. God has truly worked ahead of time without our even knowing to prepare us for what is ahead.

We are excited to have been called for such a time as this and ask that you would keep us in your prayers, that we might accomplish through the power of the Holy Spirit everything that God has set out for us.

Abel and his wife, Ednay, are AFLC missionaries. After serving a first term in Brazil, they are being sent to open a new mission field in Paraguay.

# Church planting

BY DR. NATHAN OLSON

hurch planting. What comes to your mind when you read those words?

Maybe some of you think of a department or organization. For others, perhaps you think about a congregation big enough to pioneer a vision like that by itself.

For most of us, perhaps it's the last thing on our mind. But if we are presented with the idea we often think: "There is no way that our congregation could do something like that on our own. Our church isn't big enough for that kind of venture."

In the founding documents of the Lutheran Free Church and the AFLC, this was exactly the point. There are some things that the local congregation can't do on its own. But when churches work together toward a common cause and common task, God's Spirit is able to work through that combined effort to bring about great things. This is the case in many aspects of ministry—including church planting.

Perhaps you are reading this and thinking: "Wait a second—don't we have a Home Missions Department that's responsible for this task, which we financially support in order that they may plant churches?" This is true and we praise God for the good and faithful work He has done through this ministry. However, perhaps too often local congregations have completely abandoned the role of kingdom expansion by leaving church planting to a department.

Brothers and sisters, the call to "make disciples of all nations" finds its realization in the local congregation. It is something each and every one of us is called to have a heart for, not a mission for us to just leave for others to do. Yes, we should continue to support specific church planting ministries and their ventures, but let us embrace this call for our local congregations as something we can also have a hand in.

Many of us know the Great Commission of our Lord from Matthew 28 to "Go and make disciples of all nations." However, if we're honest with ourselves, this often seems detached from the mission and vision of the local congregation. Instead, our dreams consist of building remodels or having the right songs played on Sunday mornings.

Friends, our call is to have a bigger dream. Part of

evangelism means helping to found godly fellowships in the surrounding area so that more people can hear the good news of Jesus Christ.

"Well, I get what you're saying, but we are a small congregation," you may say. "We could never take part in something like that." That is exactly right—you need others.

Fortunately, you are not alone. In fact, there are other AFLC congregations around you in your district. Some of you are spread out. Others of you are closer together. But as the founding documents of our church body remind us, we are all gathered around a common cause and a common task—the call for each of us to uphold the Word of God unashamedly and to proclaim the good news of the gospel to a world in need of a Savior.

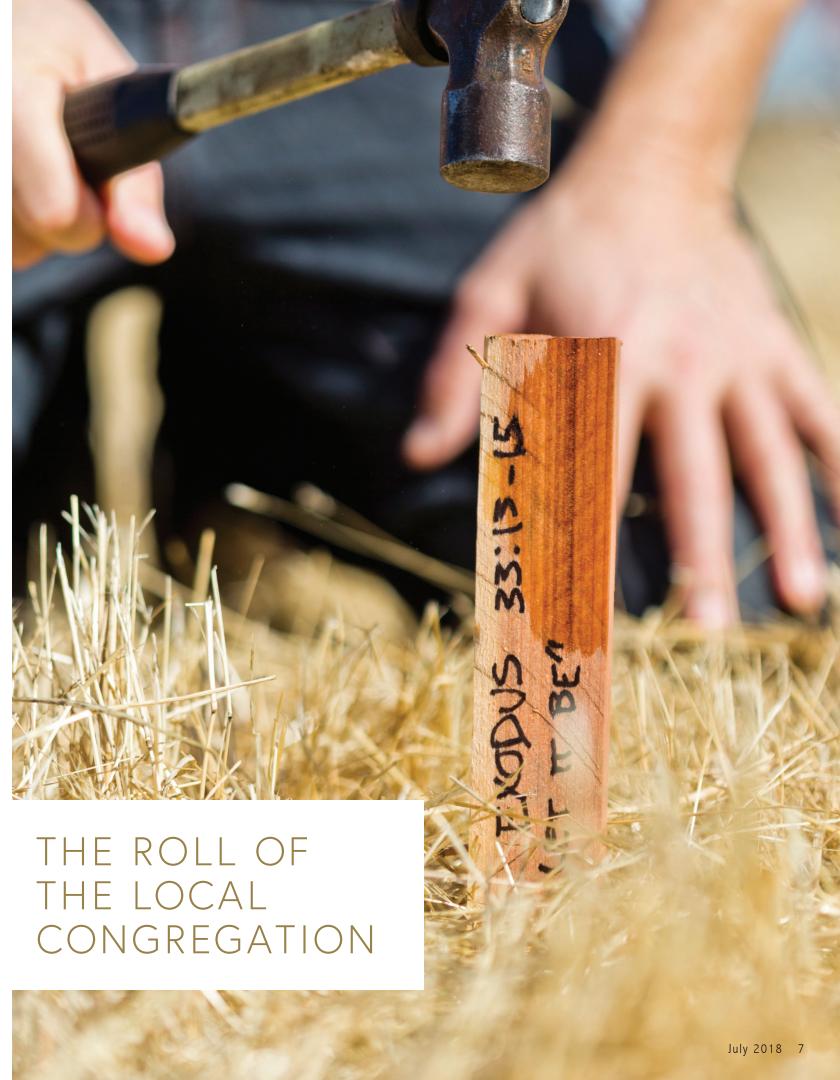
So, as you ponder this in your heart today, let me ask you this: What would it look like for your district to collectively work on planting a church? What would it take to pool together your resources in such a way that starting a new congregation would be feasible? Maybe you are in a position to supply manpower, or lead a Bible study for an up-and-coming group. Maybe your congregation is further away from where a church might be planted, but God has blessed you with the resources to support what another congregation is pioneering. Maybe each congregation in your district could chip in \$5,000 a year to collaborate toward a united goal.

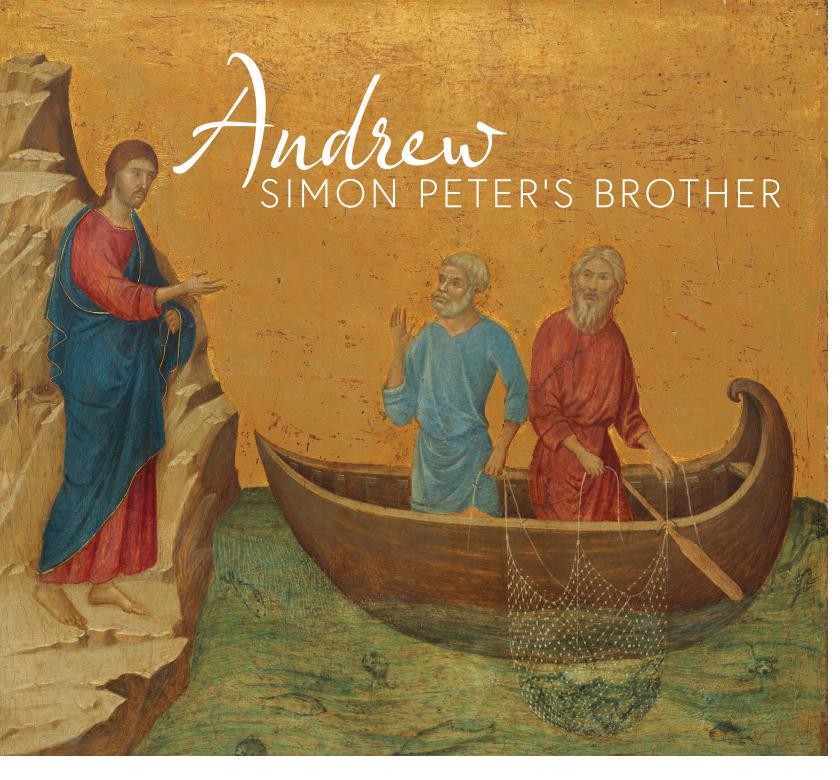
The possibilities are endless, but the heart is the same—taking the good news of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth.

In the Minneapolis District, our local pastors have started to dream and pray about this. We have started to ask: God, how might You use us together to do a work that we couldn't do on our own? God, what kind of vision would You have for us and how can we follow Your leading to reach the lost?

I invite you to pray about the same thing. I invite you to pray that God would open your eyes to how He might use your congregation, small or large, to be part of His working. To pray that God would do a mighty work in your midst that you are incapable of doing alone.

Olson, Savage, Minn., serves Living Word Free Lutheran, Eagan, Minn.





BY GEORG SVERDRUP • Translation by Carl Vaagenes

he little we know about the Apostle Andrew, son of Jonah, is very precious. He was one of the first of John the Baptist's disciples to hear the baptizer's testimony, "Behold the Lamb of God!" and to follow Jesus.

These two had an unforgettable day with Jesus. They certainly came to Him believing that one word: "Behold the Lamb of God!" And that faith gave them an abundant understanding of Jesus' person and deeds and message, so that they held onto Him with an indestructible bond.

Only those who experience it know how glorious such a meeting with Jesus is when doubt and dimness are replaced by light and truth, when question after question is answered, when the heart's dark misgivings and even secret thoughts find solutions, when, all at once, trust and love for the faithful Savior are born in the heart, and joy is overflowing.

But such a meeting has a continuing effect on life. Andrew went out from his meeting with Jesus a new man, having received new life and a new goal for his life. He now had

something to live for and work for. It was glorious to be Andrew now. It was like a joyful dream, yet he saw quite clearly what he must do.

Yes, he had a brother, Simon, who had not yet found the Messiah. It would have been unthinkable for Andrew to have such good fortune and Simon not to share in it. So Andrew made it his business to find his brother and report to him the Good News: "We have found the Messiah!"

No greater discovery can anyone make! All the gold in the world and all its honors are insufficient to compare with Jesus Christ and salvation in His fellowship. This is happiness for time and for eternity.

And Simon [himself] was not unconcerned about whether the Messiah was found or not. Simon also had been with John the Baptist and had a poor sinner's yearning for salvation. When Simon heard from Andrew that the Messiah was there, that "The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" might be found, he was not slow to follow the happy and zealous Andrew, who "brought him to Jesus."

Blessed Andrew! To find the Messiah, the Lamb of God, and to believe in Him, and then to find his brother Simon and lead him to Jesus. That is grace upon grace and joy upon joy. If we might be permitted to envy any of God's elect, it would seem we should envy you.

But it is not necessary [to envy Andrew]. It is better to do as Andrew did. The first testimony for Christ of which we know, the first Christian layman mentioned in the Gospels, is an example for us to imitate. For this is the way and method of living Christians, then and now: They first find Jesus, then they find their brothers and "bring them to Jesus."

This is missions in its complete simplicity. The inner kernel of missions is a direction onward and outward. Here there is room for all. Here there is opportunity for everyone: Come first to Jesus and then go out to find your brother and lead him to Jesus.

Friends, many of you have had a day and many already have had many days with Jesus, and therein you have joy and peace. Think now about your many brothers after the flesh, the many unsaved people at home and elsewhere who have not yet found the Messiah or known the Gospel's gladness. What shall we do for them?

Let us remember Andrew, that blessed man who found a double joy, because he found the Messiah and then went out again and found his brother. The Lord still has the same double joy and welcoming hand for all who will come to Him. They shall be blessed and be a blessing for others.

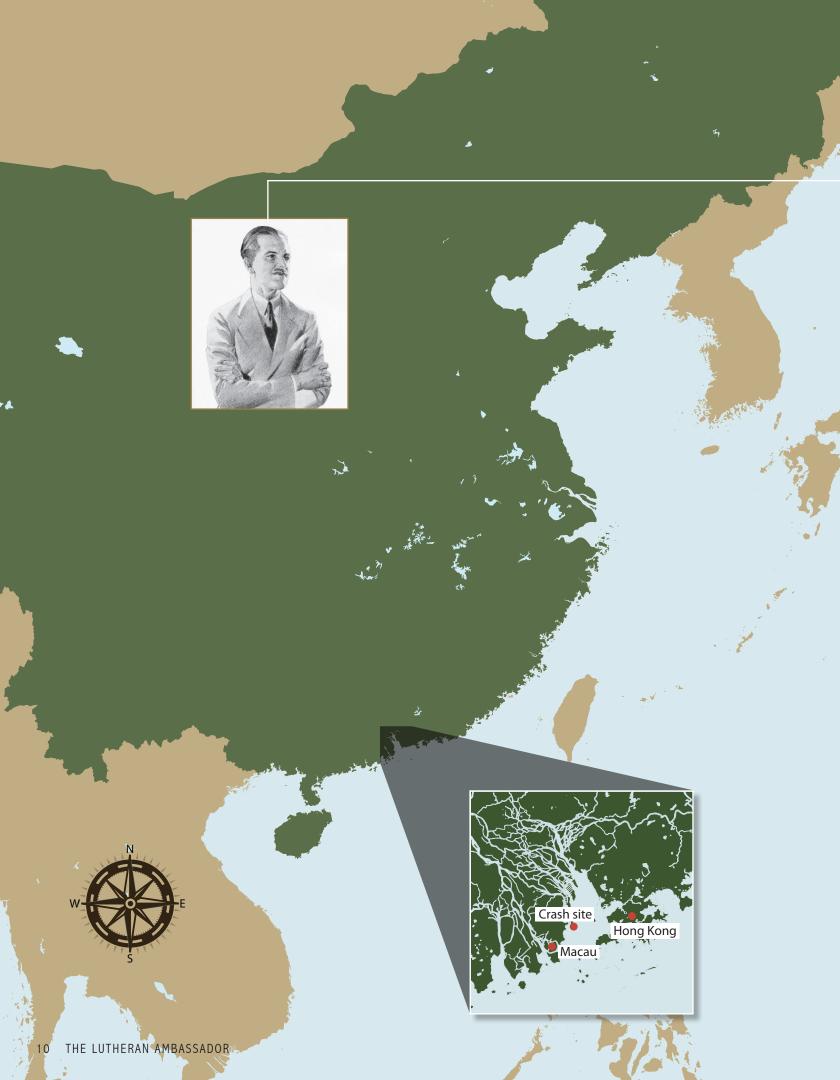
"He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah (which translated means Christ).' And he brought him to Jesus."

—John 1:41-42

Herein the congregation has its peculiar work: to reach out and to communicate [the gospel]. In the Old Testament the chosen people treasured God's precious gifts like gold in a casket, and in the world's dark and storm-filled night it was a great achievement to be able to preserve the flame worthily, if only guarding it with both hands. In the New Testament, this dimly shining lamp, which is often compared to a smoldering wick, became like a bright torch which withstands all storms and downpours and burns all the more fiercely the more terrible the storm. Congregation of God, bear it out into the night, into the darkness ... Bear it out in thousands and thousands of languages, until it shines in all dark lands in all dark houses and huts, yes, in all dark hearts! Bear it out, further and further out. Bear it so that it may progress inch by inch. It is God's light which is to be carried forth for the salvation of the peoples. He Himself will add blessings to those who bear the message forward and to those who hear it.

Georg Sverdrup, a founder of the Lutheran Free Church (forerunner of the AFLC), had two great passions—the free congregation and missions. "Andrew, Simon Peter's Brother," along with 85 of his other mission meditations, were published in Norwegian under the title, Thy Kingdom Come. The Georg Sverdrup Society has translated all 85 of these meditations and will be publishing them in the future as part of the AFLC Heritage Series. Vaagenes is the son of former LFC missionaries to Madagascar, and alsos served there with his family.

"The Calling of the Apostles Peter and Andrew" by Duccio di Buoninsegna (c. 1250).





#### BY CHARLOTTE MARTINSON GRONSETH

uly 16 is the 70th anniversary of the world's first recorded skyjacking of a commercial airplane, the Miss Macao of the Cathay Pacific Airways. It is also the 70th anniversary of the death of a notable Lutheran missionary and his family who were passengers on that plane.

Daniel Nelson, Jr., was born on Aug. 18, 1902, in the city of Xinyang, China, in the poor rural province of Henan. There his father, Daniel Nelson, Sr., and his mother, Anna, were serving as missionaries—America's first Lutheran missionaries in China. Young Daniel grew to love the Chinese people and their culture.

On returning to the U.S. he attended first St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn., graduating in 1924, then Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. Soon after his ordination as pastor, Nelson married a college schoolmate, Esther Idso, and in 1928 the two left for a lifetime of service in Henan. There, often under threat of bandit groups and civil unrest, he brought the good news of God's love to many and helped train Chinese converts to become effective Christian leaders.

Returning to the U.S. for several years he earned a Ph.D. in Hartford, Conn. (1943), and served for some time with United China Relief in New York. Relief was urgently needed, for the Japanese had invaded China in the late 1930s, penetrating deep into the country and bringing vast devastation. In 1943 he was chosen by the National Lutheran Council (the China arm of the Lutheran World Federation) to head up their work there. He accepted the challenge, and in 1944 became its director, a post he held until his death.

During these several years, based in Free China's western city of Chongqing, his duties were many-faceted. An early assignment was to provide relief to orphaned missions—European Lutheran agencies cut off by the war from their support in Germany and Scandinavia. He also opened a Lutheran Service Center for American military personnel, was instrumental in organizing a Chinese Lutheran congregation from among the millions of war refugees, and helped open a provisional theological school.



# Perspective

BY JOSIE PILLMAN

comforter.

y sister, Melita, is a missionary in the Philippines. On a chilly night in April, we had a conversation on Skype's video conferencing software. She was in cool summer clothes to match the hot climate at midday and actually got up to turn on the fan during the course of our conversation. In contrast, I was in Wisconsin and it was late evening. It was cold and winter-like weather. I got up to wrap myself in a down

> Melita described the perspective of her world saying that the temperatures had dropped down to 72 degrees Fahrenheit overnight and people were exchanging shorts for slacks and sweaters, only to shed them later on as the temperatures rose. The Filipinos lamented that the sniffles and coughs they were experiencing were caused by the extreme temperature changes. We laughed together about the different perspectives we each had where we are planted.

> From my perspective, the -8 degrees Fahrenheit early morning temperatures I had that morning had not even risen to 32 degrees during the day. It still felt cold, but think of what 72 degrees would have felt like to me. Extreme temperature fluctuations are also a matter of perspective. Having been raised in cold Canada (think -40, several days each winter), my sister and I laughed together about how our own perspective changes and adjusts to the climate around us.

> As our conversation moved to some of our personal challenges, it occurred to me that many of my concerns had a lot to do with perspective. The Apostle Paul says, "I have learned in whatever state I am to be content" (Philippians 4:11). We are admonished to not be anxious, but to set our minds on things above not on things on earth (Colossians 3:2), which includes whatever is true, noble, pure and lovely (Philippians 4:8). Having this kind of discipline changes our perspective when facing relationships struggles, financial strain, or health challenges. Romans 5:3 says we should actually glory in tribulations as they produce perseverance, character, and then hope. And hope gives us a new perspective on the trials of life.

In the course of our conversation, Melita reminded

me of King Jehoshaphat and what he did when faced with a multitudinous enemy army. He cried out to the Lord, knowing God would hear and save, saying,

"We have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do but our eyes are upon you" (II Chronicles 20:12). King Jehoshaphat set himself to seek the Lord and proclaimed a fast throughout Judah. The Lord encouraged the heart of Jehoshaphat saying, "Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude for the battle is not yours but God's" (v. 15). The Lord's words were changing Jehoshaphat's perspective. In the end, the whole multitude helped destroy one another. That was Jehoshaphat's answer from God's perspective.

I also thought of Gideon's army of 32,000, which the Lord kept making smaller before he and his men faced the Midianites. That day the Lord used 300 men to use to defeat his enemies (Judges 7). And what about David, the shepherd boy, up against the great Philistine warrior Goliath. I Samuel 17:45 records David's challenge, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel." David's confidence was founded in his perspective, for he served his great and mighty God, and he trusted God's abilities and desire to save him.

Abraham Lincoln is quoted as saying, "I know that the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord's side." I, too, want my hope to be on the Lord's side. I want to have an eternal, spiritual perspective as David did, and Jehoshaphat and Gideon. As we cry out to the Lord, let's allow the Word to work in our hearts to give us a spiritual, eternal perspective.

So, Melita, keep your fan on and I will grab my down comforter. We will laugh at wrong perspectives causing anxious days like the fluctuating culture around us. As we apply God's perspective to spiritual challenges, we will shed anxiety, faith will be built, and we will gain an eternal perspective.

Pillman attends Christ the King Lutheran, Wilson, Wis.

## When Jesus calls

BY GAIL BRANDT

hat do you do when Jesus calls? This is a very personal question.

Unbelievers have ears that do not hear, and the call is unanswered. Others are caught up with the whirlwind of life's activities and postponement becomes a way to avoid the question. Hopefully believers have ears that do hear and choose to answer the call.

When Jesus calls and we answer, we must trust that He will lead the way. The number of people we reach is not the issue. It is the answer we give when He calls us.

In 1969, a man I knew graduated from high school in a very small town located at the tip of Southern Texas, near the Texas-Mexico border. He chose to go to college in Edinburg, Texas, becoming the first in his family to graduate from college. A year later he married his high school sweetheart—that would be me. His name is Bill Brandt, and I am Gail. The Christian impact that we have had in our lives happened mostly in the classroom, or in the area of sports. We both have 42 years of teaching experience in Texas public schools. Bill is not only a coach, but a science teacher. I have taught journalism and English the longest, but American history is my passion.

Our three girls will tell you that they cannot take us anywhere without running into former students. We chose to teach because that was our passion. Christ called us to serve in that capacity.

Through our journey together as Lutherans, we were introduced to a man who became the pastor at Faith Lutheran Church in Weslaco, Texas. He even offered the prayer at our rehearsal dinner. His name is Norman Dornquast. People came to Faith Lutheran just to listen to his messages. They came because he relied on the Word and the Holy Spirit to guide him.

Pastor Dornquast remained at Faith Lutheran for 26 years before retiring. He helped Bill grow in his walk with the Lord. Bill even referenced him in a recent sermon; He pointed out that Pastor Dornquast's words made him realize that when God calls, you had better have an answer.

When our last pastor retired, my husband Bill took over as the lay pastor. Bill had been the "fill-in" guy when

our regular pastor took vacation time, was sick, or in the hospital. Bill's mother, Ruth, had always wanted him to be a full-time minister. And while she did not live to see it, her prayers did come to fruition.

I am reminded of a message Bill delivered in January of this year. After reading Mark 1:14-20, he asked two questions: "What do you do when Jesus calls?" and, "What is the appropriate response to Christ?" They are questions that we must still face today. Jesus is no longer here in the flesh, but lives inside each of us.

Bill continued. Jesus said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." This Bill did, as did I.

For his second question, Bill referenced the last command of Jesus in Acts 1:8: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

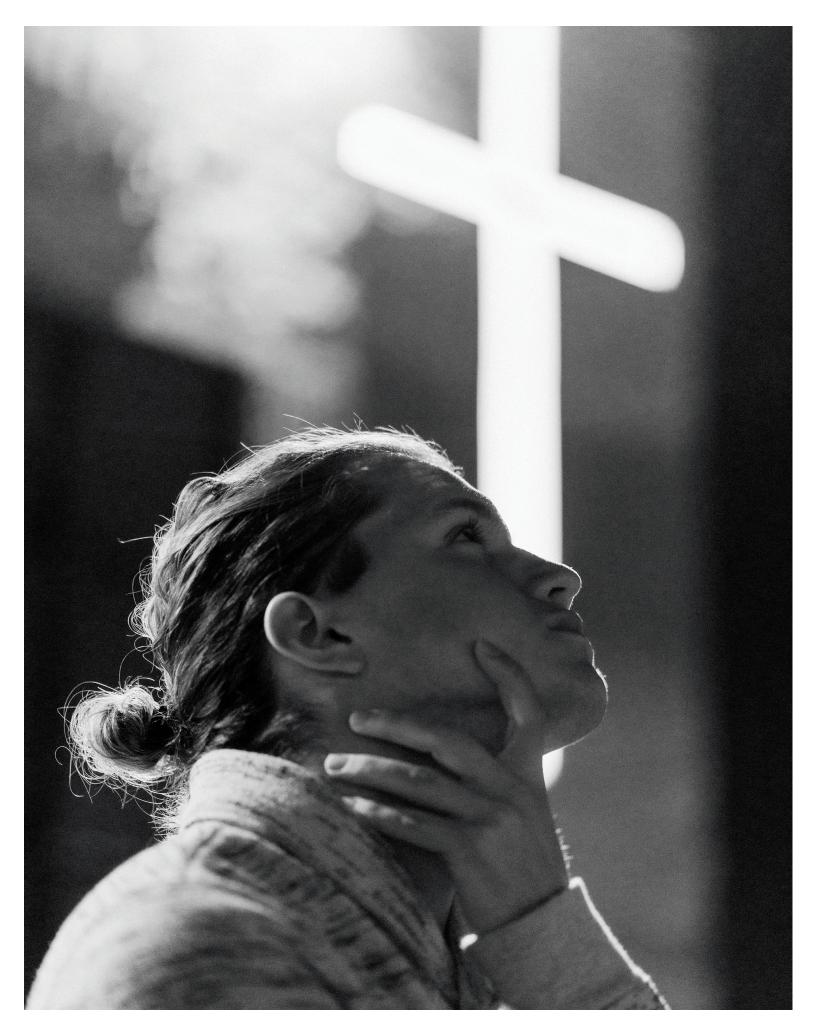
As my husband concluded his sermon, he said. "Here is the secret of why we are all called to become fishers of men and women and children. This is what salvation is actually all about. Salvation is joining the mission of Jesus. If we refuse to become fishers of men, then we are refusing to follow Jesus."

When people travel to South Texas, they are known as Winter Texans. Some choose to reside in Weslaco, where trailer parks abound. There are many Protestant churches, even several different Lutheran synods. Some come simply because of the birding centers located in Weslaco. Of course, many of the tourists are avid bird watchers.

At Faith Lutheran, located on the corner of 300 South Border Avenue and Third Street, we preach that the Bible is the infallible Word of God and invite all who come to join us.

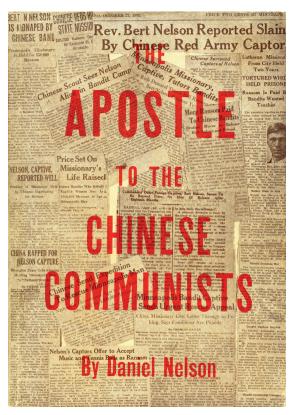
Our journeys throughout life take us to many places. Let Weslaco be one of your destinations on your life journey, and let Faith Lutheran be your church home while you are here in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas.

Brandt is a member of Faith Lutheran, Weslaco, Texas.



#### NELSON, from page 11

Unknown to Nelson, in 1946—following WWII—the Roy Farrell Export Import Company was founded in Shanghai, which soon created Cathay Pacific Airways as its air transport wing. With offices opened in Hong Kong, Cathay Pacific Airways soon became a flourishing business, ferrying both passengers and freight. It was not long before the opportunity of ferrying imported gold



Nelson's book about his brother, Bert Nelson, who was martyred by Chinese communists in 1932.

to Macau became evident, involving transactions legal in Macau though not in Hong Kong. The gold would be disseminated to Chiang Kai-shek (among others), leader of the Republic of China, to support his fight against the communists in China. However, ferrying passengers and gold on the same flight was recognized as dangerous and therefore prohibited.

Daniel Nelson, ironically, had been a staunch advocate of the use of airplanes in mission work. During WWII he became deeply concerned for the nearly 300 missionaries and their families still in danger zones in China. From his base in Free

China, he approached Major General Patrick Hurley, then U.S. ambassador to China. Hurley communicated with U.S. Army commander General Albert C. Wedemeyer, who then ordered their air rescue. American transport planes brought the missionaries first to West China, then lifted them high over the eastern Himalayan Mountains and the Burma jungles to Calcutta, India.

Following the war in 1946, as missionary personnel streamed back into China, Nelson envisioned a plane owned by the mission to facilitate their movement. His dream became reality when he arranged the purchase of a DC3 twin-engine transport from the U.S. Army, christening it the St. Paul. The plane served its purpose well.

Two years later, in 1948, as communist forces advanced throughout China, the St. Paul became a critical factor in another major evacuation of missionaries. Making dozens of flights it evacuated Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries as well as 1,000 Korean

Christians from territory threatened by the communists. In June of that year, only weeks before Nelson's own fatal flight, the plane had completed 30 trips. By then Nelson had been elected president of the newly established World Missionary Aviation Conference by the National Lutheran Council.

On July 16 Daniel Nelson and his family, after a visit to Macau, boarded the Miss Macao for their return to Hong Kong. Unknown to all, among those boarding the plane were three armed pirates who secured seats directly behind the pilot, American Dale Cramer, a highly respected ex-US Navy pilot. He was substituting for the originally rostered pilot for this flight who had become ill.

The pirates' plan had been to hold up the plane, force it to land somewhere remote, and rob the passengers, four of whom were millionaires. They would then be held for ransom on a remote island by relatives of the pirates. Accordingly, seven or eight minutes after take-off they struck, demanding Cramer hand over the controls. He refused. Shots were fired and pandemonium broke loose, bringing the plane into an irreversible dive. Of the 27 aboard, all perished save one, a 24-year-old rice farmer who had been brought into the plot because of his detailed knowledge of the coastline and of a place where the Miss Macao might be hidden. Among the passengers were Daniel and Esther Nelson, their daughter Marguerite and son Daniel.

The Nelson family was not a stranger to tragedy. Daniel Jr.'s pioneer missionary father, Daniel Nelson, Sr., had been killed by a stray bullet during a skirmish in 1926 between opposing military forces in Xinyang, Henan. His brother, Bert Nelson, had been captured by the communists during the civil unrest of 1930 and killed two years later by his captors.

Despite these tragedies, those who knew Nelson valued not only his intimate understanding and love of the Chinese people, but also his irresistible enthusiasm and good humor. His unusual degree of vision and originality were coupled with the drive, efficiency, and daring to make vision a reality. Developing new projects always engaged his mind. An incurable optimist, he has been quoted as saying in regard to one project, "Some said it would be impossible, but we Christians specialize in the impossible." Even in his death, his faith—inherent in all that he did—was to impact many around the globe.

Martinson Gronseth, Inver Grove, Minn., is the daughter of Harold Martinson, lifelong friend of Daniel Nelson, Jr. In turn, she was friends with Nelson's children. Gronseth also served as associate director of the Global Mission Institute of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn.

Source: "Flight of No Return: How a Cathay Pacific plane became the first hijacked commercial airliner," Mark Footer, *South China Morning Post*, July 20, 2008, updated Oct. 7, 2016.

t was 6:30 on a Wednesday morning. Julia and I bumped into each other on our way from dorm to cafeteria at the Association Free Lutheran Bible School, probably making a joke about how quiet I am in the morning and how funny it is to see Julia awake before sunrise. The Barnabas teams gathered around a table on the far end of the cafeteria where Pastor Paul Nash opened the

Bible. We leaned in to listen,

to what it looked like to "do"

of our ministry training, our experience with Home Missions, and a friendship that spans eight years. Through our time with Home Missions we noted a few core principles that have proven central for missional living.

#### Obstacles are opportunities.

Summer ministry with Barnabas teams is done as a group. Church planting with pastor, elders, and Parish Builders is done as a group. Being on mission together sets the ministry up well to face the inevitable obstacles of closed doors, ministry fatigue, and criticism. It reminds me of the four men in Mark 2 who were on a mission to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus. As they arrived at the house where Jesus was teaching, they met poor crowd control and a blocked door (2:4a). I wonder if three of those men felt like giving up then and there. Regardless, one of them stood up and saw another way, thought outside the box, thought outside the house (2:4b). Jesus acknowledged their faith and determination

## **ON MISSION TOGETHER**

BY HANNAH MESSERLY



with healing and forgiveness—it was worth it! One person can discourage a whole group. By the same token, one person can give a whole group courage. We need each other in ministry.

#### Deep friendship is a by-product of faithful discipleship.

Throughout our experience with Home Missions, we sat in the Word together, we prayed together, we planned vacation Bible school songs, games, and Bible lessons together. Ours has been a missional friendship from the beginning. Since that summer, Julia and I have served as co-teachers of a confirmation class at Vision of Glory Lutheran in the Twin Cities. as Young Life volunteers together, at a Home Missions church together, and traveled to Nepal to encourage a missionary friend together. We've laughed, argued, and pushed each other to lean in to Jesus through the changing seasons of life. Home Missions is about inviting people into a relationship with Jesus and missional living. There's no doubt that a fruit of answering that invitation is in-depth friendships.

#### Servant-heartedness is a lifestyle.

When we concluded our summer of VBS we thought our ministry of serving was coming to a close, but in reality, it was just the beginning. The training and ministry we experienced during those summers serving on the Barnabas teams continues to be a lifestyle we live today. I have played a significant role in the Kingdom work



through four years as a Young Life director in Camarillo, Calif. Back in Minnesota, Julia plays an integral part in Home Missions as the office administrator. Whatever the season of life, there are opportunities to serve those around us for the Kingdom. Mark 10:45 says, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Eight years later, these principles not only perpetuate in our own lives, but endure as foundational themes of AFLC Home Missions.

Messerly is a member of Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Camarillo, Calif. Julia Prichard also contributed to the article.

## AFLC Canada celebrates 35th annual conference

By Pastor Al and Dorothy Pinno

FLC Canada held its 35th Annual Conference on April 6-8, 2018, at Faith Free Lutheran, Lake Alma, Saskatchewan. Faith Free Lutheran was the first congregation of AFLC Canada when it began in 1983. The theme for the weekend was "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9). Forty-five registered for the conference. We were pleased that Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, AFLC president, and his wife, Linda, joined us.



At the WMF annual meeting on Friday afternoon, guest speaker Linda Korhonen shared a message with the 20 ladies present entitled: "She Did What She Could" based on Mark 14:8. Shannon Hundeby, president of the WMF of AFLC Canada, led the business meeting. In response to a written request from Pastor Luther Dasari of AFLC India, it was decided to support one additional Bible woman, making

TOP: Conference attendees at the Friday evening service.
ABOVE: Pictured (from left) are AFLC Canada officers: Pastor Kelly Henning, president; Linda Lee, secretary; Brenda Attwood, treasurer; and Pastor Al Pinno, vice-president.

a total of six Bible women that the Canadian WMF supports each year. During the elections, Katie Haaland was elected as vice-president and Sharon Smith was elected as secretary.

At the Friday evening worship service Ken Hagen, president of Faith Free Lutheran, welcomed everyone. In his message, Pastor Rob Lewis, recently retired director of World Mission Prayer League Canada, encouraged us to continue in the work of the gospel. We shared in Holy Communion. At the end of the service,

Pastor Kelly Henning, president of AFLC Canada, officially opened the conference.

On Saturday morning Reverend Ken Wilsdon, a former pastor and vice-president of AFLC Canada, told of the open door of ministry that the Lord has given to him to help teach God's Word and gospel to many pastors in the country of Nepal. Pastor Korhonen, brought greetings from our sister association in the United States. Pastor Korhonen was one of the pastors who was part of sharing with Faith Free Lutheran congregation in 1983 when AFLC Canada began. Elections included Pastor Al Pinno as vice-president, Linda Lee as secretary, and Pastor Doug Lutz and Ken Hagen as Coordinating Committee members. It was a great blessing to receive Pastor John Attwood onto our lay pastor fellowship roster, as well as Faith Bible Fellowship, a house church in Black Diamond, Alberta, onto our congregational roster. We praise God for Brenda Attwood's willingness to serve as the newlyappointed treasurer of AFLC Canada, and for Bernd Halwass who served faithfully as treasurer for the past 16 years.

The Saturday evening banquet was held at Lake Alma Hall. After the meal and a time of praise singing led by Ron Hundeby, Pastor Attwood shared how the Lord led the little group of believers in Black Diamond to affiliate with the AFLC Canada. At the evening worship service, Pastor Brian Smith's message encouraged each of us to continue to follow Christ in the unique ministries He calls us to.

On Sunday morning, Pastor Wilsdon led a devotional and prayer time. Pastor Pinno's message focused on the urgency of continuing in the work that the Lord has prepared in advance for us to do, emphasizing that our lives are brief, and the Lord's return is near. Pastor Henning installed the newly-elected officers before closing our conference. We were greatly blessed by the times of worshiping together, hearing God's Word, sharing Holy Communion, taking part in the business meeting, and fellowship. To God be the glory.

The Pinnos live in Outlook, Saskatchewan.



## **STAND FIRM IN HIM**

BY LYNN STRAND

and sisters, when you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

We all face trials. In verse two of this passage, James reminds us of "when" we will

on James 1:2-4, which says,

"Count it all joy, my brothers

two of this passage, James reminds us of "when" we will face trials, not "if." No one likes to talk about trials; it's hard to preach or teach on this topic as Loiell Dyrud, our Bible study leader from Thief River Falls, shared. But trials come in all sorts of ways: sickness, disease, financial trouble, disasters, accidents, etc. Some people, as Dyrud shared examples, including his mother, face lots of death in their lives. And how—you may wonder—do we deal with these kinds of trials or get through times of testing?

Dyrud led us through three different versions of these passages, specifically on verses two and three. James 1:2 NIV says, "... count it all joy when you face trials of many kinds." When you come face to face with a trial, you may or may not see it coming. The ESV version says, "meet trials of various kinds." This happens without any planning or warning, like meeting someone on the street. The NKJ version says, "fall into various trials." It gives the idea that we can stumble into trial, so unaware that we cannot even catch ourselves. Neither the term "fall into," nor "meet," nor "face" should be construed as God punishing us.

Whether you face or meet or fall into a trial, just know that you will get through it with God's help. It's hard to see over the hill or mountain. Once on the other side, this testing brings fruits of patience and steadfastness, and also perseverance. The Apostle Paul wrote in II Corinthians 4:17, "for our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."

So how do we get to the other side? Author and speaker Susie Larson has some good advice for us. She first directs believers to realize that God doesn't cause trials, but He does allow them to happen. Then when we are thrust into this place of trials, it is here when believers especially need to hang onto what they know to be true—God's Word. "He who calls you is faithful, He will surely do it," promises I Thessalonians 5:24.

It's easy to look down at our trials and forget

to look up to the promises of God. We lose ground because we loosen our grip on God and what we know to be true. Then, we start to doubt God and develop a cynical attitude toward Him. Like Peter walking the waves in the storm, we begin, instead, to look at the problem and not the Savior (Matthew 14:31).

Find a promise that matches your trouble or trial. Don't let your heart close up in this place. Consider Psalm 119:133: "Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me." In the dark days, remember what He told you to be true in the light. When you find your spirit closing up, get with some godly friends who can talk and pray with you and for you. If you're hurt, bring it to the Lord. Be honest. He wants to hear from you. He actually already knows but longs for intimacy with us as we talk to Him. Tell him you're a mess and need some healing. Just know, your breakthrough will come. "But the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one" (II Thessalonians 3:3).

Strand, president of the Northwest Minnesota District WMF, is a member of United Free Lutheran, Greenbush, Minn.

### **AFLC Schools host graduation**



he AFLC Schools hosted a weekend of events May 18 and 19 to mark the end of the school year. Four men graduated from the Free Lutheran Seminary, and 47 students graduated from the Association Free Lutheran Bible School.

The weekend kicked off with a final concert featuring the Concert Choir, Proclaim Choir and Wind Ensemble on Friday evening. The graduation service was held Saturday afternoon, with Pastor Joel Rolf, Bible school dean, giving the address. Rolf has stepped down as dean after leading the school for 12 years. Welcoming the family and friends in attendance were graduates Ethan Zeltinger and Hannah Peterson.

Holding with tradition, a reception line wrapped through the parking lot between the chapel and Heritage Hall, where a reception was held to honor the graduates.



















1. The graduates. 2. The combined AFLBS choirs sing during graduation. 3. Pastor Joel Rolf was the commencement speaker. 4. Friends and family greeted graduates following the ceremony. 5. Graduate Andrew Odhiambo (center) poses with friends. 6. AFLTS graduates Nick Schultz, Kendal Flaten, Matthew Nelson and Matthew Quanbeck pose for a photo with their diplomas. 7. Jane Rasmussen congratulates the graduates. 8. Ethan Zeltinger and Hannah Peterson greet the audience. 9. Adreana Marschner receives her diploma.

#### PEOPLE & PLACES

#### Pastor Andrew and Alexis Olson,

AFLC missionaries on loan to Lutheran Bible Translators, have been called to serve in Tanzania. The Olsons are still in the preparation process, but look to transition to work in Tanzania in 2019, where they hope to join the Kikerewe Bible translation project on Ukerewe Island. Andrew's education from AFLTS will be put to use as he will add Greek and Hebrew theological insights as a translation advisor. The Olsons ask for prayer for the translation team as they begin working on the Gospel of Luke this summer.

Pastor Nathan Olson was awarded a Ph.D. from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., on May 18. The title of his dissertation was "Faith Comes By Hearing: The Interrelationship Between Theology, Faith, and Practice." A copy is available in the AFLC Schools Library. Olson serves Living Word Lutheran, Eagan, Minn.

**Pastor Steven Lombardo** has accepted the call to be preaching pastor of Helmar Evangelical Lutheran, Newark, Ill.

Pastor James Lindgren, Iron Mountain, Mich., has accepted a call to serve Good Shepherd Free Lutheran, Madison, S.D. Lindgren, a 1974 graduate of AFLBS, was recently approved for the AFLC fellowship roster by members of the Coordinating Committee.

**Pastor Todd Klemme** was installed July 1 at Grace Free Lutheran, Bagley, Minn., with Pastor Lyndon Korhonen, AFLC president, officiating.

**Pastor Craig Benson** has accepted a call to serve Grace Lutheran, Morris, Ill.

Pastor Matthew Nelson, a 2018 graduate of AFLTS, was installed June 24 at Salem Lutheran, Radcliffe, Iowa, and St. Paul's Lutheran, Jewell, Iowa, with Dr. Phil Haugen, AFLTS faculty, officiating.

#### MAY MEMORIALS

#### **AFLBS**

Norman Dahl (3) Ruth Claus Pastor Steve Papillon (44)

#### **AFLTS**

Pastor Steve Papillon (45)

#### **WMF**

Carol Maki Ricky Lee Kutter

#### **Karol Frecks**

Karol Frecks, 80, of Holdrege, Neb,. died May 21, 2018. Born Oct. 13, 1937, in Holdrege, she was the daughter of Lawrence and Iola (Wells) Beaird. She married Glenn Frecks Oct. 7, 1962.

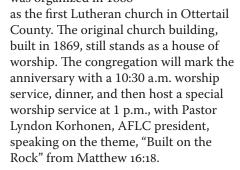
She worked at Bethpage Mission and as a cook at Minden East Elementary School, Minden, Neb. Her husband served Faith Free Lutheran, Bertrand, Neb.

Surviving are her husband, Pastor Glenn Frecks, Holdrege; one son, Monte (Michelle) Frecks, St. Augustine, Fla.; two daughters, Kamala (Jeff) Carlsen, Lexington Park, Md., and Tracy (Bob) McDuffee, Lake in the Hills, Ill.; eight grand-children, two great-grandchildren; five sisters, Shirley (Ron) Urbom, Marcia (Vern) Hasty, Kathy (Royce) Larson, Brenda (Monty) Splitter, and Julie (Dan) Jordan.

The service was held May 25 at Bethany Lutheran, Minden, Neb., with Pastor Donald Hunzeker, Pastor Lyndon Korhonen and Pastor Paul Nash officiating. Burial was in Minden Cemetery.

#### Kvam congregation celebrates 150 years

Members of Kvam Free Lutheran, Dalton, Minn., will celebrate the congregation's 150th anniversary on July 15. The congregation, which is part of the Dalton Free Lutheran Parish, was organized in 1868





One fascinating story in the life of the congregation recounts a storm in the 1880s which moved the church from its foundation. Some said that if God wanted it moved back He would do it Himself. After

prayer, a wind storm came and moved the church back to within a quarter of an inch of its proper place.

"Whenever there is an anniversary we like to look back, but a real focus for Kvam is 'another 150 years,' in looking to the future," wrote Pastor Mark Johnson, who serves the congregation. "Kvam continues to be a warm, vibrant church seeking to reach people for Jesus Christ."

AFLC BENEVOLENCES May 1-31, 2018			
	REC'D IN MAY	TOTAL REC'D TO DATE	PRIOR YEAR-TO-DATE
General Fund	\$38,680	\$202,528	\$198,078
Evangelism	9,083	45,708	50,051
Youth Ministries	14,764	59,255	38,890
Parish Education	43,658	103,446	67,758
Seminary	24,075	126,781	103,495
Bible School	59,655	256,502	247,095
Home Missions	20,802	177,690	196,048
World Missions	23,132	176,153	184,875
Personal Support	62,593	323,618	269,973
TOTALS	\$296,442	\$1,471,681	\$1,356,264

### **NEW BROOMS AND MISSION TRANSITIONS**

ne of my jobs during high school years included sweeping the floor of a clothing store at the end of each business day, and it didn't take long for the bristles in a broom to wear out. When the brooms were replaced, I told my boss that it was almost fun to sweep the floor, and he would reply, "A new broom sweeps clean, you know." New brooms include both continuity and changes.

The 2018 Annual Conference is past by the time that this editorial is published, and Home Missions announced that a new



Pastor Robert Lee

director has already been called. The calling of new directors for both World and Home Missions, with the accompanying leadership transitions, is quite unique in the life of our association, and the process presents both challenges and

opportunities. The actual authority rests with the Mission Corporation, which is reportedly accustomed mainly to hearing reports and approving the election of conference nominees. It would be impractical, of course, not to mention costly, for the large corporation to meet regularly and manage details of the ministry, yet one would have hoped that in major decisions the corporation would be involved as much as possible.

Members of the corporation have been informed that both committees have recommended that the current directors devote up to a year training their successors. This is unprecedented, placing a significant and questionable burden on the budgets as well as assuming that the new directors will simply continue doing in the same ways what has been done. A new broom sweeps clean, which suggests that new directors will hopefully bring fresh perspectives to both areas of ministry.

What does the future hold for AFLC World Missions? The director

and committee were faced for the first time with the need to find a place for two missionary families when initial plans failed to materialize. The door to a missionary presence in India seems to be firmly closed. The Brazil work has matured, and leadership of the denomination and schools has primarily been turned over to nationals, fulfilling our mission goal of the missionaries working themselves out of a job. A third generation Abel missionary family plans to soon begin outreach and church planting in neighboring Paraguay. The Uganda field seems to be entering an exciting phase of outreach, transitioning in part from training to church planting. One missionary family serves in Mexico, another in Ecuador, and several others are on loan to other missionary agencies. A new partnership has been approved with a Brazilian congregation in Switzerland, and a contact with Mongolia is pending.

Are new missionaries needed? What sort of missionaries? When is the right time to transition to national leadership? These are only a few of the questions to be faced by a new World Missions director.

What does the future hold for AFLC Home Missions? Our previous successful practice

of organizing new congregations with concerned Lutherans is no longer an option, as new affiliations have proven to be more compatible homes for those who seek new church homes. Several years ago the concept of planting "gatherings" rather than congregations was adopted, with the expectation that this might reach the unchurched. How long should a gathering continue? How effective has this strategy been? How long should a congregation

continue to be part of home missions?

The Alaska mission has become in recent years a major component of AFLC Home Missions outreach, and much of the budget is devoted to it. Two missionary families are stationed there, with a third supported by the old missionary society that turned the work over to us. There should be no question at all about the importance and impact of this mission, and it has become dear to many AFLC people who have been blessed to travel there and participate in the ministry. But in the past the firm philosophy of Home Missions has been to eventually wean each new work from mission support to self-support. This is not possible for a mission like the one in Alaska, which is a very old endeavor that will never become self-supporting. Then should it be a Home Mission project because Alaska is a state, or should it be a totally separate mission activity as it was in

A new broom sweeps clean, which suggests that new directors will hopefully bring fresh perspectives to both areas of ministry.

the past when it was independent? Is the primary goal of AFLC Home Missions still to plant new congregations? These are some questions that a new director will face.

Let us join in prayer for the new brooms that God will surely provide, looking forward to both old and new directions for mission endeavors that are dear to His heart and the hearts of His people. THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR 3110 E. Medicine Lake Blvd. Minneapolis, Minnesota 55441

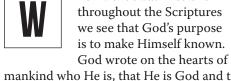
Periodicals

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

#### association retreat center

## PREPARING TO GO

BY KIRK RAUTIO



mankind who He is, that He is God and that we are to make Him known.

hen we look at missions

Romans 10:13-15 states, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are being sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'' Jesus has called us to go into all the world and bring the good news of the gospel so that they can hear through the preaching and thus believe.

July marks the middle of the busy summer season here at the ARC, and we are pleased to have once again seen our camp as a place to not only "come away and rest" but to be a platform to go and send.

Some of you may not know the process our staff follows to clean the camp's manmade lake. This is another area of wisdom and knowledge in which I have grown in my time here at the ARC. Did you know that we drain the lake completely each vear? And in the spring, we bring out the rakes and shovels and each staff member. volunteer, and even the director's children put on gloves and take part in scraping the bottom of the lake of the debris that has settled there from the fun of the previous season. This project takes a few days of hard labor, including silent meditation and contemplation for our staff and volunteers as many of them prayed for you and the experiences that you would have here at the ARC in the coming season. Also, we prayed for God to stir your heart to send you and that He would call you to go.

But I am further stirred by the thought and processes of cleaning the lake. After taking these days to scrape the old grime off the bottom of the lake the new, fresh, washed beach sand was placed at the bottom of the lake bed. Thirteen truckloads in all were moved into place with machines and rakes, then smoothed for a finished look. This moved my heart.

The lake is a picture of our hearts, is it not? Do we allow Jesus to get out His "rake" and remove the muck on the bottom of our hearts? Does this take time? And does it often hurt? Why yes it does. But that new restoration that He puts into place allows for clean growth to happen and restoration to occur so that we are able to be sent forth and used fully by Him for His work. This is not to say that God cannot use us in any condition; the lake was fun last year and will continue to be in years to come. Jesus uses all of us just the way we are. But when we truly open up to Him, allow Him to clean our hearts and make us new, then imagine what He can do through us for Him. How is your heart today? What is God asking of you?

Rautio is the executive director of the Association Retreat Center, located near Osceola, Wis.